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AGAINST ITSELF

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Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

There are a number of gifted speakers associated with PRAYER CONNECT. Jonathan Graf regularly ministers in churches of varying sizes. Carol Madison is also available to minister in the area of prayer for revival and community transformation, and mentoring the next generation in prayer. The Church Prayer Leaders Network also has many speakers associated with its ministries. You can find contact information at the respective emails or websites.

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The mission of **PRAYER CONNECT** is

1. To encourage and equip believers toward a deeper walk with Jesus Christ through prayer—our experiential connection to God.
2. To resource prayer leaders and pastors with tools to help them motivate, disciple, and mobilize believers in churches to be a part of an army that seeks to pray the purposes of God for churches, communities, and the nations.
3. To be a unifying force between prayer ministries, community transformation groups, and churches.

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Prayer lists can be endless as we intercede about culture wars, societal issues, and our need for spiritual awakening. But Scripture also reminds us not to neglect praying for fellow believers. When Christians prosper in health and soul, the Kingdom will advance! You can order “Pray for All the Saints” and other back issues at prayershop.org.

The Great Unifier



A number of years ago, I enjoyed a conversation about prayer with Dr. Oliver Price, former director of Bible Prayer Fellowship. We discussed ways that praying together brings unity and consensus among people.

Dr. Price has since died, but during his “retiral” years, he had a unique ministry. Churches that were about to split would invite him to come and help them find healing together. At the time we spoke, he said he had a 100 percent success rate. None of those churches divided. His secret? He got the feuding parties to pray together.

“You want what the Holy Spirit wants for this church, don’t you?” he would ask each group. The answer has to be yes, even if someone does not really want that.

“Then let’s pray together, asking God what He wants for our church,” he would say.

Dr. Price knew that when people pray together, after a while they will let go of their own agendas and truly start to seek God’s agenda. When that happens, everyone moves toward unity.

I suspect this is one of the main reasons Jesus taught this truth in Matthew 18:19: “Truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.” The agreement declaration from Jesus is not simply “let’s ask God for this.” No, it is a deeper agreement that comes from each individual’s belief that this is what God wants the group to ask Him to do.

I remember when a church I attended was looking to buy property. We had two options, and our people could not agree on which to buy. It wasn’t a divisive thing; we just could not decide, in unity, which property we preferred. We prayed multiple times over this decision, and God started initiating visions of various ministries we could have on one of the pieces of property. But He put those ideas into the minds of people who had wanted the *other* location! Unity came through prayer.

Precious Gift

One of the main benefits in the life of a church that prays together is unity. Sadly, many churches do not take the time to pray together, so they miss out on this precious gift of unity. When decisions are made before everyone is in agreement, people can become disgruntled. (I can almost guarantee that those who are disgruntled with a decision did not pray over it with the body of Christ.)

So I encourage churches to lead their people to pray together. When we unify in prayer, discussions and planning will go more smoothly, and there will be far less criticism of the decisions made.

If you want further insight into how to make decisions through praying together, I recommend *7 Prayers for Discernment and Decision-Making* by Kim Butts. It provides a process to help a group come to consensus on what God wants them to do.

Dr. Price’s question is a good one for each local church and every individual believer in it: “You want what the Holy Spirit wants for this church, don’t you?”

The answer has to be yes.

– Jonathan Graf

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One Million Young Christians Fast and Pray This Decade

Christian leaders are calling on one million people, particularly youth in the United States, to fast and pray, at the beginning of each year this decade, for a spiritual awakening. The Roaring Twenties Fast (see thinke.org) aims to cultivate expectant hope for another great spiritual awakening in America and in the nations around the world amid bitter divisions and political turmoil.

At a gathering of young leaders in 2019, Passion Movement founder Louie Giglio used the phrase *The Roaring Twenties* to refer to what he expects God will be doing on earth in the upcoming decade.

Dr. Malachi O'Brien, a pastor and leader within the Southern Baptist Convention, sees many direct correlations between the 1920s and the 2020s—politically, spiritually, and economically. “The decade began one way; it ended a vastly different way,” O'Brien says. He senses God's direction to call one million young people to fast and pray through the next decade—especially given the

way prayer has shaped recent decades.

In 1995, Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade (now Cru), issued a call for fasting in hopes of spiritual revival. The idea was considered radical at the time, O'Brien notes. But by the end of the 1990s, two global 24/7 prayer movements were launched, one in the United Kingdom and one in the United States.

O'Brien believes the Lord wants to mark a new generation with spiritual hunger and thirst. He longs for them to know that “there is something powerful that happens when we really consecrate ourselves to a place of fasting and prayer.”

Jon Groves, digital mission director of Think Eternity, says, “The younger generations have rarely been taught about fasting and thus do not know the power of it.”

Groves explains the vision: “Throughout history, communication shifts and true revivals have walked hand in hand. The printing press and Martin Luther. Movable-type printing and George



Whitefield. Television and Billy Graham. And today, in the biggest communication shift in 500 years ... social media apps and networks exploding by the millions every single day.

“There has never been a greater opportunity to flood the world and saturate the air with the message of the gospel—to raise up digital Billy Grahams, cultural missionaries, to take Christ to culture,” Groves says. “My prayer is that [this vision] does not end in January, but that its ripple will be seen and the roar will be heard for generations to come, the next great awakening.”

—Brandon Showalter, adapted from *The Christian Post* (christianpost.com).

United Prayer for “Decade of Harvest” with GO2020

Tens of thousands of churches with hundreds of mission organizations and prayer movements are joining forces for an epic prayer and mission initiative called GO2020 (go2020usa.com). The goal is to reach one billion people who are still unreached by Christ's Good News.

United prayer in the early Church unleashed the empowering of the Holy Spirit and ignited remarkable spiritual breakthroughs as the gospel began to spread throughout the then-known world. This same pattern of prayer preceding evangelism has been a consistent



pattern in all the great revivals and mission advances from then on through church history.

GO2020 is an effort to mobilize 100 million Christians by May 2020 to pray for those in their communities who do not know Christ, as well as for unreached people groups around the world. Coupled with prayer, there is a strategic effort to share the gospel during the month of May with one billion of the 7.8 billion people

in the world. The desired result is 50 million new believers integrated into new and existing churches.

John Robb of International Prayer Council says, “No one organization or movement can accomplish such a staggering feat, but if we flow together like tributaries in one unstoppable river, this can be achieved! Getting God's heart of love for the lost through prayer will lead to our sharing Jesus with them in the power and sensitivity of the Holy Spirit just as the early Church experienced.”

—Taken from International Prayer Connect (ipcprayer.org).

Students Host Prayer, Bible Reading on Fields

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) encourages students across the nation to gather on school football fields to pray, read the Bible, and “open up their lives to Christ.”

Since these Fields of Faith (*fieldsof-faith.com*) events began in 2004, more than 120,000 people have either professed faith in Christ or recommitted their lives to Him, according to Jeff Martin, FCA executive director of Ministry Advancement.

The main goal of these events is for the nation to experience a great spiritual awakening. “In many communities, Fields of Faith is the main or only event that is able to physically unite the community (church denominations, campus

organizations, schools, businesses, parents, teams) around one cause,” says Martin. “In a culture that is becoming more fragmented by the day, people are amazed when they walk into those stadiums and see something so abnormal. It gives communities hope and courage to live out their faith.”

Some schools that hosted a Fields of Faith event saw tremendous impact. A gathering at Texas Tech University’s football stadium drew an attendance of more than 10,000, according to Martin.

“We hope to unleash an army of true disciples who daily connect to God in His Word and prayer and obey Him no matter what,” he says. “From the student leaders who take on the responsibility to



bring Fields of Faith to their communities to the skeptical or hurting teen who might be attending for the first time, we see time and again that Fields of Faith motivates, energizes, rejuvenates, and unites. Jesus takes hold of lives right there on the athletic fields, and we are continually amazed at what He does each year in young people’s lives.”

– Jenny Rose Spauldo, adapted from Charisma News (*charismanews.com*).

President Trump Empowers School Prayer

President Donald Trump announced in January new federal guidelines to protect the constitutional right to pray in public schools. His action, which centers on the Department of Education, reaffirms the religious freedom for



students and teachers to pray and to conduct Bible studies and prayer meetings at school. These rights eroded over the past 18 years, most significantly during the previous administration.

The White House revealed this new action on Religious Freedom Day, an annual event on January 16 to mark America’s long history of protecting religious liberty.


President Trump emphasized the importance of this decision at a January rally attended by evangelical leaders. “A society without religion cannot prosper. A nation without faith cannot endure, because justice, goodness, and peace cannot prevail

without the glory of Almighty God,” he said. “For America to thrive in the twenty-first century we must renew faith and family as the center of American life.”

David Kubal, president of Intercessors for America, says, “It is exciting to see this kind

of bold action from a president.” Many people thought that the topic of restoring our eroding religious freedoms was too hot to touch, Kubal says. “President Trump is not afraid to do the hard things that many Americans want and need to be done. Many young people have grown up in the environment of only knowing a religiously hostile public school system, hiding to pray with friends, or taking their Christian groups outside of school after too many restrictions. I am thankful that President Trump took action to protect religious freedom, bringing things back into alignment with our Constitution.”

–Adapted from Intercessors for America “Headline Prayer” (*ifapray.org*).



Prayer Calendar

Global 4/14 Day of Prayer for Children
Tuesday, April 14
global414day.com

National Day of Prayer
Thursday, May 7
nationaldayofprayer.org

30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World
April 24–May 23
30daysprayer.com

GO2020 Prayer Day
Friday, May 1
go2020.world/prayer

Weekend of Prayer for Children at Risk
June 6–7
viva.org/pray

A NATION

Divided Against Itself



Prayerful Solutions to Turmoil

A conversation stopper hangs on the lobby wall in the complex where I live. I walk by it every day on my way to pick up my mail, but deliberately stand with my back to it as I wait for the elevator.

It's a television monitor tuned non-stop, day and night, to a cable news station not known for its objective reporting. I try to ignore it, but sometimes I get on the elevator, muttering under my breath about something I couldn't tune out—if I'm alone, of course!

I watch as others' faces reflect the same tension. A few years ago, we might have commented on the wildfires on the West Coast, the stock market, or other news depicted on the screen. Now we stand in silence at the elevator, nervously sifting through the mail in our hands. Suddenly junk mail about my need for a perfect mattress or a new dentist in town absorbs my attention! No one wants to comment about the constant news stream because we can't be sure of anyone's political perspective. Weather is about the only safe topic we Minnesotans can fall back on.

This same tension pervades our whole nation—in the workplace, in churches, on school campuses, even in family gatherings. If you are sure someone agrees with you politically, you breathe a sigh of relief and relax. You might even talk

about current political scenarios. But you do so with great care because the divides are growing deeper and the conversations more toxic.

How does one represent Christ well in the midst of such turmoil—even hatred? How can we remain friends with those who disagree with us—sometimes violently? In the context of such toxicity, how can the gospel be considered relevant? Even if our only desire is to live consistent with biblical values and completely avoid the political scene, the divisive rhetoric attacks every command we believe God has given to His Church.

Desperate, Discerning Prayer

The apostle Paul knew quite a bit about living in a culture filled with turmoil and opposition. He offered godly wisdom to the Colossians, a church under attack from the infiltration of false teachers:

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every

opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone (Col. 4:2–6).

Paul doesn't shy away from the gospel. He encourages conversation full of grace. And he frames it all with desperate, discerning prayer.

In this issue, David Kubal reminds us that, in our tense world, anger belongs to the Lord. His practical intercession points demonstrate that people of prayer help shape a nation's destiny. Kay Horner uses the backdrop of Lamentations to demonstrate that we are never without hope. Although our nation faces great challenges, God calls us to persevere in prayer. And Mercy Alarid warns us to avoid getting caught up in friendly fire against fellow believers. We need to know our true enemy!

By the way, I do try to engage my neighbors in the elevator. I find people are drawn to a smile and an interest in knowing their names. But I pray for an extraordinary season of revival and spiritual awakening that draws all of us to Jesus and *His* truth! **PC**

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect* and author of *Prayer That's Caught and Taught* (prayershop.org).

T T R U

How to Pray

When a Nation

Is in Turmoil

THIS

to Remember



“*It* just makes my blood boil.” These are the words I heard coming out of my own mouth at a prayer event—in front of a bunch of people—when I described the latest political “breaking news.” I can’t remember if I had ever used that phrase before, but something hit me as the last syllable left my mouth. I think it was the Holy Spirit.

I began to ask myself questions. *Why are you so mad? Who are you so mad at? Are you supposed to be mad?*

My first thought was that I am absolutely supposed to be mad. After all, the Bible talks about “righteous anger,” and God gets angry: “God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day” (Ps. 7:11, NKJV). I am demonstrating a character of God by being mad at the evildoers, right?

I momentarily felt a little godlier. This

should have been my first clue something wasn’t right. The Holy Spirit quickly brought to my attention Colossians 3:8: “Now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice. . . .”

The Spirit reminded me that anger is reserved for God.

Leave Anger to God

So, it appears God reserves the right to judge and be angry at the wicked, and we are to get rid of anger toward them. Initially, this conclusion seemed wrong because I wanted to be furious with people who are doing terrible things in our nation.

Then, I believe, the Lord spoke to my heart, saying, “Dave, I will be the Judge. Leave the anger to Me. These people are lost and deceived. Do you remember when you were lost and deceived? These people

BY DAVID KUBAL

HOLDING ON TO ANGER *for unrighteous acts gets us nowhere.*

on the news shows who are constantly lying and showing their anger toward righteousness were created by Me, and I have godly plans and purposes for them in My heart.”

To be honest, I shouted back, “*But do You know how terrible these people are?*” Even as I type these words, I am laughing at myself.

Holding onto anger against someone for their unrighteous acts gets us nowhere. It just makes us bitter. Bitterness has been defined as swallowing poison and expecting the other person to die. God doesn’t want our lives filled with the poison of anger and bitterness.

Today’s anger and bitterness have been fueled by “identity politics,” political strategies to divide people into groups, such as evangelicals or liberals or white or black or brown or gay or straight. This is a well-known political strategy championed by Saul Alinsky in *Rules for Radicals*.

After causing division, each group tries to convince people that the other groups are against them. Angry spokespeople then go to news stations, polling booths, and courts to fight for their “rights.” The result is a divided nation full of people who speak of tolerance, but are, in reality, intolerant and angry.

Purpose and Destiny

The very people I want to be angry with are individuals like me, created in God’s image, created with purpose, created with a destiny. But they have not yet found the purpose and destiny God has designed for them. As I watch them on TV and try to adopt that perspective, I have actually begun to forgive them. And forgiveness releases me from anger.

The Church has a great opportunity, summed up in three prayer points.

1. Pray prayers resulting in peace. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:1–2, “I urge, then, *first of all*, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and

quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (emphasis added). These verses guide our prayers and actions. They remind us of our primary prayer priority and give us an outcome to pursue. We are to first pray for our government leaders *so that* we can live peaceful, godly, holy lives.

How often do we give this matter the priority God gives it? Most prayer times start with requests about someone’s health or a family’s wayward child. Then the prayers usually turn to church programs and the pastor. Rarely is the very first prayer about government leaders.

If we think this primary prayer priority is challenging today, keep in mind that the emperor of Rome when Paul wrote this letter to Timothy was Nero! At the time, Nero was executing Christians in horrible ways—for sport. He even set fire to Christians to light his garden parties. Yet Paul exhorted Timothy, and all Christians, to pray for Nero and other civil authorities.

The primary pursued outcome of this prayer, according to this passage, is for us to lead quiet and peaceful lives. This is a reference to religious freedoms. We desire the freedom to walk with God and live our lives the way we believe we should without government interference. But we dare not expect revival to come from government. The solution is not a pastor in the Oval Office. And we should never mix nationalism with Christianity.

Government is a separate institution, created by God to care for our civil lives. When government takes on the role of the Church, we slip into socialism, where citizens trust in government—and not God—to care for them.

2. Pray prayers reflecting God’s sovereignty. Psalm 2:1–5 declares, “Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed. . . . The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath.”

Remember, ultimately the course of our nation is up to God. He is sovereign. Yet, I hear from many people so deeply burdened with the state of this nation that their thoughts are consumed with worry, they lose sleep, and their health suffers.

God will have His way. That is certain. But

His sovereignty does not absolve us of our responsibility to pray, vote, and be involved in our communities.

When we understand God's sovereignty, we have peace, and our civil engagement can be a joyful act of obedience instead of a desperate attempt to save our nation before we lose it.

3. Pray prayers of praise. The psalmist writes, "May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth. May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. The land yields its harvest; God, our God, blesses us" (Ps. 67:3–6). These verses directly connect God's blessing to our praises.

Isn't that true in our relationships, too? When our children constantly have their hands out, expecting cash or car keys, we question whether giving to


them is a good thing. But how willing we are to bless our children when they express gratitude!

A nation that expresses gratitude on a large scale will be blessed by God. We, as the Church, have the opportunity to lead the way, for who else understands gratitude better than lost souls regenerated through the grace of God?

Peace in the Toxicity

Some news commentators say we are on the verge of another civil war—with anger spilling into the streets, igniting violence. Do we want to be consumed by such a toxic elixir that initially feels good, then poisons us with overwhelming bitterness?

We can't afford to let anything make our blood boil. God wants us to get rid of anger, remain levelheaded, and pray prayers of peace—all the while praising

His sovereignty and His provision. He is our peace. 



DAVID KUBAL is president and CEO of Intercessors for America (*ifapray.org*), a ministry in the Washington, D.C., area that mobilizes intercessors to pray for national, state, and local concerns.

FOR FURTHER READING

Check out some additional articles on blogs and websites related to "A Nation Divided Against Itself" at prayerleader.com/issue-40-extras.

- "A Prayer for Peace in Our Country and World," by Gregory Coles
- "Prayers for Our Nation and President," by Lesli White
- "10 Scripture Prayers to Pray for Our Nation and Our Leaders," by Jason Soroski

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We

Have Hope



Ashlie was a beautiful young mother of two little girls. The joy of the Lord radiated from her, and she served alongside her husband in the youth ministry of our vibrant, growing congregation. Musically gifted, she also led worship with God's anointing and helped in other ministries where needed.

People around Ashlie couldn't help but love her because of *her* love for God and others that touched hearts. We looked forward to years of shared ministry until . . . she was unexpectedly taken from us. While I was writing this article about hope, Ashlie died.

What happens when such deep personal loss and a growing list of other disappointments veils our worship? How do we respond if our perspective of God becomes clouded by the disasters and moral darkness in our world?

Hope Confronts Sorrow

Typically, we wouldn't turn to Lamentations—a book of poetic laments—to revitalize our hope. We might read a few psalms for a good “pick-me-up.” But we may forget that the Old Testament hymns and poems contain more laments than praise psalms.

In fact, the writer of Psalm 42 asks a question that Jesus' followers, in every generation, face during difficult times: “Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?” (v. 5). Aren't we supposed to rejoice always and be victorious through Christ?

In the same verse, in the middle of bemoaning his troubles, the psalmist inserts the secret for reigniting our prayer and praise when disappointments seem insurmountable: “Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise

BY KAY HORNER

The consummate answer to life's dilemmas— **HOPE IN GOD!**

him, my Savior and my God.”

Jeremiah, the probable author of Lamentations, may have remembered this psalm as he grieved the destruction of Jerusalem and other afflictions. He offers the consummate answer to life's dilemmas—*hope in God!* The weeping prophet then defines the anchor of our hope as the Lord's infinite love, unfailing compassions, and abounding faithfulness.

This I call to mind
and therefore I have hope:
Because of the LORD's great love we are
not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness
(Lam. 3:21–23).

Jeremiah continues by recounting the *whys* for his hope. He then challenges himself and the people of Zion to examine their ways, return to the Lord, and acknowledge their sin (vv. 25–42). When divisiveness pervades a nation, this bright picture of repentance and hope, against the dark backdrop of despair, becomes a starting point for prayer. Even when the doors of prayer seem tightly shut, the foyer of weeping is always open.

The prophet's hope confronts his sorrows. Faith debates fears. Night or day, the Lord God of heaven and earth demonstrates His extravagant kindness and inexhaustible faithfulness. God's covenant love always wins the argument!

Backdrop of Grief

The horrific calamities throughout Judah and in Jerusalem, the capital city, form the backdrop of grief in Lamentations. This short book gushes with emotion birthed out of the nation's excruciating pain. The city is destroyed, Judah's king is captured, and the people are deported to

Babylon. The desolate land, referenced as *her*, is devoid of splendor. Jerusalem is robbed of her treasures, her sins are exposed, and she groans in nakedness and sorrow. She longs for comfort, but the wicked priests have died while pursuing their own desires. Her enemies rejoice over her distress.

Chapter one of Lamentations paints a vivid picture of the grief-stricken people and explains why all this has happened: “The LORD has done what he planned; he has fulfilled his word” (2:17).

Aren't there interesting parallels here to our country today?

National prayer leader David Bryant, speaking to Christian leaders desiring a Christ-awakening across America, said this:

Multitudes of Christian leaders in America are currently in danger of being sued for spiritual malpractice. . . . Leaders like you and me at this convocation must go all out to reawaken and refortify God's people with a bold, fresh, comprehensive vision of and engagement with God's Son in the fullness of his supremacy. Otherwise, this significant falling away from Christ will be unavoidable—and ultimately, we will be held accountable.¹

Bryant listed major challenges unfolding simultaneously today at a level previously unseen:

- Immigration demands and hordes of asylum seekers
- Trillions of dollars of increasing national debt
- Widening income inequality and a growing gap between rich and poor
- Unrestrained urban violence across the land
- Unsustainable increase in prison populations at all levels
- Global drug trade and the opiate epidemic killing tens of thousands of Americans yearly
- International trade wars shaking economic stability
- Rise in human trafficking and slavery, nationally and worldwide
- Soaring health care and prescription costs
- Impending exhaustion of Medicare and Social Security funding
- Rapid spread of pornography and the mass sexualization of our culture
- An intensifying battle over abortion, reminiscent of the struggles during the abolition

movement more than 200 years ago.²

These and other factors—including the closing of churches and a drastic reduction in church attendance—call us to grieve and repent for our nation.

Change of Perspective

Lamentations 2:17–18 urges God’s people to pour out their hearts to the Lord in repentance. And the people call the city walls themselves to turn into a wailing wall: “Let your tears flow like a river day and night; give yourself no relief, your eyes no rest” (v. 18). Repentance and forgiveness would seem impossible with the temple destroyed and sacrifices suspended. But Jeremiah’s hope doesn’t rest in buildings, traditions, human structures, or rituals. His personal lamenting at the beginning of chapter three changes to hope as he calls to mind the Lord’s great love.

Instead of plunging into despair, Jeremiah remembers that God’s forgiveness flows from love and not temples. His mercy reaches into repentant hearts, not into lives hardened by a constant focus on personal or national troubles. Our patience wears thin, but the Father’s compassions are, according to the original language, the total negation of being consumed, vanquished, or spent. His tenderness, mercy, and sensitive love may be newly accessed every morning by those who pray and put their hope in the everlasting Lord.

As joint heirs with Jesus Christ, we can unite our voices with the psalmists’ and the prophet’s voices, declaring this:

My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever (Ps. 73:26).

I wait for the LORD, my whole
being waits, and in his word I put
my hope (Ps. 130:5).

“The LORD is my portion; therefore
I will wait for him.” The LORD

is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD (Lam. 3:24–26).

Unfolding Story of Hope

Wait is an ugly, four-letter word to most of us. Our Internet-speed expectations

avoid waiting at any cost. However, the original word for *hope* in Lamentations 3:21 can be translated *wait*.

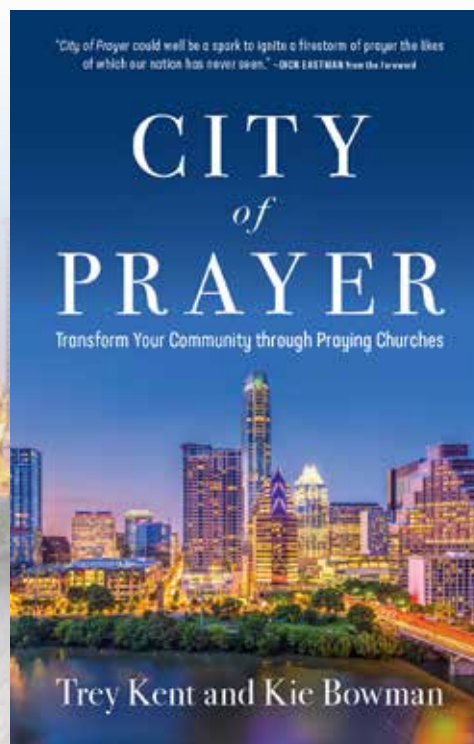
Times of waiting strengthen our character. And the Lord reveals *His* character as He pours His love into and out of our hearts.

The apostle Paul experienced intense, personal suffering, and he ministered during a season of religious divisiveness

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and governmental persecution. At that time, Jesus' followers in Rome could have easily despaired if they had not put their hope in the love of God. Yet Paul knew the secret and the cycle of hope:

Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this

grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through

the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Rom. 5:1-5).

Are we hoping for national tranquility, church/ministry growth, or relief from our suffering? Or is our hope that "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14)?

Anyone who has ever dealt with a water leak or flooding knows the power of water. It diffuses, seeps, and pours through the tiniest opening. In a similar way God's overflowing, abundant love can permeate every area of our lives so that we won't give up hope in crushing times. Paul uses a verb tense here that indicates an action in the past with results continuing to the present. What a great way to emphasize the abundance of God's love!

Character Transformation

Paul wasn't focusing on tranquility of the heart but on a relationship with God. We may feel more like lamenting than rejoicing in our suffering, but God tells us to persevere and to allow Him to lovingly transform our character through repentant prayer and grateful worship.

Ultimately, we will always cycle back to hope when we recall with Jeremiah and Paul that God's compassions never fail, and He continually pours His love into our lives. **PC**

¹David Bryant, "The Case for a Nationwide Christ Awakening," <http://christnow.com/the-case-for-a-nationwide-christ-awakening>.
²Ibid.



KAY HORNER is executive director of the Awakening America Alliance and founding director of The Helper Connection, a ministry for forming relational networks among pastors' wives and women in ministry. You may contact her via khorner@awakeningamerica.us.

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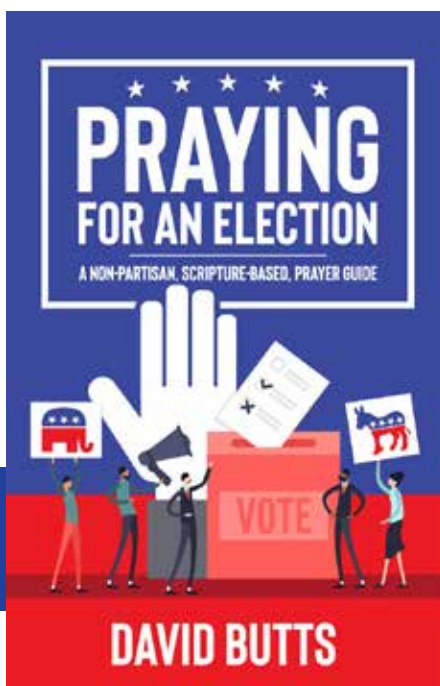
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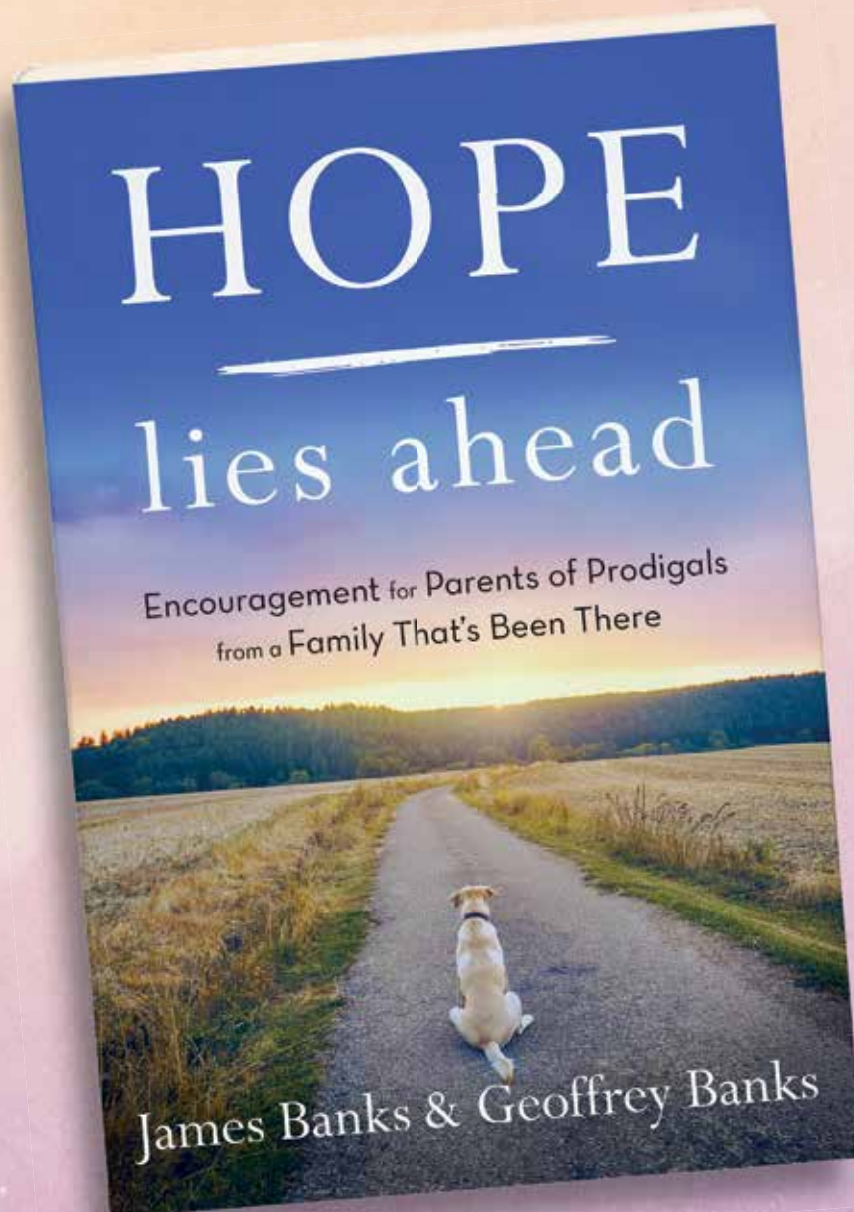
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A soldier in a desert landscape, seen from behind, wearing a helmet and a large backpack. In the sky above, several parachutes are falling, suggesting a military operation or training exercise. The background is a vast, flat, sandy desert under a clear blue sky.

*When Satan
Engages Us in the
Wrong Battles*

ING

Under Friendly Fire



The sun had set on Allied Forces stationed in Italy on a hot Sunday night in July 1944. Earlier in the day, General Patton had ordered 2,300 soldiers from the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment to travel from Tunisia to Sicily to reinforce troops already on the ground.

Unfortunately, thousands of soldiers guarding Sicily's coast never got word that troops would arrive that night, parachuting in from hundreds of planes. What happened next became the subject of much contention, sorrow, and shame.

In minutes, planes were shot down, pilots swerved to evade "friendly fire," and parachutes slowly dropped mortally wounded and dead soldiers onto land and sea.

In his book *The Day of Battle*, Rick Atkinson recounts the deadly scene on the

beach: "At last the shooting ebbed, the guns fell silent, and an awful epiphany seeped across the beachhead and through the fleet, that men-at-arms had done what men-at-arms fear doing: they had killed their own."

That night, friendly fire killed hundreds of Allied troops.¹

Friend or Foe

Friendly fire is "the firing of weapons from one's own forces or those of an ally especially when resulting in the accidental death or injury of one's own personnel."² It happens often to soldiers in military conflicts. But, sadly, it also takes place among other people, who, in daily interactions, mistake friends for foes. This type of friendly fire may not result in actual deaths, but it deeply wounds and alienates people.

BY MERCY ALARID

There is nothing friendly about coming under fire by people you rely on for support. No one is safe nowadays. This is especially true on Twitter, where people can fire off 280 bullets (characters) every time they tweet.

Even Ellen DeGeneres came under attack for merely sitting next to former President George W. Bush at a Dallas Cowboys football game and then posting it on her Twitter account. The backlash was swift.³

Collateral Damage in the Church

We might expect this type of public shaming from a steeped-in-anger culture with no moral bearings. But how do we explain the vitriol launched by Christians against other Christians? Couching our attacks in religious terms, we may suppose our artillery less hurtful. But grenades will maim and kill, regardless of the Scripture references attached.

You've probably seen the venomous public exchanges between believers we have admired and respected in the past. Christians firing on each other over political disagreements is nothing new, but our attacks are increasingly hurting our witness and having collateral damage. When unbelievers see Christians argue that faith in Christ is somehow tied to our allegiance to a certain political party, they stop listening to our message altogether.

The secular culture's name-calling and mudslinging has clearly seeped into the Church. Believers ruthlessly fight over eschatology, theology, pro-life stances (or lack thereof), and oh, yes, doctrine.

Confronting doctrinal error is vital to preserving sacred Christian tenets, and Jude 3 urges us to contend for our faith. So I'm not calling for silence when our faith is threatened. But *how* we confront those threats is as important as *why* we confront them.

In his work, "Taking Theological Risks," Terry Muck writes, "We are called to reprove our brothers and sisters to keep our doctrine and beliefs pure, but we are also called to do so in love and forgiveness. As soon as we begin to see ourselves (rather than God) as the repository of all theological truth, we lose sight of our own fallibility, and arrogance and ruthlessness, in the name of God's work, can result."⁴

Scripture tells us how to handle conflict among believers. Matthew 18:15–17 forcefully pulls our hand back from launching social media "grenades," instructing us, instead, to approach each other privately. Even when it's appropriate to rebuke believers publicly, we are to do it within the context of the Church, which, last time I checked, does not include the twitterverse.

The Real Enemy

These tangential conflicts distract us from the real battle God has called us to fight. Ephesians 6:12 clearly identifies our enemy: "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Fighting each other wastes time needed to fight the powers of this dark world wreaking havoc in our families, churches, cities, and nations. But God calls us to recognize the devil's schemes and stay engaged in the right battles.

So how do we fight these spiritual forces of evil? What strategy does Paul give us?

First, he tells us to put on our spiritual armor so we can stand against the attacks of the enemy (Eph. 6:11–17).

Second, Paul says to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" for all the Lord's people (v. 18). In other words, instead of shaming someone publicly, close your apps and *pray* for that person.

In John 17, Jesus models how to pray for our brothers and sisters—even in "combat conditions."

- *Pray God's protection over them.* Jesus prayed,

THE SECULAR CULTURE'S *name-calling and mudslinging has clearly seeped into the Church.*

“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. . . . My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one” (John 17:11, 15). Why do they need God’s protection? Our unity as the body of Christ has been the devil’s main target all along! If he can take down one, two, ten, or 100 believers, he debilitates the whole body and we all lose Kingdom ground.

- *Pray that God will set them apart by the truth of His Word.* Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). Here He elevates the truth of God’s Word. Building on this, the great apologist Francis Schaeffer emphasized that battle lines should not be drawn around the inerrancy of the Bible, for example, but instead, around obedience to the Bible. “I have said that [biblical] inerrancy is the watershed of the evangelical world. But it is not just a theological debating point. *It is the obeying of the Scripture which is the watershed. It is believing and applying it to our lives*” (emphasis his).⁵ Let’s pray that we and our brothers and sisters find great delight in obeying God’s Word.

Whenever we start to attack brothers and sisters in Christ, in social media or elsewhere, Paul counsels us to distinguish between friend and foe—and zero in on our real enemy. Twitter and Facebook may miss us, but hell will fear us, and heaven will know us as those who take the Kingdom, not by tweet but by prayerful force. 🙏

¹Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle* (New York: Henry Holt, 2007), 109.

²Friendly Fire: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/friendly%20fire>.

³Ian56 (@Ian56789), “It’s a big Club, and

you’re not in it. Birds of a feather, flock together,” Twitter, October 6, 2019, twitter.com/hashtag/FakeLiberal?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw.

⁴Terry Muck, “Taking Theological Risks,” *Facing Theological Division* (downloadable PDF, Building Church Leaders, Christianity Today, 2015): <https://www.bclstore.com/products/facing-theological-division>.

⁵Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical*

Disaster (Wheaton: Crossway, 1984), 61.



DR. MERCY ALARID is founder of Virtuous Women (virtuous-women.tv), a movement with a vision to unite women, equip them to discover their virtue in Christ, and empower them to disciple others. She has served in ministry for 22 years alongside her husband Brian Alarid, president of America Prays (americaprays.org).

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Carrying the Burdens OF

When Your Best Intentions Fail

By Carla G. Pollard

OTHERS

in Prayer



Jenny looked joyful as she navigated our church's crowded foyer toward me.¹ As women's ministry leader, I had spent

time with Jenny, discussing her concerns.

Jenny reached out to grasp my hand. "I want to thank you for praying for my husband," she said. "He finally found a job last week. He starts first thing in the morning."

I managed a smile and nodded, then she headed out the door.

Conviction pierced my heart as the memory of her plea for prayers flooded back. I had forgotten her need. I didn't pray for her husband. Until she thanked me, I hadn't even remembered her request.

I immediately sent up an earnest cry: *Dear Lord, please forgive me. Help me remember the needs of those around me, especially if they ask for my prayers. Please forgive me for letting Jenny believe I had prayed as she had asked. Help me fix this.* It had happened before, this forgetting of prayer requests. Guilt settled over my heart like a dark cloud. *Just leave it*

with God and try harder next time, I thought. But I found little solace. I knew I would not find relief from this burden until I spoke to Jenny again.



COUNTING
ON US

But Jenny's confidence in me taught me a valuable lesson about bearing one another's burdens. I understand the importance of presenting confidential requests to our heavenly Father. I know I depend on the prayers of my mentors; likewise, others depend on my prayers. Intercession—pleading our neighbor's cause—is a vital part of our Christian life. Bringing the needs of family and friends to God offers love and understanding in our relationships with one another. Intercessory prayer marks us with the image of Jesus in this world.

Over the next week, as I sought wisdom about approaching Jenny with my failure, the Holy Spirit reminded me of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane the evening before He faced death on the cross. Jesus agonized for us. His burdens were so deep that His sweat poured out as great drops of blood. During this prayer vigil, He sought the help of His disciples. But when they proved weak and He found them asleep, He said, “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” (Matt. 26:40).

Imagine! The eve of His crucifixion. Jesus will soon suffer beyond fleshly pain and agony. He will endure the wrath of God for the sin of all humanity. At that moment, our Savior desires the prayers of His followers.

And those closest to Him fail to pray. They fall asleep while Jesus wrestles with God over the cup He was sent to drink. He pours out His soul in prayer

and returns to find the disciples sound asleep—three times. Even though they are sleeping, we can imagine our Lord’s tender love as He looks over their still bodies and whispers, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners” (Matt. 26:45).

JESUS NEVER STOPS

The Book of Hebrews describes Jesus as the One who lives to make intercession for us. He is sitting at the right hand of the Father, pleading our cause, praying for us (Heb. 7:25). I marvel at our Savior speaking up on our behalf. He gave His life for us; now He gives His prayers. He never stops giving.

Scripture says, “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). We carry

one another’s burdens in the spiritual realm by pleading each other’s cause before the throne of God.

We cultivate close, intimate fellowship with Jesus as we pray with passion and purpose. We bear the image of Christ to the Father when we identify with someone else’s pain and desire God’s best and highest good for them. We reflect the love of Jesus to our hurting world when we care enough to pray for others. The Creator Himself grants us permission to enter His presence (Heb. 4:16). He hears our petitions and acts on our behalf because He sees and hears the heart of His dear Son through our prayers.

FIGURE OUT A STRATEGY

Sometimes our busyness makes us forget our promises to pray, and when we realize our failure to follow through, we’re left feeling guilty.

I have a friend whose teenage son frequently failed to take care of his responsibilities. When he tried to justify himself, blaming his negligence on his failing memory, his mother replied, “But you didn’t do anything to help you not forget.”

From my encounter with Jenny, I realized I needed a strategy to help me do something to “not forget.” Whenever someone asks us to pray, here are a few practical ways to *not forget*:

- Keep in mind the importance of remembering, as well as the privilege of praying for, the sincere need of those requesting prayer.
- If appropriate, stop and pray with them (or by yourself) at the time they express the need.
- Ask God to remind you later if He desires continued intercession over this need.
- Sometimes you cannot stop and pray immediately after someone expresses a need. So keep a pen and notepad available, or make notes in

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your phone, reminding yourself to pray about the need later—during your private devotions or at some other opportunity.

- Schedule a regular personal prayer time during your week when you ask the Lord to remind you to “carry the burdens of others.”
- Once you have prayed, set a reminder to follow up with those who’ve asked you to pray. Doing so shows you care about them and what they are going through.

I sense God’s presence in following these simple strategies to help me remember people’s requests and pray for their causes. God gives me a small taste of His great and eternal love for us. And I believe He delights in us when we draw close to Him through the service of intercession. When we remember the needs of others and pray, we can rise from those prayers with a renewed strength to face our own problems with hope and purpose.

PRAY THE GIFT OF LOVE

When I think my prayers are not enough, the Holy Spirit reminds me that crying out to the Lord for others is the greatest act of love I can give. I am grateful our Father works through prayers. I believe our petitions, when uttered *with great love*, mirror the love and compassion of His Son. When we agonize in prayer for those the Lord brings in our path, it is as if we are already seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father, participating in His love.

God grants Christians the honor and privilege of approaching His throne with our requests. Many people spend their entire working lives trying to win the ear of corporate or political influencers. But we win the ear—and the heart—of the Maker of heaven and earth when we fall to our knees and intercede.

As for Jenny, at the next week’s service,

I swallowed my pride and faced my failure. I found her sitting off to the right of the sanctuary. “I have to confess something to you,” I said. “I forgot you asked me to pray for your husband’s employment. I don’t deserve any thanks. I want to ask you to forgive me.”

She responded with grace, and, as we hugged, we both acknowledged that God knows what we need before we even

ask. I am thankful for His work in our hearts. **PC**

¹not her real name



CARLA G. POLLARD is a Christian speaker and freelance writer. Through her ministry, *Created to Climb (C2C)*, she helps area shelters, as well as women and children in need.

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Prayer Locker #365

A high school in Howardville, MO, has a unique locker in its hallways—one devoted to prayer. The Eagle Prayer Locker was started by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) at the New Madrid County Central High School. Locker #365 is a continuous reminder to students of the need for prayer 365 days a year.

Almost immediately after establishing the locker location, the requests started pouring in. In the first few hours there were already seven requests! The prayer locker supplies prayer-request slips and pens. Students can write a confidential request and slip it into the locker,

assured that the FCA group will pray over each request.

A Facebook post alerted others to this prayer opportunity, and people started reaching out to FCA with offers to add the requests to their personal and church prayer lists. The response was contagious.

The FCA team recognizes that many students and staff carry painful baggage or burdens, so the presence of the prayer locker provides a lifeline. The goal is to bring



Christ back into school as the hope that everyone needs. The school administration supports the project 100 percent.

The FCA adult leadership first reviews the requests, then they share only basic information with the students in FCA, keeping the requests confidential. Personal details are kept private to protect the people submitting the requests. Then FCA stu-

dents meet and pray over each need.

Prayer requests have included the following: *Please pray that my grandma can be happy again and not be sad all the time.* Another asked for prayer for another student who seems sad all the time. One person asked for prayer for a school employee, loved by many of the students, who passed away suddenly. The requests often move the students to tears as they pray.

The mission of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at New Madrid County Central is to be bold for Christ in both school and community. Students hope to inspire more high schools to incorporate a prayer locker. So far, they know of two other schools that have started them.

The students believe the prayer locker is just the beginning of their journey of pouring out love and prayer on New Madrid County and influencing their community and school by focusing on Christ and His gift of salvation.

GLORIA HOUSTON is the Fellowship of Christian Athletes sponsor at New Madrid County Central, Howardville, MO.

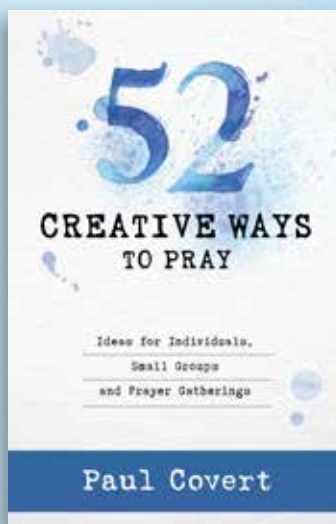
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The Gift of Praying for Newlyweds

After the pure joy of their wedding and honeymoon, newlyweds face a host of changes and challenges, settling into married life. Not only will they be adjusting to their new roles of husband and wife, they'll need to adjust to new family relationships and numerous bumps in the road. Many will face the challenges of starting new jobs, moving, or continuing their education.

How can we best help the newlywed couples we know and love as they navigate the early years of marriage?

Newlyweds appreciate the wedding gifts we give them on their big day, but our prayers are priceless gifts we can continue to give them as they become established in marriage. Our “enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). If he can destroy a marriage, he gets to devour two for the price of one. But prayer is a prime weapon against his attacks.

Newlywed Prayer Points

So how should we pray for the newlyweds we know? Here are some ideas to help focus our prayers:

- Pray they will love God above all and love each other the way God intends. Pray that they will keep their eyes on Him and their arms around one another.
- Ask God to protect them from Satan and from his schemes to erode their marriage.
- Pray for unity and unwavering commitment to each other and to their marriage.
- Ask God to help them model their love after His very own. Pray their love and forgiveness will flow without limit and that kindness will be their guide.

- Pray that God will give each of them the desire and wisdom not only to maintain a strong personal prayer life but also to pray together as a couple.
- Pray they will operate as a team, openly and honestly discussing issues before them and then agreeing how to proceed.
- Pray they will not allow other family members to come between them.
- Ask God to guide them to a church where they will be nourished, encouraged, and challenged, a place where they can use their gifts to serve.
- Pray they will honor God with their finances—first through tithing and giving, then through wise decisions regarding budgets and credit.
- Ask God to bless them beyond their dreams and grant them memories to treasure for life.
- Ask God to be their strong support through each day and through every stage of their lives.
- Pray they will make a commitment never to go to bed angry but to forgive one another and live in peace.
- Ask God to give them vision to make a difference in their world, serving loved ones and strangers alike. Pray they will be lights that shine for Jesus.
- Ask God to give them a long life together, praying they will grow ever stronger and deeper in their love for Him and for one another.

May our prayers make a difference that will last a lifetime!

CHERYL BARKER is a freelance writer and the author of *Mother of the Bride: Refreshment and Wisdom for the Mother of the Bride*. Her website is cherylbarker.net.

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Prayer Bridges into Entertainment Industry | By Karen Covell

I have worked in Hollywood as a producer for 35 years, and for the past 18 years I've led the Hollywood Prayer Network (HPN), a ministry that seeks to build bridges between the Church and Hollywood through prayer.

In all those years I've rarely had a problem with nonbelievers in Hollywood who learn about my faith. The greatest pushback has come from the Church across America. There is a tremendous, long-lasting spiritual battle between the Church and Hollywood.

Christians outside our industry who learn that I'm a Christian working in Hollywood often respond with disdain, pity, and even anger. I believe Satan doesn't want Christians to understand the power of media, arts, and entertainment—and he doesn't want Christians working in those industries!

Why? Because there is power in the word and power in visuals and music. God's beauty, truth, and love are found in creative projects. If Christians held more decision-making positions in Hollywood, the content of TV shows, films, songs, video games, and the Internet would reflect more of Jesus and of God's loving truth and salvation. The enemy wants to stop that at all costs.

Released from Fear

Decades ago, Christians grew afraid of Hollywood. They became angry and judgmental, believing Hollywood is more evil than any other marketplace. Many thought it better for Christians to flee from evil, staying away from the entertainment industry.

As a result, believers left Hollywood and took the light of Christ with them. Hollywood became darker, and the content

became more questionable, violent, sexual, and compromising. We expected the nonbelievers who remained to act, think, and create like Christians.

Jesus was not only the greatest storyteller of all time, but He went into places and formed relationships that religious leaders thought were inappropriate, compromising, and foolish. In contrast, Christians today distance themselves from the most powerful and influential industry of storytellers in the world.

Since I founded HPN in 2001, people have placed me on Christian "hate" lists. They have hung up on me during live radio interviews. They have uninvited me to Christian events. The good news is that the situation is getting better. More Christians are willing to give us a chance—praying instead of judging. Some are even sending their young people here instead of refusing to allow them to pursue a career in the arts.

Many Christians are wary or afraid of Hollywood. They talk against industry people and think it's holier to throw out their TV than to watch it. But this is not biblical. Christians need to free themselves of their fear and judgment of people, created in God's image, who are shaping culture through telling stories.

The giants are not too big in Hollywood. It's important to understand that the reason we don't agree with Hollywood decisionmakers' choices is that their choices are based on their own personal worldview—not ours. They aren't bad people. They are actually very intelligent, passionate, and heart-felt people. They just don't yet know Jesus!

Empowered to Pray


We need to empower Christians to

pray for entertainment industry leaders. We also need to train young, talented Christians to be strong in their faith, then send them to Hollywood to join the growing ranks of believers working, living, and ministering in the world's most influential mission field.

Encourage young Christians who have a passion to work in film, television, music, news, Internet, social media, or video games to come here. The Hollywood Prayer Network will embrace them, plug them into our wonderful community, pray for them, and offer them opportunities to make an eternal difference!

I founded HPN to challenge the Church to pray because I believe that when we pray for people, we can't hate them. And we can't get angry about the content produced in Hollywood if we don't pray for the people creating it. Their content won't change until their hearts change. Once they are spiritually free, their work will reflect that freedom.

The Hollywood Prayer Network has local chapters in 143 cities. The website (hollywoodprayernetwork.org) offers many prayer resources, including one-to-one prayer partnerships, where intercessors are matched with Hollywood industry professionals to pray for them. You can also sign up for a "Call Sheet" prayer newsletter that lists prayer needs for people, projects, and issues in Hollywood.

God is moving in Hollywood and we want the Church to join Him. 



KAREN COVELL is a producer and founding director of the Hollywood Prayer Network and a member of America's National Prayer Committee.

Tips to Create a Scripture-Based Prayer Guide | By Sandra Higley

Praying God's Word is powerful. Like-minded believers approaching God's throne of grace in unified, Spirit-led prayer make twice the impact. But how can we get everyone praying together in one accord? One way is to create a Scripture-based prayer guide that gives people a reference point to direct or redirect their thoughts as everyone seeks God's face together.

As you prepare your guide, you need some essential tools. In addition to your Bible, you'll want a concordance, topical index, or online Bible program with a search engine. Resources include: *bible-gateway.com*, *biblehub.com* and *biblestudy-tools.com*. You can also type the subject directly into your search engine to find examples in Scripture.

Guide Preparation

Here are some tips to consider as you let the Holy Spirit lead you in preparing such a guide:

1. Get rid of your agenda and replace it with God's. We may believe we've been led by the Spirit to pray in a particular way, but those prayers must align with God's heart. George Müller said, "The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them."¹

2. Broaden your perspective and find common ground. Rather than create a prayer guide asking God to have the building committee vote to expand the fellowship hall, for instance, acknowledge that God's plan may lead in an entirely different direction. Find Scriptures that acknowledge His will, ask for

wisdom, and bless the people entrusted with the decision to hear His voice—no matter what.

3. Find Scripture that directs you to pray through tough things. Giving thanks can be hard when your group is facing dire circumstances. But thankfulness provides a firm foundation for the requests yet to come. Let the scriptural instruction flow into the next Scripture and the next to create your prayer.

Example: "Father, You have told us that it is Your will that we give thanks in every circumstance (1 Thess. 5:18). That's really hard to do. But we choose to thank You because You are good and Your love toward us endures forever" (1 Chron. 16:34).

4. Find a similar scenario in the Bible. Let the dynamics of that situation direct you to verses that will lead you through your situation. What was the person experiencing or feeling during that time? Can you sense the greatest needs in that circumstance?

Example: Perhaps you are praying for someone who is suffering. You might pick Scriptures regarding Job's or Paul's experiences that will lead you through prayers for perseverance, assurance of God's love, faithful friends, Kingdom warfare, or God's glory.

5. Keep coming back to God's character. Use Scripture that acknowledges God's attributes.

Example: "Father, we acknowledge that You are Alpha and Omega—You know the beginning and You know the end (Rev. 22:13). This truth and the fact that You are love (1 John 4:8) assures us that Your plans for this situation are good (Ps. 145:9).

6. Sift through the prayer request to affirm what you know to be true

in Scripture. Rather than praying that X-Y-Z would stop, repeat back to God what you know to be true.

Example: "Father, we know that You are actively orchestrating all the details of our lives for our good (Rom. 8:28). The enemy may be trying to take us down with what's happening right now, but we know that You are achieving far more than we can imagine (Eph. 3:20–21). We humbly ask that You remove this difficulty from us, but if that is not Your will, we rejoice in Your never-ending grace (2 Cor. 12:8–9).

7. Find "so that" Scriptures to turn into prayers. The apostle Paul frequently prayed for one thing *so that* another would occur. An example of one of Paul's "so that" prayers is Philippians 1:9–11. To focus your prayers, use Scripture that shares a process and a result.

Example: "Father, we know that Your Word will always accomplish what You purpose (Isa. 55:11). Help us to stay in Your Word *so that* transformation will occur" (Rom. 12:2).

Writing a Scripture-based prayer guide will become easier the more you do it. Keep a notebook handy as you spend time in God's Word and jot down Scriptures that can easily be turned into a prayer for future use. Above all, ask God to direct your thoughts and bring them into alignment with His will. 🙏

¹George Mueller, *Answers to Prayer* (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 14.



SANDRA HIGLEY was one of the founders of *Pray!* magazine. While at NavPress she wrote many popular Scripture-based prayer guides, including *Targeted Prayers for Your Church*, available from prayershop.org.

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