



PRAYING
THE PROMISES

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By Stephen Altrogge

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How To Use This Book

STOP! Don't skip over this introduction. I know, I know, everybody skips introductions. I skip introductions. Usually a book introduction is nothing more than a "here's what I'm going to tell you". But this introduction is really, really important. Before you read this book, I want you to know how to read this book. Trust me, this will all make sense in a moment. I think.

This is a book of prayers. There are already a bajillion books written about prayer, so why would I bother writing another one? What gives me the audacity to think that I have anything to add to this conversation? Because, in spite of all the fantastic books I've read on prayer, my prayer life still is lacking. In the words of George Costanza, "It's not you, it's me." There are many times when my prayers feel lifeless and limp, and I can almost see them bouncing off the ceiling and falling back to the ground. I don't think I'm alone in this struggle. Many, many Christians struggle with prayer. Scripture makes it crystal clear that prayer is an integral part of the Christian life, yet so many of us feel like prayer is a chore. We slog through it, check it off, glad to be done with it. In an effort to inject energy into our prayer life we try checklists, prayer walks, prayer apps, prayer accountability partners, prayer beads, prayer cloths, and prayer wristbands. I don't have anything against those things. If those have helped you, wonderful! They've helped me at times, but never consistently.

I have, however, discovered one thing that truly makes my prayers come alive, that infuses them with life, and that inspires them with a holy energy. That one thing is the word of God. For many years I separated my devotional times into two distinct segments: Bible reading and prayer. I would read my Bible for thirty minutes, then pray for fifteen, or something like that.

Then I read the following, which was written by George Mueller:

While I was staying at Nailsworth, it pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, irrespective of human instrumentality, as far as I know, the benefit of which I have not lost, though now...more than forty years have since passed away.

The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit.

Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as an habitual thing, to give myself to prayer, after having dressed in the morning. Now I saw, that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, instructed; and that thus, whilst meditating, my heart might be brought into experimental, communion with the Lord.

I began therefore, to meditate on the New Testament, from the beginning, early in the morning. The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessing upon His precious Word, was to begin to meditate on the Word of God; searching, as it were, into every verse, to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word; not for the sake or preaching on what I had meditated upon; but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul. The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that though I did not, as it were, give myself to prayer, but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer.

When thus I have been for awhile making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it; but still continually keeping before me, that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation. The result of this is, that there is always a good deal of confession, thanksgiving, supplication, or intercession mingled with my meditation, and that my inner man almost invariably is even sensibly nourished and strengthened and that by breakfast time, with rare exceptions, I am in a peaceful if not happy state of heart. Thus also the Lord is pleased to communicate unto me that which, very soon after, I have found to become food for other believers, though it was not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word that I gave myself to meditation, but for the profit of my own inner man.

The difference between my former practice and my present one is this. Formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible, and generally spent all my time till breakfast in prayer, or almost all the time. At all events I almost invariably began with prayer... But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even an hour on my knees, before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc.; and often after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then began really to pray.

I scarcely ever suffer now in this way. For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into experimental fellowship with God, I speak to my Father, and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy of it!) about the things that He has

brought before me in His precious Word. It often now astonished me that I did not sooner see this. In no book did I ever read about it. No public ministry ever brought the matter before me. No private intercourse with a brother stirred me up to this matter. And yet now, since God has taught me this point, it is as plain to me as anything, that the first thing the child of God has to do morning by morning is to obtain food for his inner man.

When I read Mueller's strategy on mingling God's word and prayer, I had what you might call a "John Madden moment": BOOM. It made perfect sense to me. God's word and prayer are not two mutually exclusive spiritual disciplines. They should not be separated from each other. Rather, they go hand in hand, inspiring each other and feeding each other. When we read God's word we are encouraged, convicted, inspired, and challenged. When God speaks to us through his word, the appropriate response is to speak back, through prayer. Then back to the Word. Then back to prayer. It's a wonderful, divine cycle.

I'm not sure why I never realized this wonderful truth before. In John 15:7 Jesus said, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." This is one of those verses that we tend to over qualify. We say things like, "Well, Jesus doesn't really mean ask *anything*. You have to ask in accordance with God's will. And the answer might be, 'No,'" But Jesus doesn't say anything like that. He simply says that if his words abide in us and we abide in him, we receive whatever we ask for in prayer. I take this simply to mean that if we pray in accordance with the commands and promises of God, we will receive what we ask for. In other words, if our requests are informed, inspired, and fueled by the word of God, our prayers will be answered.

This truth has dramatically helped my prayer life. Now I no longer divide my devotional time into "Bible Reading" and "Prayer". I read God's word, then I pray based on what I'm reading. If I read about God's faithfulness, I thank him for his faithfulness and pray that he would continue to be faithful. If I read about the call to holiness, I pray that God would help me to be holy. And because I'm reading the commands and promises of God, I'm confident that he will answer my prayers! Don't get me wrong, I still often struggle in prayer. I'm not a prayer warrior by any means. More like a prayer apprentice. But the more I blend God's word and prayer, the stronger my prayers become.

The purpose of this book is to help you learn to pray God's word. Each prayer starts with a passage of scripture, then launches into a prayer based off of that scripture. My hope is that God's word will act like rocket fuel for your prayers. I hope that as you pray God's word, you find your prayers increasing in strength, consistency, and fervency.

This is not a “Six Steps To The Prayer Life of Your Dreams” book. This book is an invitation to step onto the diving board of God’s word, then to dive into prayer.

The Worthy Walk

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called... (Ephesians 4:1)

Father,

Thank you for all the crazy, astonishing, breathtaking blessings you heaped upon me this past year. For the times you rescued me from physical danger. For all the times you protected me from Satan's devious, ruinous snares. For victory over those sins which have haunted me for years. For sweet communion with you. For health, family, kids, friends, a soft bed, chicken wings, and dark beer. No has been kinder or more generous than you. No has given me more than you. You've poured out mercy upon mercy, blessing upon blessing, kindness upon kindness.

There's a stupid saying that goes, "Count your blessings." It's stupid because there's no way I could count my blessings! I have ten thousand reasons to bless your name, ten thousand reasons to give thanks, ten thousand reasons to freshly offer up my life to you.

I want to commit every minute of every day of my life to you. Not out of some lame attempt to pay you back for all you've given me. That's not how you work, and there's no way I could pay you back. I give my all to you because I'm filled with gratefulness. I give me all to you because you've called me into this crazy good thing called the kingdom of God. Your goodness leads to my giving.

I don't want to hold anything back. Every nook and cranny of my life belongs to you. All my possessions and talents belong to you. My entire being belongs to you. Help me to passionately live every hour of every day of my life in a manner worthy of the wonderful calling I have received. Let my life honor Christ, reflect Christ, and bring glory to Christ. This coming year, let me be spent for Christ. Let all my energies, talents, and passions be harnessed for the cause of Christ.

Give me a deeper, more steady love for you. So often my love is like the stock market: up one day and down the next. Hot, cold, hot, cold. I don't want to be a stock market Christian. Be my sole, all-consuming passion. Obliterate the false idols that I've erected and shatter the false gods that have captured my affections.

If I'm honest, there are many times when I don't want to be around your people. I'd rather be selfish and stay home and watch television. I'd rather have "me time" than fellowship with other Christians. Please change that. Increase my love for my fellow believers. Give me the love of Christ for my Christian brothers and sisters.

Give me a greater burden for the lost. There are times when, sinfully, I don't really care about the lost. Evangelism and outreach and hospitality seem like too much work. Lost people have lots of baggage. Yes, I know, I have baggage too, but somehow my baggage seems smaller. I know, I'm ridiculous. Please give me your heart for the lost. Let my heart ache for those who are far from you. Set my heart aflame with a zeal to see the name of Jesus exalted throughout the earth.

Finally, please give me a burning passion for holiness - a passion that marks everything I say, think, and do. Let the world see my life and my deeds, and give glory to you. I want to be salt. I want to be light. Use me in whatever way you see fit. If you want me to serve on a cleanup team, let me do it joyfully. If you want me to preach in front of thousands, let me do it with the same joy. I want to shine forth the glory of God for all to see. May I be a blazing gospel beacon in this dark world. Let men and women see my good works, and give glory to you.

Our Sure Confidence

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

Father,

It's a good thing that you're the one who will bring me to completion in Christ, because if it were up to me, I would totally ruin the job. If becoming like Jesus was dependent on my abilities and spiritual strength, there is zero chance it would happen.

Thankfully, you've promised to continue your mighty, unstoppable, holy juggernaut work in me. The mighty, living, resurrected Christ lives in me. The Holy Spirit empowers me. You've called me to holiness, and then equipped me with all I need to be holy. You haven't left me to my own, frail, fragile devices, but have promised to continue shaping and molding me into the image of Christ Jesus. You haven't told me to buckle down, suck it up, and pull myself up by my bootstraps. I can't complete this magnificent work on my own. No way, no how. But, I am confident that *you* will bring it to completion. You chose me, called me, saved me, and will finish the work you began in me. Unlike me, you always finish what you start.

It was your mighty work that rescued me from the clutches of sin and Satan. I was hopeless and helpless, ruined and wrecked, dead in my sin and transgressions, unable to lift myself out of my spiritual grave. But you lifted me out. You kindled spiritual fire in my cold heart. I was a slave to sin, so trapped that I couldn't even desire what was good. You shattered the chains of sin that enslaved me, you breathed life into me, and you began producing good fruit in me. After doing all that, you most certainly won't abandon me now! I thank you that your mighty power will continue working in me, shaping me, chiseling me, and molding me into the image of Christ.

Holy Spirit, have full access to every area of my life. Shine your blazing, healing, holy light into every corner of my heart. Bring conviction, correction, discipline, straightening. Convict me of sins of commission and sins of omission. Spark new, white-hot desires for holiness and righteousness. Create fresh passion for your word, prayer, and fellowship with other believers. Do whatever you need to do to make me more like Jesus. Break me, heal me,

rearrange me, shape me, prune me. By the end of this year, I want to see measurable progress in areas of holiness. I want to look back on this year and celebrate your divine victories in my life.

I know that the more holy I am, the more happy I will be. The more I'm like Jesus, the more joyful I'll be. My happiness and holiness are inextricably linked. Thank you that you are committed to my holiness and happiness in Christ.

Of First Importance

**For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4)**

Father,

Help me to keep the gospel in the place of first importance. So often other things, even good things, crowd out the gospel. The gospel must be on the top shelf of my heart. It must be the first thought when I wake up and the last thought when I drift off to sleep. Let my life orbit around, and be fueled by, and be tethered to the gospel. Let me drill deeper into the gospel, mining its endless riches. Help me to apply the gospel to every area of my life. The gospel is sacred - teach me to treasure it more. The gospel is precious - teach to me to revel in it more. The gospel is life-giving - teach me to rest in it more.

When Satan flings condemnation at me, help me to remember that Christ died to atone for all my sins. Condemnation can't stick to one who has been cleansed by the blood of Christ. Charges can't be leveled against one who hides himself in Christ. Help me to rest in the finished work of Christ, and to trust in the cleansing power of his holy blood.

When my sin plagues me, help me to remember that Christ was buried, and my old self, which was enslaved to sin, was buried with him. I'm no longer the person I once was. The old me is dead and gone. I'm no longer a slave to sin. I've been set free by the gospel. Sin has no claim on me, no authority over me. It can't tell me what to do, can't push me around.

When I feel weary and discouraged, help me to remember that Christ has been raised from the dead and now intercedes for me. The risen Christ blazes the path ahead of me. I don't walk through the valleys of this life by myself, but have a Great High Priest who was tempted in every way and yet did not sin.

In the gospel I find my defense against the fiery accusations of Satan, the strength to continue waging war against my sin, and a High Priest who intercedes for me. The gospel is of first importance, of highest priority, of greatest significance. There are many good things,

but the gospel is the main thing. There are many good works for me to perform, but first I must rest in the finished work of Christ. The more I understand the gospel, the more I will love you. The more I apply the gospel, the more I will pursue holiness. Tighten my grip on the gospel! It is my only hope in life and death. It is my only hope for spiritual growth. I throw aside any hope in my own merits and cling tightly to the gospel.

Workmanship In Christ

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

Father,

You've created me not once, but twice. You created me at my conception, then wonderfully recreated me when I was born again. I'm twice yours. Thank you for causing me to be born again, and for making me a glorious new creation in Jesus. Thank you for slaying my old self, which was a miserable slave to sin and wickedness. Thank you for killing my old self, which didn't want to do good works and didn't have the power to do good works. Thank you for making me new, for installing new affections and desires and passions into my heart. Thank you for meticulously preparing good works for me to walk in. I don't have to figure out the good works you have in store for me. Thank you for all the good works you've given me in the past, and all the good works you have in store for me.

Lord, make me zealous to bless others. So often I'm a navel gazer, preoccupied with myself and my desires. I operate as if I am the most important person in the world, and everyone should bend their lives to meet my needs. Give me a servant's heart. A heart that is willing to serve wherever I'm needed, whenever I'm needed, no matter how lowly the task. A heart that gives more than it takes.

Use me to build up, strengthen, and encourage your people. Use me to refresh others. Help me to serve cheerfully, humbly, gladly, and with zeal. Use me to bring your blessings to others. Fill me with holy, infectious joy. Use me to make others happy in you. Help me have a generous heart that is eager to give, and eager to bless. Use me to meet the needs of others. Especially give me divine opportunities to share the gospel. Use me as an instrument in the salvation of others.

Please use me to advance your kingdom. Just as a soldier longs to serve his country, I long to serve you. I long to make an impact on this world for the kingdom of God. I long to burn bright for you. I long to leave a God-centered legacy. You are my king, and I am at your

disposal. Use me to dispel the darkness of sin and Satan. Use me to win souls for Christ. Inspire me with divine creativity, that I might invent new ways of doing good for you.

Father, what a generous, lavish, and kind God you are. You give me good works to walk in, and then you promise to reward me for those works! How kind you are. How good you are. Let the promise of divine rewards motivate me to pursue righteousness.

God's Good Plans

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Father,

My life usually feels pretty chaotic. I'm trying to take care of kids and pay the bills and maintain a house that always has something breaking. I have plans for my life, but I have no way of making sure those plans come to pass. Thank you that you have plans for me, and you will execute all those plans to perfection.

I praise you that you're sovereign over all things. That all of life, all of history, and all of the universe are controlled by you. Every kingdom, every ruler, every snowflake, every sparrow, and every minute detail of my life is in your hands. You keep the planets in orbit, the seasons in order, and the oceans from overflowing. You number the hairs on my head, and know the words I will speak before I speak them. Thank you that you have every day of my life intricately planned, and nothing can stop you from fulfilling your plan. No circumstances, people, sickness, demons, or angels can stop your glorious plan for my life.

Thank you that you've promised to never cease doing good to me. Your goodness is a gushing fountain that is constantly pumping new blessings into my life. Every day I'll drink from that fountain. I will never stop receiving your goodness, kindness, and blessings. Your mercies are new every morning, and your steadfast love never ceases. Today, your plans for me are plans for good, and not for evil. No matter what I encounter today, I know that it is from you, and is ultimately for my good. This is the day that you have made, and no matter what the day brings, I will rejoice in it. I praise you that you are infinitely wise, loving and good.

Thank you that I have a future and hope for this life, and a glorious future and hope in heaven. One day I will see you face-to-face, worship at your feet, and see the wounds that purchased me. I will see the King who became a baby, and I will fall down in adoration. I will see the scars that secured my redemption, and I will be filled with praise. I will see how you

used all the painful moments in my life for my good and your glory. I will see that all the pain and pleasure I endured on the earth was being used for your glorious purposes.

Lord, when life doesn't make sense, help me to trust that you have good and precious plans for me. Help me to believe that you truly do have a hope and a future for me. Help me to see through the fog, and to cling to your good promises. Lord, fulfill your purpose in my life. I believe that you will.

Working Out My Salvation

Therefore, my beloved...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)

Father,

In Christ, I am a new creation. My fundamental identity has changed. I'm no longer the person I once was. The old, sin-loving, sin-enslaved, spiritually dead, Satan-ruled me is gone, buried with Christ. I am a new person, with a new heart that desires to follow you. You have written your law upon my heart. I am spiritually alive, and the Spirit of Christ himself dwells within me.

Help me to live a life that matches my new, incredible identity. Your word tells me I am not a slave to sin, so empower me to put sin to death. Your word tells me that the Holy Spirit will empower me to put on love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and self control. Enable me to grow in each of those areas today. Help me to live a life of holiness, righteousness, justice, and faithfulness. Help me to love justice and mercy, to care for the lowly and oppressed. Help me to hate my sin, despise my sin, abhor my sin. Help me go to war against the evil within my heart. Guard me from the lethal temptation of taking sin lightly. I am a citizen of heaven. I am an exile and alien in this world. Yet so often I feel very comfortable in this world, as if I belong here. Help me to live as a citizen of heaven, not this world.

Thank you that your mighty power is at work in me. You are changing my will, then giving me the power to carry out that will. You are giving me new, God-given, Spirit-inspired desires, and you are giving me the supernatural power to carry out those desires. Continue to work in me! Shape me. Mold me. Break me. Heal me. Stoke my passion for holiness! Fuel my zeal for evangelism. Burden my heart for those who are lost. Fill my heart with heavenly generosity. Ultimately, I do not trust in my ability to make myself holy, but I do believe that you have the power!

Do Not Forget His Benefits

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:1-5)

Father,

I bless your holy name with every fiber of my being! With all my heart, soul, mind, and strength I bless you! I will not forget all your abundant benefits and blessings. No one has been as good to me as you. No one has showered me with more blessings than you. No one has loved me more than you. You have forgiven every one of my traitorous iniquities. Every judgmental thought, every sinful glance, every harsh word, has been covered by the blood of Christ. There is no sin, no matter how heinous or wicked, that has not been washed away in the cleansing flow of Christ's blood.

Thank you for healing me of both spiritual sickness and physical sickness. When I was spiritually dead, you caused me to come alive. You breathed life into my spiritual corpse, animating it, moving it, bringing it from death to life. You've also healed me of many physical sicknesses. I thank you for the many physical healing that I've received, both large and small, both through doctors and supernaturally! These physical healing are small tastes of the age to come, when sickness will be swallowed up in the endless life of Christ.

Thank you for all the times you've redeemed my life from the pit. When I've been weary, you've strengthened me. When I've been discouraged, you've infused me with fresh faith. When I've been tempted, you've delivered me. You constantly redeem my life from the pit. You constantly bear my burdens. You are the lifter of my head, and the one who refreshes my soul. Thank you for satisfying me with good things. You don't give me everything I want, but you give me everything that is truly good for me. You overflow with generosity, and you never hold back good things from me. Lord, I'm so forgetful! Let me not forget your countless benefits. I bless your name!

Taste and See God's Goodness

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. (Psalm 34:8-10)

Father,

I have tasted and seen that you are good. I have tasted the finest delicacies this world can offer, and they cannot compare to you. Your presence satisfies me like nothing else. You give more joy, and deeper joy, than anything else in this world. One day in your courts is better than a thousand days elsewhere. One moment with you is better than a thousand lifetimes anywhere else. Please give me more tastes of your presence, more glimpses of your glory. Expand my heart to love you more, and then take me deeper into the vast ocean of your love. Your love is better than life itself.

I do not take refuge in money, people, work, or friends. Those things are fleeting vapors that quickly dissipate. They don't provide any true security. I take my refuge in you, the King of Kings, owner of all things, Sovereign One, and protector of the helpless. I know that you'll care for me, provide for me, and satisfy me. I know that you'll protect me, just as a father protects his children. Teach me what it means to fully entrust myself to you. Deliver me from my sinful self-sufficiency. Teach me what it means to truly, humbly fear you. Fill my heart with appropriate reverence, awe, and fear of you.

I want to seek you above all else, knowing that if I seek you, I won't lack any good thing. You are not a stingy God who is hesitant to bless his creatures. You are an abundantly generous God. Like a constantly flowing spring, you bubble over with goodness and generosity. If you clothe the lilies in splendor and feed the ravens, you will certainly provide me with everything I need. If something is good for me, you will give it to me. If it is not good, you will withhold it. I know that I can trust you to give me exactly what I need for every situation. Ultimately, I don't know what I most need, but you do. I don't trust in my own ability to meet my needs, I trust you to meet all of my needs.

Not Anxious About A Single Thing

The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:5-7)

Father,

Thank you for inviting me, even commanding me, to lay my requests at your feet. Thank you for commanding me not to be anxious! For commanding me to unburden myself. For commanding me to be at rest in your presence. What wonderful, peace-giving commands! Thank you that your ear is tuned to hear my cries, just as a father is tuned to the cries of his child.

Too often I am sinfully self-sufficient, attempting to bear burdens that are much too heavy for me. I try to navigate this life independently, rather than regularly give my burdens to you and constantly confess my dependence upon you. Self-sufficiency is pride, and when I'm self-sufficient the end result is always anxiety.

Please forgive me for the many times I have sinned in anxiety. Forgive me for trying to carry my burdens instead of letting you do the heavy lifting. Forgive me for allowing worry to fester and grow in my life. Forgive me for dishonoring you by not trusting you. Forgive me for relying on my own understanding instead of making my requests known to you. I repent of and renounce my self-sufficiency. I repent of my idiotic pride. I repent of trying to live independently of you.

God, I need you. Desperately. Always. I simply cannot make it without you. I am the creature and you are the Creator. I feebly bring my requests to you. I trust you to care for me, even when the future seems bleak. I trust you to guide me, even when the way seems dark. I trust you to lead me, even when I cannot see the road ahead. Fill me with your peace that passes understanding. Help me to rest in your omnipotent, omniscient care. Guard my heart from anxiety with your supernatural peace.

My Great High Priest

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

Lord Jesus,

I am a weak, fragile, frail, easily discouraged, easily worn out person. My strength quickly vanishes, and my faith quickly wanes. But you sympathize with my weaknesses! You do not despise me for weaknesses, you don't mock me for my frailty. You do not tell me to get my act together. Rather, you are tender-hearted toward me, full of mercy, grace, and sympathy. You don't require great feats of strength from me. Rather, you meet where I am and lead me from there.

You were tempted in every way that I am tempted. You felt the full, unrelenting force of temptation. Satan and all his demon horde constantly assaulted you. You were a Man of Sorrows, well acquainted with grief and anguish. You were rejected by friends and family, mocked, beaten, and eventually hung upon the cross. You were brought as low as a person can be brought. Yet in the midst of this hurricane of temptation you never sinned. Because you were tempted in every way, you are perfectly suited to help me in the midst of my temptations. You know exactly what I need in my time of need. You know what graces I need, and exactly when I need them. You are the perfect physician for my soul.

Jesus, I need grace. I need strength. I need mercy. I need perseverance. I need faith. I acknowledge that I am weak and dependent. I don't have everything I need to follow you. I am fully dependent on you. So I come to you now, asking for these things, confident that you will give them to me. When I ask for bread, you will not give me a stone or a snake. You love to give blessings to those who ask. I trust you to give me exactly what I need for my current circumstances. I trust you to pour out grace and mercy into my life. You have special grace available for whatever situation I find myself in.

True Peace With God

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

Father,

Thank you for justifying me by faith, and only faith. You don't require me to clean up my life before coming to Christ. You don't require me to attain a certain level of righteousness before coming to Christ. All you require is that I throw aside any foolish hope in my own merits, and fully embrace the free justification available to me through Jesus Christ. I trust only in Christ, hope only in Christ, and stand only on Christ, for he only is my justification. I will trust in nothing else, hope in nothing else, stand on nothing else. All other ground is sinking sand. All other foundations will crumble under the weight of your perfect requirements. Christ alone is my only hope. I will not dishonor the work of Christ by attempting to smuggle my own good works into his finished work.

Thank you that I, once a rebel, once a traitor, once an enemy, now have objective peace with you. We are no longer at war, we are at peace. There is beautiful, divine peace between you and me. You are now for me, with me, sustaining me, blessing me, upholding me, treating me as your precious child. Even when I don't feel peace, I still have true peace with you. Even when the circumstances of my life seem out of control, I still have objective peace with you. I am still your child. You are still 100% for me. This peace never changes because it has been fully paid for by your son.

Today, help me live in the good of my free justification. Free me from my sinful tendency to rely on my own merits. Forgive me for trying to add my own good works to the perfect, completed work of Jesus Christ. Forgive me for dishonoring the finished work of Christ by relying on my own works righteousness. Strip away any hope I would have in my good deeds. Help me to see that my own good deeds are nothing more than a hollow foundation that will quickly dissolve. Free me from my obsession with my faulty self-righteousness. Help me to stand only on Christ, the solid rock. Help me live in the peace that is mine through Jesus Christ. Let me experience the peace that is already mine through Jesus Christ.

Blessed Is the One

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin. (Romans 4:7-8)

Father,

When I consider the great mountain of my sins sitting on one side of the scales of justice, and your perfect righteousness sitting on the other side, I realize that I could never rescue myself. I could never tip the scales in my favor. I could never do enough to erase my sins and attain perfect righteousness.

But the blood of Christ has obliterated the great mountain of my sins! Thank you for forgiving all of my lawless, wicked, heinous sins. Thank you that the blood of Jesus has atoned for all of my atrocities, and covered all of my shameful deeds. Thank you that you have cast all of my wicked deeds into the depths of the sea, and you choose not to remember them. The sinful deeds that you have forgiven can never be prosecuted. The wickedness that you have forgotten can never be remembered. The atrocities that have been covered by Christ's blood can never be exposed. My sins are gone forever, lost in the great river of blood shed by Christ!

I am so very blessed. You have every right to count my sins against me. You have every right to level accusation after accusation against me. You have every right to condemn me in your holy courtroom. You have every right to cast me into the depths of hell and unleash your furious wrath on me. Yet because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, you choose not to count my sins against me. Incredibly, you counted my sins against Jesus. All my lust, anger, impatience, slander, arrogance, debauchery, counted against Jesus. He received the wrath that rightfully belonged to me. He became the accused, the condemned, the rejected, and the punished. Teach me to forgive as you have forgiven me. Teach me to cover over the sins of others, just as you have covered over my sins. Teach me to extend the blessing of forgiveness to others. Teach me to be merciful as you have been merciful. I have received much, let me give much. I have been forgiven much, let me love much. I bless you, Lord, for you have blessed me.

The Holy Calling

[God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began... (2 Timothy 1:9)

Father,

Thank you for calling me! The same voice that spoke the light into existence spoke light into my heart. The same voice that created the universe out of nothing created life in my heart. Your mighty voice called, and my dead heart awoke. You called me out of death and darkness, out of the kingdom of Satan, out of my sinful muck and filth. You spoke and my spiritually dead heart suddenly kick-started into life. You spoke and my ears were opened to hear your glorious voice. You spoke and my blind eyes were suddenly filled with your glory. I bless your name for calling me.

You did not call me because of my impressive array of good works. You did not call me because of my astounding number of gifts or abilities. You did not call me because I was wealthy or influential. You did not call me because I had anything special to offer. Lord, I am delightfully baffled that you called me. I am wonderfully perplexed that you would choose to save a sinner like me. You called me because you wanted me. You called me because of your sovereign, good purpose, and because of your grace. Before time began, you had a purpose for my life, and you will fulfill that purpose.

Thank you for your precious, overwhelming, relentless grace. Grace that pursued me. Grace that hunted me down. Grace that would not let me go. When I laid down to sleep, your grace haunted my dreams. When I awoke I found myself bumping into your grace. It was irresistible, unstoppable, powerful grace. Had your grace not been irresistible, I never would have surrendered. But the more I struggled, the tighter your grace gripped me. I could not escape your wonderful grace. Grace that I did not deserve, yet you lavishly poured out on me. I worship you that you are such a gracious, wonderful, sovereign God. I praise you for calling me. Today let me be overflowing with thanks because of your wonderful grace.

All Things For Good

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Father,

Thank you that you are working and weaving every event in my life for good. Every breath and every backache, every laughter and every tear, every blessing and every trial, all being orchestrated by your almighty hand for my good. Every joy and every sadness, every high and every low, whether I'm in the valley or in green pastures, it's all being worked together for my good and your glory. You are the master artist, the master weaver, the master potter, painting the canvas of my life, weaving together the strands of my life, shaping my life. I can't see the finished product yet, but I know that it will be glorious.

You are the sovereign Lord of Lords. You do as you please, and there is none who can stop you. Just as you sovereignly called me to yourself, so you also will sovereignly use every event in my life for your good purpose. No circumstance, big or small, escapes your purpose. Every blessing and tragedy is in your hands, and are being used to make me more like Jesus and to bring glory to yourself. Thank you that your purpose for my life is good. Everything in my life contributes toward your good purpose for me. I know that in eternity I will be able to look back on each event in my life and see how you used all things for good.

Help me to trust you, even when life doesn't make sense. Help me to trust you in the midst of pain, sorrow, and overwhelming sadness. When it seems like my life is falling apart, help me to remember that you are still sovereign, still in control, still working everything together for my good. So often I'm tempted to trust in my circumstances instead of your faithfulness. I'm tempted to trust in my finite understanding rather than your infinite understanding. Forgive me for all the times I've believed that I could run my life better than you. I entrust myself to your good, sovereign, powerful hands. I cannot sufficiently control or manage my life, but you can. I trust you to do it.

Proclaiming His Excellencies

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

Father,

Thank you for choosing me out of millions lost to be a part of your holy people. Thank you for calling me out of wickedness and joining me to your people. I was running headlong toward hell when you intervened! I was a cheerful prisoner of Satan until you broke through. I reveled in my wickedness and boasted in my sinfulness. You did not choose me because of what I could offer you, but because of your mercy. You did not choose me because of what my gifts or abilities, but because of your sovereign pleasure. I am your possession. I am no longer my own, I belong to you. I am in the delightful position of being a slave of the living God.

I am a part of the royal priesthood. What an astonishing, breathtaking privilege! Just as the priests of old served you in the temple, I have the privilege of serving you, and offering sacrifices of thanksgiving, praise, and service. Just as the priests of old had unique access to your presence, so I have unique, free, unfettered access to your presence, through Jesus Christ. What a wonderful calling. The saints of old would have been breathless at the astonishing privileges I've received as a child of God. I am a priest in the service of the living God! Guard me from becoming overly familiar with this incredible privilege. Help me to remember what a sacred thing it is to be a priest in the service of the living God.

You have given my life a sacred, holy purpose. You have put me on a mission. I exist to proclaim your excellencies, and wonders, and glories. I exist to tell the world of the glorious God who called me out of darkness into his marvelous light. I exist to show the world how great you truly are. I am an ambassador for Jesus Christ. Give me opportunities to speak of your glories, and give me boldness to seize those opportunities when they arise. I am yours, O Lord. I belong to you. Do with me as you see fit. Send me where I will be most effective for you.

Stir One Another Up To Good Works

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Father,

You have not called me to live out my Christian life in solitude, but have vitally connected me to my fellow believers. I cannot live the Christian life without them, and they cannot live the Christian life without me. You have bound us together. I am not strong enough to make it through the fiery trials, heavy tribulations, and deceptive temptations of life on my own. I need other Christians in my life. I need to be stirred up and encouraged by other Christians. I need other Christians to rejoice and weep with me. I need other Christians to remind me that this life is not my final resting place.

Because of my laziness and self-sufficiency, I am often tempted to neglect meeting with other believers. I don't place an appropriately high priority on fellowship with other believers. I would rather rest than pray, rather play than worship. Please show me my desperate need for others. Show me that my connection to my fellow Christians is a sacred thing. Don't let me take that glorious fellowship for granted. Help me to thoughtfully consider how I can stir up my brothers and sisters in Christ to greater love for you and greater works in your name. Use me to stoke the spiritual passions of my fellow believers. I want to be a bright, burning fireball for you, and I want to set others on fire as well. Let all my God-given gifts and abilities be harnessed together for the building up of those around me.

Help me to always remember that the Day is approaching when Jesus will return in a blaze of glory. Then the true fruit of my life will be revealed. Let the return of Christ keep me from sloth and laziness. Let the return of Christ fuel greater passion for you. Let the return of Christ remind me of my need for my fellow believers. Help me to encourage other believers in light of the return of Christ.

My Stronghold In Times of Trouble

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you. (Psalm 9:9-10)

Father,

I praise you that you are a stronghold. You are an impregnable, unshakable, unbreakable fortress. Those who take refuge in you cannot be overrun. Those who find shelter in you are not thrown about by the raging seas of life. You are a refuge, stronghold, and anchor. I run to you, hope in you, trust in you, depend on you, find all my refuge in you. I am weak and easily shaken. I am a bruised reed, battered and buffeted by the trials, temptations, and tribulations of this life. I am a smoldering wick with a fearful, easily discouraged heart. I can't make it through this life on my own. I need a sustainer and stronghold.

Lord, I know you. I know your faithful character both from scripture and experience. You are a faithful God. You have proven yourself faithful to me again and again. You are a strong God. You have proven yourself to be strong again and again. You are a trustworthy God, a conquering God, a redeeming God. I call to mind all the times you have delivered me from evil, lifted me from the pit of discouragement, provided for my needs, and healed me from sickness. You have never left me, nor deserted me. You have always kept me and guarded me. Because I know you, I trust you. Because I know you, I cling to you, knowing that you will not let me go.

You have never once forsaken those who seek you. Generations of saints have sought you, and you have never forsaken one of them. You were faithful to Abraham and Sarah when they were well past the age of bearing children. You were faithful to David as he stood in the shadow of Goliath. And you were faithful to send a Messiah to save your people from their sins. You have always been faithful, always been a deliverer, always a rescuer. The story of the Bible is the story of your faithfulness. Even when I'm faithless you are faithful. You are the faithful God, and I trust you.

Upheld By God

...fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

Father,

There are so many times when I am tempted to fear. There are so many times when life is bigger than me - when I can't control what is happening to me or around me. In those times I am tempted to be dismayed. To shrink back in fear and timidity. To sink into a fearful, useless self-pity.

Help me to put strong faith in you when it seems like my world is falling apart. I thank you that you are with me. Always. There is never one second when you, the Almighty God, the World Maker, the Sovereign Ruler of All, are not with me. Regardless of what I feel like, you really are with me. Regardless of how the circumstances appear, you really are with me. Your constant presence stills my raging fears. Your faithful presence calms my dismayed heart.

When I cannot understand what is happening around me, you are my God. When the future looks hopeless, you are my God. When my strength is drained, you are my God. When all earthly joys are stripped away, you are my God. Though my body give way and I look death in the face, you are my God. You are *my* God.

I look to you for strength, *believing* that you will strengthen me. You must uphold me. You must lift me up. You must strengthen my failing spirit. Lord, I reject the Satanic lie that you have deserted me. I firmly believe that you are with me. I firmly believe that you will sustain me. I firmly believe your promises. Your promises are the pillars that uphold my faith. Your promises are the foundation that keep my faith from crumbling. Lord I believe, help me unbelief. When I am burdened beyond what I can bear, I lean on you to uphold me. I give the crushing weight of my fears, cares, burdens, and heartaches to you. I am too weak to carry them, but you are able. Though my burdens seem heavy to me, they are light to you. You easily carry them. So I cast all my carries, worries, and burdens to you.

The One Who Cheers My Soul

When I thought, “My foot slips,” your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up. When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul. (Psalm 94:18-19)

Father,

So often I feel like my foot is slipping. Like my life is slipping out of my control. Like my life is beginning to spin wildly off its axis. Yet I thank you that my feelings are not an accurate barometer of reality. My feelings do not define me, nor do they define what is true. You define what is true. Your word is true, not my feelings or perceptions. Teach me not to rely on my feelings as the source of truth.

When it feels as though my foot is slipping, your steadfast love catches me, holds me, sustains me, keeps me. Your steadfast love bears me up. Even though I am not steadfast, you are. My love for you comes in fits and starts. It is not constant. Sometimes I am filled with passionate zeal for you, other times my heart is cold and listless. But your love for me is a constant support, propping me up when I fall, gently pulling me along when I become weary, refreshing me when my strength is sapped.

My heart is often weighed down by cares. They oppress me, suffocate me, suck the joy out of me, hang over me like a dark cloud. I cannot carry these cares. They are too heavy for me, too burdensome for my weak soul. Ultimately these cares will crush me. But they are not too great for you. You are the great Creator, the King of Kings, the one who keeps the universe from bursting apart at the seams. My problems are not too great for you, oh Lord. No problem, no circumstance, no trial, no painful situation is too great for you!

I take my cheer from you, not from my circumstances. Circumstances bring a temporary, fleeting joy. Joy derived from circumstances quickly evaporates in the heat of trials. So I derive my joy from knowing you, not from the events currently taking place in my life. In the midst of my cares and worries, strengthen and console me. Lift my eyes above my circumstances to you, the God who rules over all my circumstances.

The God of All Comfort

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Father,

I praise you that you are the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Your heart is full of mercy, compassion, and grace. You are not a God who is quick to criticize, judge, and find fault. You are not a spiteful, capricious God. You do not inflict suffering simply for the sake of sufferings. All my afflictions are wrapped in your mercies. All my sufferings come on wings of grace. All of my trials are dispensed by you, the wise physician who knows exactly what my soul needs.

When I suffer, I experience your comfort in a way that I would never experience it otherwise. You never send affliction without also sending comfort. You never send suffering without first wrapping it in mercy. In the midst of my suffering, let me experience your nearness and comfort like never before. Comfort me through your word. Comfort me through the encouragement and prayers of others. Comfort me by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. As suffering digs a deep channel in my heart, fill that channel with your comfort and mercy.

Lord, one of my tendencies when I suffer is to pull back from you. To withdraw, to curl up into a ball, to push you away. Forgive me for doing that. I know that you long to comfort me in the midst of my sufferings. Through my suffering, equip me to comfort those who are also suffering. Guard me from the temptations of self-pity, selfishness, and bitterness. Protect me from my natural instinct to focus on myself when suffering. Instead, let me be a channel of grace to others. Use my afflictions to give grace to others who are also suffering. Empower me to comfort others with the same comfort I have received from you. Help me not to waste my suffering. Instead, let my suffering, and the comfort I receive from you in suffering, be a means of grace in the lives of others.

Toiling Together

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

Father,

You have not saved me to work out my faith on my own. You have not saved me to be a solo Christian, but to be vitally joined to other believers. My natural inclination is to be selfish, self-centered, self-deceived, and lazy. I believe the lie that I can grow in Christ apart from others. I believe the lie that I can do the hard work of following Christ by myself. Help me to see my desperate dependence on other believers! Help me to see that, just as one part of the body cannot grow on its own, I cannot grow in Christ without being connected to the other members of Christ's body. Help me to feel my desperate, dire need for others.

Please give me fruitful, productive relationships with other believers. Your word says that when two toil together, they produce more fruit than one toiling on his own. Please connect me to other believers who will stir me, inspire me, correct me, love me, and help me love you more. Connect me to fellow believers who will cause me to produce exponential, explosive fruit for you. I cannot create these relationships on my own. You must bring these people into my life.

Help me to live a transparent, humble life, so that when I fall, others are there to pick me up. Lord, I'm proud. I don't like to confess my sins to others. I don't like to humble myself. Please give me the supernatural ability to confess my sins to others. Connect me to strong brothers and sisters who will restore me gently when I fall into sin. When I'm weak and weary, bring me refreshment through your saints. Thank you for bringing me into your family. Thank you for not leaving me on my own, but giving me an army of fellow Christians to fight along side.

God, Faithful and Just

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)

Father,

I know that through the powerful death and resurrection of Christ, you have freed me from the oppressive, domineering power of sin. I am no longer a slave to the sins that once shackled me and ruled me. I am no longer required to obey the sinful passions that surge within me. However, though I am free from the power of sin, the hellish presence of sin still remains in me. I long for the day when I will be totally from the presence of sin!

My war against sin is daily, hourly, even minute by minute. Thank you for the countless times you have given me victory over the sin that clings so tightly to me. I rejoice and exult in those victories, knowing that your past faithfulness is a rock-solid guarantee of your future faithfulness. You will continue to cleanse me. You will continue to empower me to overcome sin. You will continue to shape and mold me into the image of Christ Jesus. You have promised that sin will have no dominion over me. I thank you that you will even give me victory over “persistent” sins - sins that have plagued me for years. I ask that this year you would set me free from sin in ways that I never have experienced before.

Thank you that when I repent of my sin, you are faithful and just to forgive me. Because Jesus fully satisfied your justice against all my sins, it is just for you to forgive my sins. To not forgive my sins would actually be unjust, because Jesus already atoned for those sins! Because Jesus satisfied your wrath, you can freely forgive all my sins without compromising your holiness. Because Jesus became sin for me, you can cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Lord, when I sin, I will not try to earn my way back into your presence. Rather, I will confess my sin to you, then joyfully embrace the free forgiveness, cleansing, and righteousness that you offer me. I will not dishonor you by doubting your justice and forgiveness. Rather, I'll celebrate the fact that you are righteous and just to forgive all my sins!

The Delightful Gifts of God

Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. (Ecclesiastes 5:18)

Father,

You are the source of every good, perfect, delightful, wonderful gift. You are the inventor of pleasure, and the creator of joy. All true pleasure comes from enjoying you, and gratefully enjoying the gifts you have given me. Satan would have me believe that you are against joy and happiness, but I know that is not true. I know that your desire for me is maximum joy and gladness in you.

Thank you for the gifts of food and drink. You could have created all food to be boring and bland. Instead you created an astonishing array of flavors, textures, and colors to delight our palettes. Creativity and joy burst forth from the thousands of different foods you have created for my enjoyment. Forgive me for my forgetful eating. Forgive me for assuming that I deserve these gifts. Forgive me for abusing these wonderful gifts. Help me to eat and drink in such a way that I bring you, wonderful Creator, maximum glory. Fill my heart with thanksgiving when I eat and drink.

Thank you for the gift of work. Although work has been cursed since the fall, work itself is not a curse, but a gift. What joy I receive from creating, nurturing, toiling, and bringing forth something from nothing. What pleasure I receive from using my hands, arms, muscles, and nerves as I toil. Help me to enjoy my work, and to see my work as a way of worshiping you. Help me to work hard, not as a way to earn praise from others, but as a way of honoring you. Thank you for the many days of life you have given me. Every new day is a precious, undeserved gift. Help me to seize each day with passion and enthusiasm, determined to bring you the most glory throughout that day. Help me to redeem each day for the glory of God. Help me to suck the maximum amount of joy from each, and in turn, give you the maximum amount of glory each day.

The Lord Is My Helper

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6)

Father,

Guard me from the love of money, and the lie of security that money brings. Keep me from trusting, hoping, and resting in money. Keep me from making money my refuge, instead of you. Keep me from trusting in my bank account rather than the God who owns the cattle on a thousands hills. Keep me from clinging to riches rather than Yahweh. Riches are fleeting, like a vapor in the wind. They can vanish in a day, an hour, even a minute. They are a shaky foundation that easily crumbles. Please keep me from being lulled to sleep by the noxious vapors of riches.

You have promised to never leave or forsake me. To always be with me. To accompany me wherever I go. I may lose all my possessions, I may be stripped of all my riches, I may even lose my health, yet you will never leave me. Your faithful, strong, upholding, sustaining, omnipotent presence is always with me. You are my shepherd who is always leading me. Riches, possessions, and health may forsake me, but you will never forsake me. Friends and family may desert me, but you will never desert me. When the clear light of the sun floods my life, and everything is going well, you are with me. When I am in the deepest pit, and I cannot see the sunshine, you are also with me.

Because you are always with me, I will not fear. I won't fear the loss of my possessions, because you are my portion. I won't fear the loss of my friends, because you are always with me. I won't fear persecution, because I know you will sustain me in the midst of any opposition. If you are for me, no one can be against me! No man, circumstance, illness, or demonic power can stand against me. I know that even the specter of death itself cannot separate me from you. My contentment is not found in my constantly changing, vaporous circumstances. My contentment is not found in having everything in my life run smoothly. My contentment is rooted in you and your unchangeable character.

My Treasure In Heaven

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Father,

I am so tempted to trust in what I can see, touch, and handle. I'm tempted to clutch tightly to my earthly treasures, to foolishly cling to the things that can so quickly be destroyed. I'm tempted to find my security and identity in things that can vanish in an instant. Forgive me for trying to hoard earthly treasures. Forgive me for giving my attention to trinkets instead of precious, delightful, heavenly rewards. Clear away the fog so that I can see and pursue the things that will truly matter in eternity. Let the things of this world grow strangely dim in the light of your glory and grace.

Help me to be thoroughly heavenly minded. Firmly fix my gaze on the day when all earthly things will be stripped away, and only what has been done for Christ will remain. Help me to long for that day, and to order my few days on this earth in light of that glorious coming day. My passion for you is often choked out by the worries of this world and the love of things. Holy Spirit, come and destroy the thorns that choke out my love for God and my zeal for eternity. Sever the sins that cling so tightly. Make me so heavenly minded that I am of great value here on this earth. Let my longing for heaven fuel my pursuit of righteousness here on this earth. Help me to remember that this life is a vapor, a few short days, and that only what is done for Christ will last.

I want to store up great piles of heavenly treasures - treasures that can't be touched by rust, moths, or thieves. I want to invest my passion in eternity, not the things of this world. Help me to count the treasures of earth as nothing more than dung compared to the great treasures of knowing, loving, following, and obeying Jesus Christ. Give me an earthly contentment and a heavenly restlessness - a deep contentment with what I have on earth, and a great restlessness to attain great rewards in heaven.

Be Strong and Courageous

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

Father,

So often I'm fearful of moving forward into the areas you have called me. I'm afraid of what might happen, of what I might lose, of the discomfort I might have to endure. I'm afraid of the future, afraid of the past, afraid of failure, afraid of what others will think. I don't like to move out of my comfort zone. I don't like to move beyond my familiar borders. Yet I know that you often do great things when I move out of my comfort zone and am forced to rely on you. When I am stripped of my strength is when your glory shines through most clearly. When I am completely dependent on grace is when you move most powerfully through me. You strip me of my own strength so that I can only attribute success to you.

Help me to be strong and courageous in the face of uncertainty. In the face of trials. In the face of spiritual attack. In the face of discouragement. In the face of financial woes. In the face of physical brokenness. Help me to be strong and courageous! Your character and your promises give me every reason to be strong and courageous. When I feel fear surging within me, help me to remember your unshakeable promises. When I feel uncertainty rising within me, fix my gaze on your faithfulness. Keep my eyes fixed firmly on you, rather than on the stormy waves that threaten to wash over you.

You have promised to be with me wherever I go, therefore I will not be dismayed. You have promised to accompany me to the glorious heights and the gloomy depths, therefore I will not fear. I cannot escape from your wonderful presence. It lifts me, strengthens me, pushes me forward, holds me back, refreshes me, convicts me, and keeps me. Your presence dispels darkness and fear. Your presence drives back Satanic gloom. If you are for me, and with me, and behind me, and ahead of me, who can stop me? If your mighty presence always surrounds me, why would I be afraid?

You are the one true God, and you are my God. The creator of the universe is on my side. If God is for me, who can be against me?

My Shepherd

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalm 23:1-3)

Father,

You are my blessed shepherd. I am the weak, easily distracted, easily frightened sheep, you are the strong, faithful shepherd. Just as a shepherd protects his sheep, so you protect me. Just as a shepherd provides for his sheep, so you always provide for me. Just as a shepherd leads his sheep on good paths, so you always lead me. Just as a shepherd lifts his sheep when they fall, so you always rescue me when I fall. Because you, the living, almighty, always-providing, always-leading, always-protecting God are my shepherd, I shall not want. If you are my shepherd, I know I have all I need for this life and the next.

I trust you to bring me to green pastures. Green pastures of peace, love, joy, and contentment. I trust you to bring me to these places even when my life seems to be spinning out of control. You will lead me to green pastures of supernatural strength in the midst of trials. You will feed me from the green pastures of your scriptures. You will refresh my soul in the green pastures of your presence. When I rely on myself, I end up in desert wastelands. When I rely on you, I end up in green pastures.

I trust you to lead me to still waters. When my soul is in turmoil, you will lead me beside still waters. When my heart is weary, you will refresh me with still waters. When my body is broken, you will sustain me with your still waters. When my soul is thirsty, you will satisfy me with still waters. I cannot restore my soul, but you can. I cannot reenergize my spiritual life, but you can. I cannot create spiritual life in myself, but you can. You are the lifter of my head, the restorer of my soul. You are my good and gentle shepherd.

I trust you to lead me in paths of righteousness. You will not let me stray to left or right, but, by the power of your Holy Spirit, will lead me in paths of righteousness. You will convict me of sin, then give me the power to overcome my sin. You have not left me on my own in the battle against sin. I don't trust in my own wisdom, but in you, my great Shepherd.

Safe In the Hand of Christ

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. (John 10:27-28)

Father,

Thank you for letting me hear the voice of Jesus calling me. Thank you for unplugging my sin-stopped ears, and allowing me to hear my shepherd calling my name. If you had not opened my ears, I would have forever wandered in the miserable darkness of my sin. If you had not opened my ears to hear Jesus calling, I would have run directly into the fires of Hell. But Jesus called me, and I heard him! Jesus called, and his voice stopped me in my hell-bound tracks. The voice of the Savior pierced my darkness and deafness, and broke the chains of sin that held me captive.

Jesus, thank you for giving me eternal life. Thank you that I possess eternal life right now. It is not something awaiting me in the distant future. Your eternal, explosive, resurrection life, has broken into my life right now. I am a new creation in you. The old, eternally damned me, is dead, and now I have eternal life. When I experience the joy of communion with you, that is a taste of the full eternal life that I will soon inherit. When I overcome sin, that is a small glimpse of the full, glorious eternal life that awaits me. When I experience wonderful fellowship with other believers, that is a tiny taste of the wonderful eternal life that will soon be fully mine. Jesus you came to give life abundantly. Thank you for the tastes of abundant life I have now, and for the fullness of abundant life that awaits me.

Jesus, thank you that no one can snatch me out of your strong hands. You are my strong tower, my mighty fortress, my bulwark never failing. Sickness cannot steal me. Demonic powers cannot have me. Sin will not ruin me. Even death itself cannot ultimately touch me. I am safe in your sovereign hands. You will keep me to the end, until the day I stand before your judgment throne. You will protect me and present me blameless before the Father on Judgment Day. I will not trust in my strength or my spiritual abilities. Jesus, I trust you to keep me, hold me, protect me, deliver me, and ultimately carry me to my final, eternal destination.

Nothing Can Separate Me

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Father,

I confess, so often I am overwhelmed by the circumstances of my life. I'm overwhelmed when my health fails, when my budget buckles, when my child strays, when my job is uncertain, and so many other times. So often I forget that you are sovereign over every aspect of my life. If you number the hairs upon my head, then surely you know about every other detail of my life. It is when I forget your sovereignty that I become most afraid. It is when I forget the depths of your love that I am gripped with worry. It is when I forget the great lengths you went to save me that I sink into despondency.

You have promised that absolutely nothing can separate me from your love for me. There is nothing greater than you, and you have promised that nothing can take me away from you. No present or future circumstances, no matter how evil or dire they may seem, can separate me from your love. No angel or demonic ruler, no matter how powerful or strong, can tear me out of your grasp. There is not a single thing in all of creation, from the highest mountain to the deepest, darkest reaches of the ocean, that can separate me from your love. Your love goes higher, wider, farther, and deeper than anything else. I am never outside the bounds of your love.

Why am I secure? Because I am in Christ. When you saved me, you irrevocably joined me to Jesus Christ. I am in him, and he dwells in me. This mystical, glorious union, is what secures me in your love. I will be in Christ for eternity, and as long as I am in Christ, I am secure in your love. Christ is my unassailable fortress, my impregnable shield. Nothing can separate me, take me away from, or dilute your love for me in Christ. Christ is your son, and as his father, you love him intensely. Because you have joined me to Jesus, you love me with that same, intense, unbreakable, immovable love. Help me to rest in your wonderful love, even when I don't feel it. Your love for me isn't dependent on how I feel, but the fact that I'm joined to Christ.

Death, Where Is Your Sting?

**“Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 15:54-57)**

Father,

When I was under the law I was afraid of death. It haunted me, stalked me, terrified me. The curse of the law hung over me, waiting to destroy me the moment death took me. I knew that the moment I died, I would begin experiencing your awful, soul-crushing wrath. And so I feared death. There was no way for me to escape its icy clutches, no way for me to wriggle free from its unstoppable power. Death and spiritual destruction were my inevitable end. Every day marched me closer to execution. But in your astonishing goodness, you have done the impossible: you have freed me from the curse of death!

Jesus, thank you for submitting yourself to the Father’s will, even to the point of death on a cross. You were the only human in history that did not deserve the curse of death, yet you willingly drank from death’s chalice. Thank you for allowing yourself to be swallowed by death, so that you could destroy death from the inside out. Thank you for submitting yourself to death so that, ultimately, death would bend its knee in submission to you. Death sank its fangs into you, only to discover that you would shatter the fangs of death.

Therefore I will not fear death. I will not tremble when I cross the river of darkness. I will walk boldly through the Valley of Death. The sting of death has been removed. Death has been de-fanged. It can make threats, but they are empty words. Jesus drained death of its power. It can no longer terrify me with threats of Hell and judgment, for Jesus himself took my Hell and judgment on the cross. It can no longer threaten me with God’s wrath, because Jesus himself took God’s wrath for me.

Death, you have no power over me. Jesus toppled your throne when he died in my place. I will not grieve like those who have no hope. I will not fear death like those who have no future. Instead, I long to depart this sin-stained world and be with Christ, which is better by far. I have victory over you through Jesus Christ.

All Things New

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Revelation 21:4-5)

Father,

This world is full of suffering, sadness, tears, brokenness, trials, tribulations, and heartache. Our sin has ruined this world. Our sin has turned your good creation into a place of darkness and nightmares. Our relationships are broken. Our bodies are slowly dissolving into dust. Those we love quickly succumb to death. Tears are never more than a breath away.

And yet I praise you that you have promised to undo all the sadness, and sin, and strife that currently permeates the world. Sin will not prevail forever! Satan will not triumph forever! A day is coming when we will finally be free from sin that entangles us, disrupts us, and breaks our communion with you and one another. A glorious trumpet blast will sound, and Jesus will appear for all to see. Darkness will shudder at the sight of the returning king. Death will be destroyed by the Holy Conqueror. Tears will be wiped away by Jesus, the Warrior Comforter. Pain will be destroyed, and sadness will dissipate like fog burned away by the delicious warmth of the sun. The sinful darkness that swarms around us will finally pass away.

Lord, I praise you that you are making all things new. Our broken relationships will be mended. Our failing bodies will be replaced by new, unbreakable, immortal resurrection bodies. The heavens and earth will be replaced by a new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness and goodness reign. There is not a single inch of the heavens and earth that will not be made anew. Not a single bit of sin will remain. All will be good, delightful, satisfying, and God-glorifying.

Come quickly Lord Jesus. I long for your return, and I want to live in light of your impending return. My hope is not in this world, and its dim and dull pleasures. My hope is in you, the one who is making all things new.

He Will Deliver Us

Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. (2 Corinthians 1:9-10)

Father,

There are times when my weakness is so overwhelming that it feels as if I've received a death sentence. There are times when life seems so difficult, so oppressive, so impossible, it almost seems as if I've been sentenced to death. Going forward seems impossible. I cannot see a way of escape. In whatever direction I look I see misery and unhappiness. I feel as though I have been sentenced to death.

And yet I know that these "death sentences" are actually demonstrations of your love for me. In order to free me from my insidious temptation to rely on myself, you must place me in situations that are far beyond my ability to bear. You must overburden me so that I will be forced to cast my burdens upon you. You must sentence me to death in order that I will rely on the One who is able to raise from the dead. You must kill my self-sufficiency, which then forces me to press into you. Though these "death sentences" are painful, they are your goodness to me. They are your faithful, fatherly discipline. You want me to experience the delightful freedom of relying solely on you.

When it feels as though I've been sentenced to death, I look to you. You have delivered me from deadly peril in the past, and your past faithfulness is a guarantee of your future faithfulness. You have proved yourself to be faithful in the past, you will also prove yourself to be faithful in the future. You are my deliverance. You are my hope. You are my light in the darkness.

I set my hope firmly on you, and nothing else. I don't know when or how you will bring deliverance, but you will bring it. Even when I cannot see how it is possible for me to be delivered from dire circumstances, I will trust in you. You have delivered me in the past, you

will deliver me again. I throw myself upon you, cling to you, hope in you, and rest in you, knowing that you are a delivering God.

My Face Is Radiant

I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. (Psalm 34:4-5)

Father,

Thank you that when I seek you, you answer me. You are not a distant, busy, unfeeling, uncaring God, who doesn't care about my troubles. You are a God who is near, and aware of every detail of my life. When I seek you, you don't turn a deaf ear to my cries. You don't harden your heart toward me. When I call out to you, you hear me, and you come to my aid. Such an astonishing truth! The Lord, Yahweh, the Almighty One, hears me. The world-shaper, star-maker, white hot sun-creator, hears and comes to my aid. Such a comforting truth.

You may not relieve me of my circumstances, but you deliver me from all my fears. You may not change my life, but you do change my heart. When you are with me, I don't need to be afraid, no matter what the circumstances. When you are for me, it doesn't matter what circumstances are against me. You are greater than my circumstances and greater than my fears. I praise you that you are a delivering God. A rescuing God. A God who works mighty wonders for your people. You are not a passive God. You are a God who actively, and aggressively works on the behalf of your people. I bring all my fears to you, and I trust you to deliver me out of these fears. I don't know how you will deliver me, and I don't need to know how you will deliver me. I place simple, child-like trust in you to deliver me.

Oh Lord, give me your supernatural joy in the midst of life's difficult circumstances. Because I know you, I can have overcoming, radiant, gloom-dispelling joy at all times. I can be a fountain of joy in the midst of desert places. This radiant joy does not spring naturally from me, but comes when I look to you. Lord, let your joy radiate out of me, touching and blessing everyone I encounter today. Let your joy pour out of me so that I give thanks even in the midst of trials. I know that if I continue looking to you, I will never be ashamed. Today help me look to you again and again. Help me take ten looks to you for every one time I look to myself.

The Way of Escape

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Father,

I praise you that you are a wise, good, kind Father, who will not let me be tempted beyond my ability. Every temptation that comes my way is first filtered by you, my wise Father, who knows exactly what I can and cannot bear. You know what temptations I am able to withstand, and what temptations are too great for me. You know which temptations will sharpen my faith in you, and which temptations will strangle my faith in you. Just as you kept Satan on a short leash when he tempted Job, I know you are absolutely sovereign over every temptation Satan throws at me.

When I am tempted, help me to look for the way of escape that you have provided. Help me to flee temptation. To run from it. To find the divinely appointed escape route, and go to that escape route as quickly as possible. Guard me from the temptation to play with my sin, or take it lightly. Help me to approach my sin with a divine seriousness. Help me to fight against my sin with a holy fury. Help me to hate my sin just as you hate my sin. My temptation is to not take my sin seriously. Yet your word tells me to throw off the sin that so easily entangles, and to run hard after holiness. Today empower me to run hard after holiness.

I praise you that you are a faithful God. When I am tempted to sin, you will always be faithful to provide a way out. You do not allow Satan to simply have his way with me. Even as he is tempting me, you are near, carefully monitoring the situation, ready to intervene at a moment's notice. When I call out for strength, you will provide me with divine strength. When I feel weak and weary, you will strengthen me for the fight. Lord, ultimately my hope is not in my ability to overcome my sin, but in your Spirit which dwells within me, making me more like Jesus Christ. You will be faithful. You will be faithful. You will be faithful!

How Lovely Is Your Dwelling Place

**How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.
(Psalm 84:1-2)**

Father,

You are the Lord of hosts. You speak and the all the hosts of heaven obey. You command all the angel armies, you rule over all demonic spirits, all of heaven and earth is at your beck and command. And yet you let me dwell in your presence. The seraphim cover their eyes and cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy," as they encircle your throne, yet you invite me into your presence. The hills melt like wax before you, yet you invite me to draw near to the throne of grace. How astonishing, incredible, and amazing. Forgive me for the many times I have taken this privilege for granted. Forgive me for coming into your presence without appropriate awe and gratefulness.

Lord, in your presence is fullness of joy. When I experience your presence in creation, it fills me with joy. When I experience your presence through fellowship with other believers, it fills me with delight. When I experience your presence through singing, I'm overwhelmed with gratitude. When I experience your presence as I read your Word, I'm filled with joy. It's only in your presence that I find fullness of joy. The things of this world give some joy, you give fullness of joy.

Cause me to long for your presence even more! I'm far too easily satisfied with the trinkets and baubles of this world. My heart grows cold quickly, and often becomes dull to spiritual things. Cause me to thirst for your presence as though I were in a dry and parched desert. Cause me to hunger for true spiritual food. Forgive me for trying to satisfy my thirst with things other than you. Only you can satisfy the longings of my soul. Only you can give me true, lasting, indestructible joy.

I sing for joy that I know the living God! What an incredible thing to have intimate fellowship with the World Maker. What an incredible thing to call the Holy One, "Father,". Lord, I need and want nothing more than you.

Making Every Effort

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. (2 Peter 1:5-7)

Father,

I bless you, for you have given me saving faith. You created a desperation in me for a savior, then you showed me that Savior. You called me out of spiritual darkness into your glorious light. Help me now to live a life worthy of the calling I've received. Help me to work out my salvation, knowing that you are powerfully at work within me. Faith without works is a dead faith. Help me to supplement my faith with the fruit of the Spirit.

Help me to live a life of virtue, in which I pursue holiness, integrity, and purity. Help me to hate my sin, and to aggressively put my sin to death. Give me a deep hunger for divine knowledge, and the discipline to search out the scriptures for that divine knowledge. Equip me with self-control in everything I do, including what I eat, what I say, what I drink, and what I think. Supply me with an unshakable steadfastness that will carry me through any fiery trial that may befall me. Teach me how to be godly and righteous in the midst of this godless, impure world. And give me a deep, abiding, patient, warm affection for my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Above all, fill my heart with love - love for you, love for others, and love for the lost. Without love, I'm nothing but a clanging gong or a clashing symbol. Without love, all my spiritual gifts are useless. Without love, I am no different from the rest of the world. Lord, my heart is not naturally loving. It is naturally selfish, cynical, and critical. Give me a deep love for you that transcends all other loves. Cut down any idols I have erected in my heart. Give me a deep, singular, whole-hearted passion for you. Let my love for you then overflow into love for others. Help me to love others as you love them. Help me to treasure other people as you treasure them. Help me to love others in the same gracious, patient way that you have loved me. Let the world see my love for others and know that I'm your disciple. Let the world see my love for others and know that you have changed me.

Transformed by God

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)

Father,

Thank you for the overwhelming, astonishing, undeserved, unmerited mercies that you have poured out upon me. Your mercies to me are more numerous than the stars, more abundant than the sands by the sea. You have forgiven my sins, adopted me into your family, united me with Christ, and are storing up an inheritance for me in heaven. These mercies alone are incredible, and yet every day you continue to bless me with new, fresh mercies.

In light of all I have received, I want to offer up all of myself to you. I want my entire life - everything I think, say, do, eat, and drink, to be done as worship to you. I offer every area of my life to you. I want to give my body, my intellect, my emotions, and my health to serve you. Every gift and every talent I possess belongs to you. I want to spend all of my energies in your wonderful service. I want all of my life to be a living sacrifice, pleasing and acceptable to you through Jesus Christ. Every day, help me to pick up my cross in service to you. Every day help me to die to myself so that I may serve you more effectively.

Keep me from conforming to the ungodly ways of this world. Show me the areas of my life which have been breached and compromised by the world. Shine your light on the areas of my heart that look more like the world than Jesus Christ. Please renew my mind according to your word. Let me think your thoughts. Help me to see the world the way you see the world. Help me to think more highly of you and less of myself.

Please give me spiritual discernment and wisdom. I cannot navigate this world apart from your supernatural wisdom. As I renew my mind according to your word, let my discernment increase. I want to do what is good, pleasing, and acceptable in your sight. Equip me with the discernment to do that.

To Live is Christ, To Die is Gain

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. (Philippians 1:21-23)

Father,

I find myself torn between two wonderful options. I am caught between heaven and earth, between fruitful labor for you here on this earth and actually being with you in heaven.

For me, to live is Christ. My life revolves around Christ, orbits around Christ, submits to Christ. My great goal and obsession while on this earth is fruitful labor for you. Jesus, I want to do great things for you. I want to speak of your fame and glory to those who don't know you. I want to build up, strengthen, and encourage my fellow believers. I want my every thought, word, and deed to be fruitful labor for you. I don't care if anyone remembers my name or legacy, as long as I am fruitful for you. I don't care about my reputation, as long as I increase your reputation. I don't care about my honor, as long as you increase and I decrease. Jesus, you are my life, and to live is Christ.

And yet, I find myself torn. I know that to depart and be with Christ is far better. To be in the infinitely satisfying presence of Jesus is what my heart desperately desires. I was made for heaven and made for Jesus. I know that when I am with Jesus in heaven, I will finally be satisfied. I want to labor fruitfully for you here on this earth, and yet I long to be in your presence even more.

Father, help me to labor diligently for Christ now, always keeps in the end in mind. I know that my labors for Christ will be rewarded abundantly when I finally see Christ face to face. I know that every bit of suffering I experience while on this earth will seem pale and insignificant compared to the glory of seeing Christ. Help me to be so heavenly minded that I do great things for Christ while on this earth. Help me to always live in the tension created by "to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Don't Lean On My Own Understanding

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.
(Proverbs 3:5-8)**

Father,

So often I'm tempted to lean on my own understanding. I'm tempted to trust in what I can see, feel, predict, understand, and comprehend. I'm tempted to trust in what seems obvious rather than you, the omnipotent, omniscient God. It's hard for me to let go of my own understanding, and to not rely on my own faulty, limited wisdom. It's hard for me to trust in you over and above what I can see. In my stupidity, I'm more inclined to trust my feelings instead of you and your infinite wisdom.

Lord, I trust in you with all of my heart. I throw aside any other supports that I would lean upon. I throw aside the supports of financial security, health, and friendship, and I lean solely upon you. I acknowledge my desperate need for you to lead me, guide me, carry me, and protect me. I want to acknowledge my dependence on you in every step I take. I cannot live this life apart from you. I cannot make it through life without you. I am utterly dependent on you, oh God.

So often I'm tempted to be wise in my own eyes. I'm tempted to trust my judgment of a situation, rather than your promises. I'm tempted to rely on my own wisdom to help me navigate through life, instead of relying on the gracious commands you have given me in your word. I'm tempted to believe that I see everything accurately. This foolish, stupid belief often leads me into evil. Instead of trusting in my own wisdom, I want to fear you and turn away from evil.

I know that if I rely on you for wisdom, you will lead me in good, sweet paths. You will give refreshment to my weary body and soul. You will make my path clear and straight. Today, strip me of my self-sufficiency, and help me to rely solely on you.

The God Who Gives Wisdom

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. (James 1:5-6)

Father,

I need wisdom! There are so many different situations in which I need divine wisdom. Every day I find myself confronted by a myriad of difficult situations requiring divine wisdom. If I don't have divine wisdom, I'll make a disaster of these situations. Without divine wisdom I will quickly make a mess of my life. If you don't lead me, I'll surely stray from your path. I can't make it through this life without your wisdom.

So Lord, I ask, in faith, for wisdom. You promise to give generously to everyone who asks. You don't dole out wisdom in small, tiny drops. You are not stingy giver. You lavishly, eagerly, joyfully give wisdom to everyone who asks. You are a generous, loving, guiding God, who is eager to lead his people. So I ask in faith, believing that you will give me the wisdom I need for every situation. No matter what the situation, now matter how difficult or confusing, you will give me the wisdom I need.

Help me not to dishonor you by doubting your generosity. You have promised to give me wisdom. You have promised to lead me and guide me. I believe that you will keep your word. I believe that you will give me exactly what I need, when I need it. Forgive me for the times when I've doubted that you would give me wisdom. Forgive me for the times when I haven't asked for wisdom. Forgive me for the times when I have tried to walk through life relying on my own wisdom.

When I doubt you, I am unsteady and unstable. I'm like a wave tossed back and forth by the wind, unable to be settled, unable to be at peace. So I trust in you and your divine wisdom. I trust you to lead me, guide me, and give me wisdom for every situation. I fix my mind on you, the God who gives peace that passes understanding. You will give me wisdom, just as you have promised. You are my solid rock.

Taking Up My Cross

And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:38-40)

Father,

You have commanded me to follow Jesus at all costs. You have commanded me to take up my cross, with all its pain and sorrow, and to follow in the footsteps of my Savior. Help me not to shrink back from the cross. Help me not to be afraid of taking up my cross. I know that Jesus is the pearl of greatest price, and that following him is worth any sacrifice, no matter how great. Jesus is a treasure of inestimable value, a jewel of priceless worth. When I'm tempted to shrink back from carrying my cross, help me to remember that Jesus carried the cross first, in my place. When I'm weary of carrying my cross, help me to remember that Jesus always carries the heavier end.

Father, I willingly give up all my "rights" for the sake of Jesus. I am willing to give up every comfort, every pleasure, every relationship, every hobby for the sake of following Jesus. I am willing to lose my life in every sense of the word. I'm willing to lose my relational life. I'm willing to lose my financial life. I'm willing to lose my comfortable life. Any sacrifice made for Christ pales in comparison to the great sacrifice he made for me. I also know that any sacrifice made in the service of Christ will be repaid infinitely more by Jesus himself. I count everything as loss compared to the great joy of following after Jesus.

Forgive me for the times I've sinfully clung to my "rights" and my life. Forgive me for the times I've treasured my comfort more than serving my Savior. Forgive me the times I've thought more of how I can advance my own agenda than advance the rule and reign of Christ. Forgive me for the many times I've sought my own glory and honor over the glory and honor of Christ.

Father, you own me twice. You own me by the fact that you created me, and you own me by the fact that you bought me with Christ's blood. I want to lose my life for the sake of Christ's honor.

Saved For A Mission

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Father,

You have saved me for a mission. You did not save me so that I could live a comfortable, self-seeking, easy life. You did not save me so that I could be still until Christ returns. You did not save me for a life of inactivity. You saved me from sins, then commissioned me for your service. You have called me to a great and glorious mission, a mission worthy of all of my energy, passion, and zeal. You have called me to the glorious mission of making Christ-followers.

Lord, please give me a holy fire for your mission. Ignite my dull, cold, selfish, comfort-loving heart. So often I sleepwalk through life, paying little attention to those around me. Infuse holy energy into my spirit, and divine quickness into my step. Give me a deep, heartfelt compassion for the lost. Help me see them as you see them: as wandering, helpless sheep without a shepherd. Please give me more and more opportunities to introduce people to the wonderful Shepherd. Please put me in the path of men and women who are desperate for rescue. Allow me to introduce the desperately sick to the Great Physician.

I confess, I need boldness. You have given me the job of teaching men and women to follow you, yet so often I’m timid and prone to fear. So often I care more about what people think about me rather than about their eternal destiny. So often I prize my reputation over your reputation. Please forgive me for letting the fear of man hinder my obedience to you. Please forgive me for not proclaiming the gospel with more boldness.

Jesus, thank you that you are always with me. When I am afraid to speak, your presence empowers me. When I am rejected, your presence comforts me. When I am weary, your presence strengthens me. Thank you that I am never separated from your wonderful presence. Your constant presence gives me faith for the mission you’ve given me.

I Will Hope In God

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. (Psalm 42:5-6)

Father,

There are many times when my soul is cast down. My heart feels heavy when the oppressive circumstances of life weigh my soul down, like a heavy, immovable anchor. There are times when it seems like the darkness will not lift and the fog will not dispel. There are times when my soul is in turmoil, whipped about like a wave on a stormy sea. There is no peace or rest for me when my soul is in turmoil. I cannot serve you effectively when my life is in turmoil. I need your peace, your rest, your joy. Only you can give me true peace in the midst of trials.

When I am cast down and in turmoil, lift my eyes to you. When I am pressed on every side, take my eyes off of my circumstances and fix them on you. Take my eyes off of the waves that are crashing around me, and fix them firmly on you and your unchangeable character. Keep me from steeping in the poison of self-pity, and from wallowing in the pit of doubt. When my soul is cast down, I will not let it stay there. I will hope in you! When my heart is in turmoil, I will not let it stay there. I will trust in you! Help me to speak truth to my soul instead of listening to the lies of Satan. Help me to remember your promises instead of allowing doubt and dismay to fester in my heart.

I know that I will praise you again. I know that I will again sing songs of joy and delight to you. I know that the darkness will not haunt me forever. I know that I will not always be cast down and in turmoil. You have been faithful to me every step thus far, and you will continue to be faithful to me every step that I take.

Lord, you are my salvation. I will not hope in a set of circumstances I envision for the future. I will not hope in what I can see or imagine. Rather, I will hope in you, and in your salvation. I may not be able to see how you will deliver me, but I know that you will deliver me. You have always been my faithful God, and you will continue to be my faithful God.

Love For God Demonstrated

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15)

Father,

I love you so much. I love for all that you are. You are holy, omnipotent, loving, slow to anger, abounding in love, just, righteous, good, all-knowing, all-seeing, always present. You are infinitely lovely in your attributes, infinitely delightful in your character, infinitely wonderful in your being. I love you because you are intrinsically lovely and worthy. The loveliest things on this earth are worthless in comparison to your inestimable worth and value. You are worthy of all praise, love, and affection.

I also love you because of what you have done for me. When I was bound by shackles of sin, you came and set me free. When I was caught in Satan's dungeon of darkness, you broke in and rescued me. You forgave all of my sins. You washed away all my sins of lust, anger, pride, arrogance, gossip, and anger. You completely cleansed me with the blood of Christ. Not one trace of my sin remains.

Not only did you cleanse me, you also made me a new creation in Christ. My old, sin-snared, sin-loving, God-hating self, has been replaced by a person who is gloriously free. I am free to obey, free to say, "No," to sin, free to pursue righteousness, free to be holy.

Father, my heart is full of love for you, both for who you are and what you've done. Help me to demonstrate my love for you by obeying your commands. Help me to show my gratefulness by pursuing holiness. In light of your mercies, help me to offer all of myself in obedience to you. All of your commands are good, and just, and true. You only command what is good for me. You only command what is truly best for me.

Guard me from the temptation of claiming to love you without actually obeying your commands. I don't want to be merely a hearer of your word, I want to be a doer. Let my love for you propel me to deeper, more passionate obedience. Let obedience be not my duty, but my delight.

Being A Faithful Servant

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' (Matthew 25:23)

Father,

You have wonderfully supplied me with spiritual gifts. I did nothing to earn or deserve these gifts. You have given me these gifts out of your abundant generosity. These gifts are intended to be used for your fame and honor. They are not primarily for my own glory, pleasure, or delight. They are not to be used to exalt myself. Rather, you have gifted me so that I might highlight your glory, and so that I might draw attention to you and all your excellencies. My gifts are to be used to show the world how great you truly are. Thank you for the wonderful, undeserved spiritual gifts you have given me.

Lord, I am often tempted to use my gifts for my own glory, honor, and advantage. Forgive me for that selfish, sick desire. Forgive me for taking the good thing you have given me, and then perverting its use. Please help me to harness all my gifts and abilities for your glory. Help me orchestrate my gifts to create a symphony of praise to you. I want to spend every ounce of my strength in your service. Guard me against laziness and selfishness, which would prevent me from using my gifts to serve you and to serve others. Guard me from pride, which would cause me to use my gifts for my own glory. Today please give me opportunities to use my gifts to draw attention to you.

How astonishing it is that you promise to reward me for my pitiful attempts at serving you! So often my serving is stained with selfish ambition. Yet in spite of that, you still promise to reward me. What a generous, patient, gracious, big-hearted God you are. Help me to be faithful over whatever tasks you have given me, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant. Help me to use my gifts diligently, no matter how unimportant the job may seem. When opportunities to serve arise, let me be quick to seize them. Your primary concern is my faithfulness to the divinely appointed task, not the task itself. My job is to be a faithful servant, your job is to make me a fruitful servant. Help me to be a faithful servant.

The Great Cloud of Witnesses

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith... (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Father,

I thank you for the great cloud of witnesses that surround me. Even though I may not be able to see them, I am surrounded by Christian men and women who have gone before me - men and women who have already fought the good fight and finished the race. Men and women who passed through the Valley of Death, who were even martyred for Christ, and yet remained faithful. Let me feel them cheering me on in my Christian life. Let me take courage from them. Let me emulate their godly example. The fact that they successfully finished the race is a testimony to your constant faithfulness. You have empowered millions of Christians before me to finish the race, and I am confident that you will empower me to finish the race as well. All the men and women in this great cloud of witnesses stumbled in their faith at one point or another, yet you were always faithful to them, and I am confident that you will be faithful to me as well.

Help me to throw aside every sin! Lord, sin clings to me and weighs me down. It hinders my pursuit of holiness and limits my experience of your nearness. It acts as a spiritual bog, sucking me down and not letting go. It prevents me from making progress in godliness. It sucks the joy out of my life. Ultimately, sin brings pain and ruin into my life. Help me to cast off every sin that weighs me down and hinders me. Lord, perform divine surgery on me, cutting off every sin that clings to me. Help me to run my race with endurance. Give me the courage, strength, and resolve to cast off the sins that simultaneously appeal to me and kill me.

Jesus, you have already gone before me. You have blazed a path for me to follow. You are the founder, the pioneer, the trailblazer, the leader of my faith. As I run my race, I look to you. You are both strengthening me along the way and waiting at the finish line. You have

faithfully carried every one of your saints to the finish line, and you will faithfully carry me to the finish line.

Water That Truly Satisfies

Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:13-14)

Father,

This world is full of men and women who are deliriously spiritually thirsty, yet have no way of quenching their thirst. They stumble from one pleasure to the next, desperately hoping that the pleasure will satisfy the deep soul thirst they feel. They don't know that Jesus is the only one who can quench the deep, aching thirst that racks their soul. They don't know that Jesus offers truly satisfying water. They are trying to slake their thirst with saltwater when Jesus offers them the water of eternal life.

Thank you for letting me taste the eternal life that Jesus offers. Thank you for pouring the all-satisfying water of Christ upon my soul! Once I tasted the water he offered, I was ruined for everything else. Once I tasted the water of eternal life, I saw that nothing on this earth could truly satisfy me. Jesus satisfies my soul like no one else. I have tried to find joy and satisfaction in other things, and have come to realize that only Christ can truly offer the water of life. Compared to the water of Christ, everything else is a mud puddle.

Lord Jesus, satisfy me again! Satisfy me with your delightful, refreshing, strengthening presence. Fill me once again with the Holy Spirit. I need the times of refreshing that only you can give. In my foolishness, I forget that you alone can satisfy my deepest longings. In my sinful forgetfulness, I try to satisfy myself with the saltwater of this world.

Help me to find my satisfaction, delight, joy, pleasure, and happiness in you and your presence. Forgive me for the many times I've been discontent. Forgive me for the many times I've grumbled that I don't have “enough.” In you, I have all that I need, and infinitely more. In you I have all I need to be satisfied and content. In every circumstance, teach me to be content and thankful. You have given me the water of eternal life that truly satisfies.

God Will Dwell With Us

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more...And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God." (Revelation 21:1,3 ESV)

Father,

I praise you that you will create a new heavens and a new earth. This earth is so broken, shattered, charred, and distorted. Sin has perverted our relationship with you, our relationships with each other, and our relationship the earth itself. Our lives are so full of sickness and sadness. We labor and toil under the curse of sin. Every day we are confronted by a new manifestation of sin. We don't walk in the light of your presence like we desire. But Lord, I praise you that sin and Satan will not ultimately carry the day. You, Father, will carry the day! Through Jesus, you will crush Satan and all who follow him. You will restore all that was lost in Eden.

A day is coming soon when this sin-ruined earth will be remade into a glorious, new, sin-free earth. The old heavens and earth, which are under the curse of sin, will finally be gone, and we will live in a delightful world, where righteousness, justice, peace, joy, and delight reign. There will be no more tears and no more sadness. The joy of Christ will radiate throughout all the earth, filling us to overflowing.

Just as you dwelt with Adam in the garden of Eden, so you will dwell with us in the new heavens and earth. We will constantly live in the wonderful light of your presence, and there will be no sin to diminish our experience of your presence. You will dwell with us, in our midst. You will be our God, and we will be your people. There will be no sun or moon, for the light of the Lord God will be our light.

Lord Jesus, come soon! Our hearts groan for the day when you will return and undo all the sadness sin has wrought. Our hearts long for the day when we will finally be free from the presence of sin, and will be able to obey you and delight in you without hindrance. Come Lord Jesus, come soon.

No Boasting Allowed

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Father,

Were it up to me, I never would have chosen you. My heart was too hard, and the shackles of sin bound me too tightly. I was a willful, happy prisoner of sin and Satan. I was cheerfully skipping my way toward Hell. I would have constantly run from you, shut my ears to you, rejected you, and spit in your face. But your relentless, unstoppable, delightfully irresistible grace pursued me. Your grace overcame my hardness, conquered my insurgent heart, and opened my eyes to see the beauty of Christ. You did the impossible: brought me from death to life. Once blind, now I see. Once I was dead, now I'm alive.

By your explosive, supernatural power, you opened my eyes to see my need for a savior, and then you gave me faith in the Savior. You gave me faith in Christ where there had once been doubt, skepticism, and outright unbelief. You gave me love for Christ where there had once been animosity and hatred. You gave me spiritual life where there had once been spiritual death and decay. You breathed life into my dry, dead bones. Thank you for giving me precious, saving faith. You required me to have saving faith in Christ, then you gave me the faith you required.

Lord, let me never boast in my spiritual accomplishments! Any spiritual good in my life is the result of your work. Any spiritual fruit, any spiritual life, any spiritual progress, is because you blew your holy fire onto my heart, causing it to come alive. All that I have accomplished, you have done for me.

I will boast, but only in Christ! I will brag, but only in my God! I will exult in you, and what you have accomplished in my life. I will tell the world of the God who makes dead men come to life. I will tell the world of the God who gives the faith he requires! I will reject any hope I have in my own works, and I will loudly boast of the work of God in my life.

The Shield of Faith

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one... (Ephesians 6:16)

Father,

When Satan assaults me from every side, flinging his flaming darts at me, help me to quickly take up the shield of faith. Faith is the shield against the lies of Satan, the antidote for his poisonous doubts, the sword of truth that cuts through his lies. When Satan assaults me with flaming darts of condemnation, help me to quickly take up the shield of the gospel. Help me to believe what your word says more than what I feel. Your word says that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Your word says that you are faithful and just to forgive all of my sins in Christ. Your word says that Christ paid for every one of my sins upon the cross. The gospel is my shield. I take up the shield of faith by believing the promises of the gospel. I put all my faith in what you say, not the lies of Satan.

When Satan assaults me with flaming doubts of fear, help me to quickly take up the shield of your faithfulness. You have promised to meet all my needs according to your riches in Christ Jesus. You have promised to be my shepherd, and to lead me beside still waters. You have promised new mercies every single morning. Your faithfulness is my shield and refuge. I take up the shield of faith by believing the promises of your faithfulness. I take refuge in your faithfulness. I thank you that Satan's flaming darts cannot penetrate the shield of faith.

Father, too often I let doubts linger in my mind rather than immediately taking up the shield of faith. Please forgive me for dishonoring you by giving in to the sin of unbelief. Your promises are a mighty fortress, an impenetrable stronghold. Your promises are sure, and nothing can break them. You are God, and you cannot lie. When I am assaulted by Satan, help me to quickly run for the cover of your promises. Your promises comfort me when I'm brought low, strengthen me when I'm tempted, and push me forward when I've stalled out spiritually.

Thank you that all your promises to me are, "Yes," in Christ. Because I am inseparably bound to Christ, you will fulfill all your promises to me.

The Unfathomable Love of God

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Father,

It absolutely astonishes me that you would love the world. When I consider all the evil that we have produced - murder, terrorism, rape, pornography, child abuse, gossip, slander, pride, embezzlement, adultery, and thousands of other sins - it astonishes me that you would still love this world. When I consider all the evil that I have produced, it astonishes me that you would love me. Why, most holy God, would you love sinners like me, who have profaned your name, disregarded your good commands, gone our own way, committed spiritual treason, and done everything in our power to resist you? You should have poured fiery wrath on us the moment we rebelled against you. But you didn't. Instead, you poured out your love on us.

You proved your love for us by giving up your Son, your only Son whom you delighted in, to be our substitute and sacrifice. You sent Jesus for us, for me! To live the sinless life I never could. To repay the debt I never could. To die a sinner's death in order that you might rescue profane sinners. To offer eternal life to those who deserved furious, unending wrath. Jesus succeeded where Adam, Noah, Israel, David, Solomon, and every other person failed. He secured eternal life through his perfect obedience, and now he lavishly offers that to all who believe in him. My heart is filled with gratefulness when I consider all the ways you've shown your love for me. I don't understand why you love me, but I am so glad that you do.

Jesus, I believe in you, hope in you, trust in you, throw myself completely on you. I have no hope apart from you. I have no life apart from you. You are the only source of eternal life. I have nowhere to go apart from you, no one to hope in apart from you, no true source of joy apart from you. You have promised eternal life to all who believe in you, and I stake all of my eternity on your promise.

Father, forgive me for the times I've doubted your love for me. By sending the One who was most precious to you, you have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that you love me.

The God Who Stills the Seas

O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD, with your faithfulness all around you? You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them. (Psalm 89:8-9)

Father,

Who is mighty like you? Who is powerful like you? No one compares to you. All are dust compared to your unsurpassable greatness. The nations are nothing more than a drop in a bucket compared to your unimaginable greatness. You hold all the waters of the earth in the palm of your hand. The mountains tremble and melt before you. The angels cover their eyes as they circle your throne. You uphold the entire universe with your word. Apart from your sustaining power, the universe would dissolve into nothingness. You are the Lord of Hosts. All the heavenly beings submit to your word and rule. The most powerful angels do you bidding. There is no one like you, O God. Our greatest imaginings of you cannot come close to your true greatness.

And yet in spite of your great immensity, you are also near to me. You, the world-making, world-sustaining, angel-frightening, mountain-melting God, promise to be faithful to me. You promise to be near me when I'm broken-hearted. When my soul is nothing but a dying ember, you don't snuff it out, but instead blow it to life. When I am a bruised reed, you don't cast me aside, but instead nurse me to health. When the waters rise, you keep me from being swept away. When the fires burn around me, you keep me from being singed. You are with me when I am thrown into the furnace. You are with me when I am flung into the lion's den. You are always faithful, always a sure foundation, always my rock. When the world rages around me, you keep me in perfect peace.

So often I'm tempted to rely upon my own strength in the midst of trials. How foolish I am! You are the infinitely strong God, I am weak, frail, and easily frightened. When the waters rise around me, help me to look to you. Help me to fix my gaze on you. Help me to trust you. I have often proved unfaithful, but you have always proven yourself to be faithful. I have proven to be weak, you have proven yourself strong. And so I throw away any foolish trust I have in myself, and I look solely to you.

God Of A Thousand Generations

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations... (Deuteronomy 7:9)

Father,

I praise you that faithfulness is not something you do, but something you are. You are a faithful God - you are *the* faithful God. You are faithful to me again and again, because faithfulness is who you are. You are always faithful to your purposes, your promises, and your people. You were faithful to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph Samuel, Israel, David, Solomon, the twelve disciples, the early church, and you will continue to be faithful to me. The story of your people is a story of faithfulness.

Thank you that you will keep your covenant with me, and continue to demonstrate your steadfast love toward me. Through Christ, you have made a covenant with me to forgive my sins, give me power over sin, and bring me into your family. Because you are faithful to your covenant, you will never condemn me for my sins. Because you are faithful to your covenant, I will never experience the wrath of God my sins deserve.

Your steadfast love will always pursue me, always hem me in, always lead me. Thank you that your love for me does not waver or wobble depending on my circumstances, but is steadfast, unshakable, and immovable. Lord, when I'm tempted to fear and doubt, help me to remember your past faithfulness to me. Help me remember all the times you've rescued me and delivered me.

Help me also remember your faithfulness to past generations. Not one of your people can say that you have been unfaithful. The constant testimony of your children is that you always have been, and always will be faithful to your covenant. You have always cared for, provided for, and led your children.

I Remember

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:21-23)

Father,

Apart from you I would have no hope. My life would be bleak, my future hopeless, and every day drudgery. Gloom and despair would encompass me. This world is too sinful, too broken, too unsatisfying to give me any true, lasting hope. But in the midst of all the wreckage and carnage of this world, I can have real, solid, lasting hope. In the midst of death and destruction, I can have true joy.

I am filled with hope by calling to mind your character and your promises. Lord, you are full of steadfast love toward me. So often I feel jerked about by the circumstances of life. Some days I'm riding high with joy, others days I'm laid low with sorrow. In the midst of it all, your steadfast love toward me never ceases. The quality and quantity of your love toward me never changes. The intensity of your love never wavers. You still love me with same intensity today as you did on the day you saved me. Help me to call these truths to mind on a daily basis. Your steadfast love is my anchor in stormy seas. Your faithfulness is my solid rock amidst the storm.

I will never come to the end of your mercies. You are an ever-flowing spring of mercy, ready to refresh me at a moment's notice. When I awake in the morning, you have new mercies specially prepared for the coming day. These mercies are especially tailored for that day's trials and triumphs. When these mercies are used up, new ones await me.

Great is your faithfulness, O Lord. You are not sort of faithful. You are not mostly faithful. You are infinitely, always faithful to me. I cannot escape your faithfulness, nor would I ever want to. Your faithfulness goes ahead of me, guarding my steps. Your faithfulness goes behind, catching my foot when it slips. I am always hemmed in by your wonderful faithfulness.

My Very Present Help In Trouble

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. (Psalm 46:1-3)

Father,

I thank you that when trouble arises you are not distant. You do not see me from a distance, you are not far away. You are a very present, immanent, present, near, close, help in trouble. You know me intimately, you know my troubles intimately, and you know what will bring you the most glory and honor. Trouble must come through you first before you allow it to touch me. I take my refuge in you. I do not try to stand against the troubles in my own willpower, but rather, run to you. I find my strength in you. The persistence of trials wears me down, but you are the restorer and supplier of my strength.

I will not be afraid, even when everything around me is collapsing. If my job collapses, I will not fear. If my health collapses, I will not fear. If my family collapses, and my friends desert me, and I have nothing left, I will not be afraid. Even if the earth itself should begin to collapse around me I won't be afraid. Why? Because you are my refuge and strength, my help in trouble, my strong tower, and my shepherd. I am safe as long as I am close to you. You are greater than my circumstances, greater than my fears, and greater than any enemy that stands against me.

You rule over all things, and you have promised to do good to me. You have promised to set a table in the presence of my enemies, and to fill my days with mercy and kindness, and to let nothing separate me from your love. I believe you will fulfill all your promises to me, even when my circumstances seem to indicate otherwise. I believe you will work all things together for my good, even when I can't see how that's possible.

Therefore, I will not fear. Because you are an ever present help in trouble, I will not fear. I will not let my circumstances dictate my life. I will find my refuge in you Lord.

As Far As East Is From West

He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:10-12)

Father,

Thank you that you do not deal with me according to my sins, or repay me according to my iniquities. If you dealt with me according to my sins I would currently be experiencing your fiery, furious, wrath in hell. If you repaid me according to my iniquities, I would right now be experiencing the just repayment for every one of my sins in hell. But your economy is an economy of grace, and you don't repay us according to what we deserve. Instead, you repay sin with mercy, and iniquity with blessing. You repay spiritual treason with full pardon. On the cross you gave Christ the wrath I deserved so I could receive the blessings he deserved.

Lord, help me to grasp the height, breadth, and depth of your love for me. Increase my awareness of your personal, intense love for me. I am always guilty of underestimating your love for me. I never fully grasp the incredible depths of your love for me. Your love for me is greater, higher, deeper, more joyful, and more enthusiastic than I could ever imagine. Please forgive me for doubting your love for me. Your love for me is higher than the heavens are above the earth. Help me to grasp the mind-blowing enormity of your love for me. When I sinfully doubt your love, remind of this incredible truth. Today, by the power of the Holy Spirit, help me to be aware of your love.

You have also removed my sins as far as the east is from the west. You have not taken my sins and stored them somewhere for future retrieval. You have taken away all my sins and flung them into the depths of the sea, never to be retrieved. You have removed them an infinite distance, as far as east is from west. When I sin, I often feel as though I must somehow remove my sins. Free me from the ridiculous idea that I could do anything to take away my sins. Thank you that you are the one who removes all my sins. Help me to revel in the full, free forgiveness you provide!

The God Who Forgets

I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. (Isaiah 43:25)

Father,

When I sin I am tempted to try to blot out my own transgressions. I'm tempted to perform extra spiritual "duties" in a foolish effort to quiet my conscience and blot out my sins. I think that, somehow, a bit of extra Bible reading, or prayer, or fellowship, or fasting, can take away my sins. I act as if I have the power to earn forgiveness. I act as if I can cleanse my soul. What a fool I am! Only you have the authority to forgive sins. Forgive me for dishonoring you by trying to do what only you can do. Forgive me for stealing the glory you receive by forgiving all my sins. Forgive for not believing your promises of forgiveness.

Thank you that you do what I never could do! I cannot remove the deep stain of my sins. I cannot cleanse my marred conscience. I cannot make myself clean in your sight. But you can, and you do! You blot out my transgressions! You remove them from your sight. You wash me clean, take away my sins, and make me pure in your sight. The blood of Christ is sufficient to wash away every I have committed and will commit. The blood of Christ is more powerful than the worst of sins. I may be a great sinner, but I know that Christ is an even greater savior. My sins may be great, but I know that the sacrifice of Christ is greater. I trust you to blot out all of my sins by the blood of Christ. I reject any hope I have in my own merits, and I trust in you to completely wash me clean.

Thank you that have promised not to remember my sins. Even after I repent, I am tempted to remember my sins, and that remembrance often brings condemnation. But when you forgive sins, you completely and totally forgive them. You do not bring them up again and again to condemn me. You deliberately choose not to remember them. Satan is the "Great Reminder" of sins, you are the "Great Forgetter". When Satan accuses me, help me to remember that you have promised to forget all of my sins. Help me not to bring up the sins that you have already forgotten. Today, help me to rest in your wonderful, divine forgetfulness.

Forgiving As I've Been Forgiven

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Father,

When I consider that you have forgiven all of my sins, my heart wants to sing. When I remember that you have washed away every sin I ever have committed and every sin I ever will commit, I am astonished. When I flagrantly, arrogantly, spitefully disobeyed you, you were kind toward me. When I was hard-hearted toward you, you were tenderhearted toward me. I could not purchase your forgiveness, yet you freely gave it to me. You have treated me far better than I deserve, given me far more than I merit, poured out more blessings than I could ever imagine.

Lord, when I consider the overflowing, abundant mercy you have shown me, I'm ashamed at how harsh and hard hearted I've been toward others. When I consider the gentle, tenderhearted way you have treated me, I'm ashamed at my often critical spirit. You said that those who have been forgiven much love much. Lord, you have forgiven me of so much. You have forgiven me of so much more than I will ever forgive others. In light of that, help me to love you deeply and love others deeply. Help me to be constantly aware of how deep your forgiveness runs in my life.

Lord, please give a tender heart toward others. Give me a heart that is slow to anger and quick to forgive other's sins. Give me a heart that is full of mercy, compassion, and grace. Fill my heart to overflowing with your loving kindness. When I'm tempted to be impatient, help me remember your patience toward me. When I'm tempted to be angry, help me to remember your kindness to me. When I'm tempted to withhold forgiveness, help me to remember the depths of forgiveness I've received.

In Christ I've received the greatest kindness and deepest forgiveness. Help me to treat others with gospel kindness and forgiveness.

Freedom In the Son

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

Jesus,

I once was bound by the heavy shackles of my sin. I could not break the power of my sin, could not stop sinning, did not even want to stop sinning. I was a willful slave of Satan, living out my days in his kingdom of darkness, unable to see you or know you. My heart was a spiritual coffin, full of death and decay. I was in grave danger, yet didn't know it. The flames of hell awaited me. The wrath of God hung over me. I was hopeless, helpless, and powerless. I needed to be rescued. I was powerless to rescue myself.

But Jesus, you came to my rescue! You supernaturally breathed life into my spiritually dead heart. You caused my dead bones to come to life. You broke the mighty power of sin that enslaved me. You conquered sins that had ruled me for years. You destroyed my appetite for sin. You broke the sinful spell Satan had cast over me, and you opened my eyes to see your glory and your beauty. You wrote God's law upon my once rebellious, traitorous heart. Jesus, you did this! You are the great conqueror. You are the holy warrior.

Jesus, thank you for the freedom you have given me. I know that if you have set me free from the power of sin, I truly am free. I may feel as though sin still rules me, but I believe your promise that you have set me free. Help me to live each day in the freedom I have in Christ. In Christ, I am free to be holy. Help me to walk out that holiness each day. Satan often lies to me, telling me that I must obey my sinful desires. But I know that in Christ, I truly am free. I don't have to obey my sinful desires, no matter how strong they feel. I am no longer a slave, I am a son of the living God.

Lord, thank you that a day is coming when I will be completely and totally free from sin. I will no longer be plagued and harassed by my sin! How I long for that day! I long for the day when I will not only be free from the power of sin, but also free from the presence of sin. Until that time help me to fight vigorously against my sin, knowing that I am free in Christ.

No Greater Love

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:12-13)

Jesus,

Oh how you have loved me! Your love is higher than the highest heights, deeper than the furthest depths. Your divine love is unfathomable, stretching to the heavens. You have loved me with a holy intensity. No one has loved me more, shown me more kindness, or extended more mercy. Jesus, you loved me when I was supremely unlovable. You loved me when I was a God-hating rebel. You loved me when I was a cosmic traitor. Your love for me led you to set aside your glory and be born in the form of a humble baby. Your love led you to live a sinless, righteous, perfect life in my life. And your love led you to lay down your life in my place.

Jesus, help me to love others as you have loved me. Your love for me was a deep, self-giving, self-sacrificial, others-centered love. You laid aside your privileges, laid aside your glory, laid aside all that rightfully belonged to you. You laid down your very life for me! You did not clutch to your rights or your glory, but instead sacrificially laid them aside. Help me to love others in the same way. Give me a heart that is quick to lay down its rights, quick to sacrifice for others, quick to look to the interests of others. So often I hold fast to my perceived "rights". Forgive me for being so selfish. Give me a heart that is quick to sacrifice for others.

Jesus, I confess that I am often selfish and self-serving, caring more about my own interests than the interests of others. Please fill my heart with your deep, zealous love for others. I need you to fill me with divine, supernatural, sacrificial love. Give me your affection for my fellow saints. Help me to see others through the eyes of Christ, love others with the love of Christ, sacrifice for others just as Christ sacrificed for me.

Jesus, I truly understand love when I see how you have loved me. Help me to love others just as you have loved me.

Having the Mind of Christ

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus... (Philippians 2:3-5)

Father,

I confess that so often I am full of selfish ambition and conceit. I want to advance my agenda and exalt myself. I want others to think highly of me, to respect me, to honor me, even to worship me. Too often I have a high estimation of myself. I think far too much of myself and far too little of others. I am far too easily impressed with myself. I believe that I am more significant than others, and that my desires are more important than the desires of others. Forgive me for acting in such a foolish, sinful, self-promoting, God-dishonoring way. Forgive me for trying to steal the worship that belongs to you alone.

Help me to count others as more important than myself. Help me to elevate others and lower myself. Help me to think more highly of others than I think of myself. Jesus, you are my great example. You set the ultimate example of humility. You laid aside your divine rights to rescue me out of darkness. You set aside your glory and humbled yourself by becoming nothing. You stepped out of glory into darkness, so that you might raise me to glory. Help me to lay aside my perceived "rights" as I serve others. Help me to sacrifice my desires and passions in order to serve others.

Too often I'm only concerned with my own interests and desires. I'm self-absorbed, self-preoccupied, and self-centered. I'm obsessed with ease, comfort, and my own agenda. Lord, destroy my idol of self! Help me to be aware of the interests of others and to actively promote those interests. Help me to even consider the desires of others as more important than my own desires.

Lord, humility is a sweet incense to you. Let my life have the aroma of humility, meekness, and unselfishness.

Sacred Meditation

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. (Psalm 1:1-3)

Father,

Your word is precious to me. It guides me, leads me, protects me, shows me the proper path. Help me to take counsel from your word, not the godless ideas of this world. Help me to always find my wisdom in your scriptures, not in the sinful folly of this world. So often I'm tempted to lean on my own, fragile understanding, rather than on your unshakable word. So often I'm tempted to walk according to my own sinful desires rather than your delightful word. Forgive me for not clinging to your word more tightly, believing your word more firmly, and walking according to your word daily.

Lord, help me to fill my mind with your precious word. When I awake in the morning, help me to prepare for the day by meditating on your word. As I go about the tasks of the day, regularly bring your word to my mind. Help me to apply your word to every situation I find myself in. As I prepare to sleep, fill my mind with great thoughts of you.

Father, forgive me for not delighting in your word more. I know that the more I give myself to sacred meditation on your word, the more I will grow in holiness, righteousness, and Christ-likeness. I know that I cannot produce good spiritual fruit without regularly immersing myself in your word. I know that my spiritual maturity is directly connected to how deeply rooted I am in your word. You speak to me, convict me, refresh me, uplift me, and propel me forward by your word.

Your word is delightful - help me delight in it. Your word is sacred - help me revere it. Your word is precious - help me treasure it. Thank you for giving me your word so that I might prosper.

The Generous Heart

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

Father,

You have been overwhelmingly, incredibly, astonishingly generous to me. When I had nothing to give you, you gave up your precious, sacred Son for me. When I was a helpless, hopeless sinner, Christ died for me. Your generosity knows no limits, your goodness knows no bounds. You have displayed your love for me in every way imaginable, proven your love for me beyond the shadow of a doubt.

In light of your abundant generosity to me, give me an abundantly generous heart. My sinful inclination is to sow sparingly. I'm tempted to sow sparingly with my time, my resources, my energy, and my money. Forgive me for my selfishness, which stands in such stark contrast to your generosity toward me. You have poured bountiful blessings into my life, help me to pour bountiful blessings into the lives of others. You promise that if I sow bountifully, I will reap bountifully. Help me to believe and obey your promise rather than my own sinful, selfish heart.

Lord, you don't need anything from me. You don't need my money, or time, or energy. You are the self-sufficient, self-sustaining God. And yet you invite me to participate in your work. You invite me to give myself to your glorious cause. You invite me to invest myself in your mission. Help me to thrust myself wholeheartedly and gladly into the work you've given me. I don't want to withhold anything from you. I want to cheerfully give all I have to you. I want to joyfully throw myself into your wonderful work. My time, money, energy, and talents all belong to you. Everything I have is yours, and yours alone.

Father, help me to serve today with gladness. You're not interested in a sour, selfish heart. Give me the cheerful, generous, overflowing heart that greatly pleases you.

Gifts of the Spirit

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

Father,

It is incredible to that the Holy Spirit would come to dwell in me. Your Spirit no longer resides in the inner sanctum of a temple or tabernacle, but within me, a frail, fragile vessel. There is no longer a curtain separating me from your immediate presence. Rather, your immediate presence dwells within me. What an incredible blessing! The Holy Spirit gives me power to overcome sin, comforts me in my weakness, empowers me for service, and gives me spiritual gifts to be used for your glory and the good of your people. The Holy Spirit takes my tepid efforts to serve you and transforms them into something glorious. Father, I acknowledge my dependence on the Holy Spirit.

You have not given me spiritual gifts so that I might bring attention, honor, or glory to myself. Rather, you've given me spiritual gifts so that I might exalt you, and help others to exalt you as well. Forgive me for using my gifts to advance my own agenda. Forgive me for the times I've selfishly withheld my gifts from others. I want to all of my spiritual gifts to be harnessed for your service. I want all of my talents and abilities to be deployed in your holy service. Give me a holy zeal to use my spiritual gifts to exalt your name.

Thank you for the particular set of spiritual gifts that you have given me. In your infinite wisdom, you have given me the spiritual gifts that will enable me to bring you the most glory. Help me not to compare my gifts to the gifts of others, or to be jealous of the spiritual gifts you've given to others. Just as a hand is designed to perform a particular task, and should not be jealous of other parts of the body, so you have equipped me to perform particular particular tasks for you. Help me to be content in the wonderful tasks you've called me to do, no matter how "high" or "low" they may seem. Help me to serve contentedly, not striving for more or less than you've called me to.

Ask, Seek, Knock

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened...If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:7-8,11)

Father,

You, the great King of Kings, the one who owns a cattle on a thousand hills, the one who provides for all the sparrows of the air and lilies of the field, have invited me to ask great things of you. How amazing it is that the one who holds the planets in place would bend his ear to hear my prayers. How incredible it is that the one who sustains my very life would put himself at my disposal. What a kind, generous, humble God you are!

Forgive me for how often I neglect to bring my needs to you. Forgive me for how often I try to provide for myself, sustain myself, and strengthen myself, when you are eager and waiting to do those things for me. When I am in need, you call me to come running to you with my requests. You call me to knock, to ask, and to seek. By commanding me to continue knocking, asking, and seeking, you also are calling me to trust your timing in how you answer the request. Father, I often grow weary and discouraged when my prayers are not answered quickly. Stiffen my resolve in prayer. Because you are faithful, help me to continue faithfully knocking, asking, and seeking, even when I cannot see the answer.

Lord, you are the very essence of all that is good and delightful. If I, who am evil, know how to give good gifts, how much more will you, the sum of all good things, give good gifts to me? You, the one who created joy and gladness and delight, will give me exactly what I need when I need it. If something is good for me, you will give it to me. If something is not good for me, you will withhold it. Help me to entrust all my requests to you. Help me to rest in you, knowing that your ways are good, your timing is perfect, and your love for me is deep.