

Mary DeMuth

PRAY  
EVERY  
DAY



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS  
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## Pray Every Day

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# INTRODUCTION

This book began several years ago because I love to pray for others. In my monthly e-zine, I end each letter with “Mind if I pray for you?” And then I pray for the folks receiving the email. Over the years, people have contacted me in several ways—via email, in person, and through the mail—asking me to write a book of my prayers. I created a proposal and shopped it for a few years to no takers. But once I gave it to Harvest House, they saw the project’s merits and published *Jesus Every Day*, a 365-day devotional that empowers readers to pray through Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

When the book released, I had a fortuitous retreat with my mastermind group—a group of Christ-following authors. During our time there, each of us took the hot seat, where we would share a conundrum. I shared, “I would like to promote *Jesus Every Day* in a unique way.” My group of friends suggested I start a podcast. I could call it *Pray Every Day*, my friend Thomas suggested. Following the same pattern of the book, I could read through Scripture, then pray it for my audience.

I launched the podcast in February 2018. My heart in doing so was to pray for the world. As of this writing, the podcast has reached more than 100 countries and has been downloaded hundreds of thousands of times. God has expanded this prayer ministry in ways I could not imagine. Thanks to help from others, *Pray Every Day* now has an app on iTunes and Google Play, and you can even access it on your Alexa device.

Imagine my joy when I hear from listeners all over the world!

Anna from Hungary wrote, “I got an Amazon Echo for Christmas, and I was curious if it could help boost my spiritual life somehow.

That's how I found *Pray Every Day*. Listening to it is part of my morning routine now, and it's so good! So thank you."

Jimena from Colombia shared, "I'm 30, and I've been a Christian all my life through my parents, but two years ago I was baptized. I love your podcast, and I hear it every single day. I was searching for Christian podcasts, and I came across yours and some others, and it has become my morning routine. Thank you for giving us some daily inspiration in the Lord!"

Jessica from the United States emailed me this: "Mary, I just wanted to let you know that I felt like your prayer on the podcast this morning was meant for me. I am a caregiver by trade, and sometimes I need to be reminded that it really is a ministry. I also have trouble speaking up and have been getting discouraged regarding what I have felt God is calling me to do. Your prayer greatly encouraged me, and I pray for you, too, as I know you have opposition and attacks come against you. Thank you so much for your ministry."

This broken world we live in needs prayer. I need prayer. You need prayer.

As a continuation of the *Pray Every Day* podcast, I thought it would be interesting to look at 90 prayers from the Bible. As I uncovered these prayers, I was moved, challenged, and changed. In studying those who prayed in Scripture, I saw a swath of humanity as wide as the Mediterranean Sea: a patriarch, a disgraced murderer, one who formed a golden calf, the least in his clan, a childless woman, a shepherd king and his son, a wall builder, a righteous man who suffered the crushing blow of loss, an unknown psalmist, the weeping prophet, an exile in a foreign land, sailors on a sinking boat, a reluctant prophet, Jesus himself, lepers, officials, disciples, men and women longing for healing (for themselves and their loved ones), the blind, a denier of Jesus, one whose face shone during martyrdom, a church persecutor, elders, and angels. What does this tell us about prayer? God offers everyone this extraordinary gift. And you can access that line of communication with him at any moment—even as you're reading this text.



What a privilege it is to build our relationship with God through prayer—to honestly share our hearts with the One who perplexes us, saves our souls, created the universe with a word, and is the author and finisher of our faith. We don't have to use high language. There is no need to impress. In fact, the essential ingredient in coming to him is humility, acknowledging he is God and we are not. He is the Creator; we are the created. And yet, this Creator made a way for us to stay close to him. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we have unfettered access to the holy of holies. At any given moment, whether we are crying out in pain, rejoicing in hope, or suffering unjustly, we can approach the throne of grace with confidence (Hebrews 4:16).

One of the passages on prayer I didn't highlight in the following 90 devotions comes from the book of James. The Lord's brother asks,

Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven (James 5:13-15).

Whether broken, joyful, or sick, our task is to pray. Recently, my husband and I accompanied our dear friend who had been diagnosed with aggressive cancer as she went to be prayed for by the elders of our church. They anointed her with oil and prayed over her, while many of us cried out in hope. Though impossible, she is with us today—still battling cancer, but defying the odds.

I understand that people don't always receive the answer they want in prayer. (One of my dear friends lost her cancer battle four years ago, and I still grieve.) The point of prayer is not merely to list our requests, but to press into knowing Jesus better. As the elders, my husband, and I prayed for my friend, we all experienced him in a profound way.

This type of prayer indicates its communal importance. James continues,

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops (James 5:16-18).

We can confess our sins to one another, experiencing profound release as someone else hears our struggle (and it is no longer torturing us in the darkness). As people of prayer, we have the privilege, too, of asking for supernatural intervention as Elijah did.

My prayer for you as you work your way through the next 90 days is that you will experience God in a profound, life-changing way. It's my hope that you'll discover the beauty and power of prayer, and that you will walk through a prolonged deepening of your relationship with God. You'll find every sort of prayer in this devotional—from hollers of lament to praises of gratitude, from fear for the future to faith for the sake of others, from cries of grief to hope for unity. I hope every shadow and nuance of prayer will touch you as you face every circumstance. And I pray you'll close this book as a different person.

## Mind if I pray for you?

Jesus, I pray for my friend reading this devotional, that each day will touch them in a specific, *them*-shaped way. Bring clarity in muddled thought. Bring hope where helplessness rules. Bring light when darkness threatens the horizon. Speak truth over every conundrum. Infuse them with righteousness and justice. Sing lovingly over their lives. Empower them to walk in strength and dignity. Replace fear with

faith. Heal them of deep emotional wounds. Restore their joy in salvation. Usher in physical healing. Empower them to let go of bitterness and vengeance. Clean their hearts, minds, and souls in a profound way. Reveal what's next. Bring life to their relationships, reconciliation with enemies, and the return of the prodigals in their lives. May they pray every day, experiencing your delight. Amen.

# DAY ONE

## ABRAHAM

*Abraham said to God,  
“May Ishmael live under your special blessing!”*

GENESIS 17:18

**T**his prayer shows us the longing of a father’s heart for his son, aching to see his offspring blessed by the God who bestows kindness and favor on his children. This is the cry of one who hopes the best for another. This desire for a blessing expresses a universal, unconstrained need. Abraham’s words are instructive to us today and can deeply empower our prayer lives.

So as we begin this journey of praying through the Bible, let’s start with blessing. Think of someone in your life who is struggling with knowing that God is the One who blesses. Pray this over a family member who needs second-chance grace, the kind of grace that pursues those who are far from God—or pray this for a friend who cannot see light in the darkness.

The Hebrew translation of this prayer augments the word *blessing*. It’s a series of words that mean “that Ishmael might live before [God].”<sup>1</sup> And the blessing involves Ishmael’s face, that he would experience God as he faced the Almighty. There is relationship coursing through this verse, depicting the God who lovingly faces his creation, who walks behind, before, and beside as a protective parent. That is the essence of the blessings we pray over our loved ones—that God would shine his face upon those who need him, and that he would protect, defend, and be with his children.

It is much more difficult to pray a blessing upon someone with whom you're in conflict. Part of your healing journey may be asking this for your friend or a family member who perplexes you: *Lord, I pray they would live before you, that you would prosper their soul.* In praying for our painful relationships, we become more like Jesus.

To pray for another is to bless them—to dare to ask that the One who made every heart, body, and soul would protect and walk gloriously alongside them. We see this in beautiful fulfillment as Jesus incarnates God on earth, facing the creation he fashioned, showing us the heart of the One who blesses us all.

We are blessed so that we can bless. We are given grace so that we can give grace to others. We are loved so that we can embody love to someone who truly needs it. We are forgiven so that we can learn the art and joy of forgiving another.

Jesus, would you bless the person I'm thinking of right now? Would you walk alongside them, bring comfort, show them that you see them? Would you turn their face toward yours? Would you reveal yourself to be faithful, utterly reliable, and wholly interested in their welfare? I entrust them to you. Amen.

# DAY TWO

## JACOB

*Jacob made this vow: “If God will indeed be with me and protect me on this journey, and if he will provide me with food and clothing, and if I return safely to my father’s home, then the LORD will certainly be my God. And this memorial pillar I have set up will become a place for worshiping God, and I will present to God a tenth of everything he gives me.”*

GENESIS 28:20-22

Jacob is the patron saint of the doubter. He throws three ifs toward God in this vow and only promises allegiance when God meets all three conditions. Jacob did not have the privilege we have of reading his story from beginning to end. As he states these many ifs, he is *in medias res*, a storytelling term that simply means he is in the middle of a journey. This passage is a snapshot of Jacob in doubt.

That should bring us deep comfort because we, too, live the life of faith in the middle of our journey, without known outcomes to light our way. We understand from Hebrews 11:1 that “faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.” Jacob could not know that his was the lineage of Israel, that the blessing of God would flow through him, the second-born twin of trickery. He is proof that even connivers and scoundrels can find favor and comfort.

Jacob asks for protection, provision, and position in this prayer—to be protected from harm, to be provided food and clothing, and to be positioned back in his homeland. He echoes the Lord’s Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one (Matthew 6:9-13).

It is good and right for us to ask for these things. Why? Because it shows our reliance on God to provide everything we need. And it invites God into our worries. All of this should end as Jacob ends his vow—in worshipping God for who he is and how extravagantly he loves. We owe him everything, not merely a tenth. Because of his faithfulness, we owe him our very lives.

Jesus, thank you for the vulnerability of Jacob's prayer, that he worried about safety, food, clothing, shelter, and home. Please provide what I need. And as you do so, keep me in a posture of gratitude for all you have done. You are so good. So strong. I choose to worship you with everything within me. Amen.

# DAY THREE

## MOSES

*Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Oh, what a terrible sin these people have committed. They have made gods of gold for themselves. But now, if you will only forgive their sin—but if not, erase my name from the record you have written!”*

EXODUS 32:31-32

We live in a world where we continually commit the sin of making gods of gold for ourselves, where the pervasive ideology becomes preferring money over what matters. People have sacrificed dignity, relationships, and right living on the altar of consumption. And it is our job to pray for those ensnared by the corrupt mind-set that material possessions and money are all that matters. The almighty dollar-euro-pound-yen-rand is a cheap substitute for the Almighty God.

What a stunningly sacrificial prayer Moses offers here for the money-bent nation of Israel. It echoes the sentiment of the apostle Paul: “My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them” (Romans 9:2-3). Moses’s prayer is one of deep intercession, attempting to take upon himself what only Christ could do—to bear the sins of another.

Have you ever experienced this kind of affection toward those for whom you pray? That you feel you would willingly be cut off from Christ so that someone else might experience his grace and glory? This is the cry of love, the prayer of the intercessor, the longing of the one



who stands in the gaping hole between a holy God and his unholy people.

Moses prays for God's forgiveness for those who have willingly turned away. We can pray the same, realizing that we, too, willingly turn away. We are clay-footed folks longing for security more than we long for the Savior. Thankfully, we have an advocate in Jesus Christ, who lives to intercede for us day and night. "My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous" (1 John 2:1).

Whether we pray for ourselves, trusting in Jesus our advocate, or we intercede for those in our lives who are far from him, we can be reassured that we will never have to experience hell. Jesus faced it all as he died on the cross. He accomplished this prayer, being cut off from the Father, so we would not have to be.

Jesus, how can I thank you for such a sacrifice? I pray for myself and my friends and family who have been wayward. Help us realize that the things of this world will not satisfy. Help me pray all the more fervently for those who are trapped by the trappings of this world. Thank you for going to the cross for me. I cannot adequately express my gratitude. Amen.