

Consider
the
Lilies

"This book is exceptional
in every way."
—JOHN MACARTHUR



Finding
Perfect Peace
in the
Character
of God

Jonny
Ardavanis

Consider the Lilies

Chapter 12: *The One Who Hears*









“After crossing the Nieman River and entering Russian territory, Napoleon found himself warring against a Russian army in perpetual retreat. The Russian general, knowing that he could not contend with Napoleon’s massive army in head-to-head confrontation, employed a tactic known as attrition warfare, wherein you attempt to grind down your enemy’s ability to wage war by forcing them to exhaust all their energy, resources, and supplies.” (pg. 171)



Napoleon entered Russia with over 600,000 men.

Only 100,000 returned.

Napoleon's losses were greater than the total populations of Roanoke City & County, Salem City, Botetourt County, Craig County, Montgomery County, Floyd County, Franklin County, and Bedford City & County combined!



“The once-applauded army had been decimated – not as a result of opposing military strength, but due to starvation and cold. Although a brilliant military tactician, Napoleon had neglected his men’s most obvious need for food, and as a result, they withered, froze, and died.” (pg. 172)

“The Russian general’s keen strategy is similar to that of the Enemy of our souls. Satan employs attrition warfare. He seeks to deprive us of spiritual sustenance, because starved souls make for easy prey.” (pg. 172)

1 Peter 5:8

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.



C. S. Lewis.

The Screwtape Letters

Includes *Screwtape Proposes a Toast*

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

“It is funny how mortals always picture us as putting things into their minds: in reality our best work is done by keeping things out.” -- Screwtape

“At times God’s children give away the battle, not because they exhaust their spiritual resources, but because they don’t use them at all... Satan cannot steal our salvation, but he can try to steal our peace and rob our joy (John 10:10). Our adversary is happy to find those whom he seeks to destroy failing to use the resources and wield the weapons God has provided in the heat of the battle.” (pgs. 172-173)

“The devil lurks; he prowls and is content that we would trust in Christ as Savior just as long as we do not trust Him to supply our every need (2 Corinthians 2:11).” (pg. 172)

“You do not have because you do not ask.” (James 4:2)



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“Therefore, the biggest problem in our lives is not unanswered prayers but unoffered prayers to God.” (pg. 187)

“To live prayerless is to live defenseless amid the battle. In Christ, God gives the Christian confidence, but he does not condone carelessness or negligence in regard to the strength and shielding our souls need most. Jesus lived for forty days without food (Matthew 4:1-11), but He did not live for an hour without prayer (Luke 5:16)... We need protection in battle, we need joy in the midst of sorrow, and we need communion with God in a confusing and chaotic world. We need prayer... And the stunning reality is that when you pray, your Father hears.” (pg. 173)

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

“Despite his grim circumstances, he wrote to rejoice always (Philippians 4:4), be anxious for nothing (verse 6), and pray about everything. This was Paul’s prescription for worried and anxious minds: prayer.” (pg. 174)

*“A Christian is indeed someone who has placed his or her faith in God, but biblical belief is not merely the placement of our faith in Christ; it’s the continued practice and habit of faith as a constant exercise. Faith is not a thing; faith is an action. It has to do with where we set our minds and where we fix our gaze – and for the child of God, **the exercise of faith is most practically expressed when we flee to our Father in prayer.**” (pg. 174)*

James 2:26

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

“Fleeing to God as our refuge and relying on Him as our strength is merely Christian mumbo jumbo to those who are strangers to God in prayer. God is a ‘very present help in trouble’ (Psalm 46:1), but His nearness and closeness are not equally sensed by everyone. Psalm 145:18 says that God is ‘near to all who call upon Him.’ God’s nearness is an objective fact, but it is also a subjective experience. His nearness is sensed in a real, comforting, and invigorating way only by those who ‘call on Him.’ When prayer is on the back burner of our lives, worry and anxiety will be on the forefront of our minds.” (pg. 174)

Hebrews 4:16

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

3 Reasons Scripture Gives Us to Pray:

1. Prayer is Commanded

Matthew 6:5

“When you pray...”

Luke 18:1

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.

Matthew 5:44

“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Luke 10:2

And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

3 Reasons Scripture Gives Us to Pray:

1. Prayer is Commanded

Acts 2:42

They were continually devoting themselves to... prayer.

Colossians 4:2

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; **for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.***

“Prayer is a duty; however, because God is a good Father, every command He give us in Scripture is also for our good!” (pg. 176)

3 Reasons Scripture Gives Us to Pray:

1. Prayer is Commanded
2. Prayer is a Privilege

“Prayer is the highest privilege we have as children of God. Stars cannot pray. Oceans cannot pray. The mountains cannot pray. The animals cannot pray. Why? Because they are not made in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.” (pg. 176)



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“We have lost sight of the privilege prayer is and, in turn, have relegated prayer to the peripheral pockets of our lives. Prayer is fellowship and communion with our Creator, Savior, Friend, and the King of Kings. If someone were to write a biography of your life, would prayer be a main chapter? Would it even be included in the appendix?” (pg. 176)

3 Reasons Scripture Gives Us to Pray:

1. Prayer is Commanded
2. Prayer is a Privilege

“Privileges are typically granted, not earned. And such is the case with prayer. Christ, by His obedience, death, and resurrection, has purchased this privilege for us... To pray is not a natural birthright; it’s a spiritual birthright in Christ. Jesus had to die so that you could approach God and call Him ‘Father.’” (pg. 176)

3 Reasons Scripture Gives Us to Pray:

1. Prayer is Commanded
2. Prayer is a Privilege
3. Prayer is Powerful

“[In His sovereignty] not only does God ordain the end; He also ordains the means to the end.” (pg. 177)

“God does not need dirt to plant trees, or rain to nourish them, or the sun to help them grow, but He uses dirt, rain, and photosynthesis to accomplish His purposes. Similarly, God uses prayers to accomplish His will, and prayer does in fact change things!” (pg. 177)

James 5:16-18

*¹⁶ The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. ¹⁷ **Elijah** was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.*

3 Reasons Scripture Gives Us to Pray:

1. Prayer is Commanded
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Romans 8:26-27

*²⁶ In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷ and **He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.***

The ACTS Acronym for Prayer:

“A” is for Adoration

“Adoration is the act of treating someone or something with profound love, deep devotion, and extreme admiration. It often implies worship, particularly in a religious sense, acknowledging a superior being (God)... Synonyms include worship, veneration, honor, devotion, and esteem.” (Google AI)

2 Kings 19:15

“O LORD, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.”

The ACTS Acronym for Prayer:

“A” is for Adoration

Psalm 8:1-4

¹ O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! ² From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength because of Your adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease. ³ When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; ⁴ what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?

The ACTS Acronym for Prayer:

“A” is for Adoration

Psalm 103:1-19

*¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.
² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; ³ Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; ⁴ Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; ⁵ Who satisfies your years with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle.
⁶ The LORD performs righteous deeds and judgments for all who are oppressed... ⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness... ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him... ¹⁷ the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting... ¹⁹ The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.*

The ACTS Acronym for Prayer:

“A” is for Adoration

“When the pattern of our prayer lives is exclusively requests, petitions, and wants, we lose one of the primary purposes of prayer, which is to hallow the name of God. Our prayer lives will inevitably be anemic when we come to God only with our grocery list of ‘gets.’ But when our heart’s desire is foremost the hallowing of His name and the advancement of His kingdom (Matthew 6:10), all our other needs and desires are put into perspective (v. 33).

Are you as anxious about the glory of God as you are about your personal desires?... Adoration tunes our hearts to God’s glory, power, and authority, and if we miss this critical element of prayer, our petitions will lack perspective of who we are praying to, and, consequently, our worries will not be wiped away no matter how hard we plead.” (pgs. 181-182)

The ACTS Acronym for Prayer:

“C” is for Confession

Psalm 32:1-5

¹ How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! ² How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! ³ When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin.

“Psalm 130:4 says, ‘There is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.’ God’s forgiveness leads to fear – not in the sense of dread, but in the sense of humble awe and wonder. Confession is a catalyst to awe, and awe is the on-ramp to worship.” (pg. 183)

The ACTS Acronym for Prayer:

“T” is for Thanksgiving

Philippians 4:6

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Colossians 4:2

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.

“If we do not come thankfully into God’s presence, we will come greedily... Without thanksgiving, we come to God as if He were a vending machine.” (pg. 184)

The ACTS Acronym for Prayer:

“T” is for Thanksgiving

Philippians 4:6

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

“One of the reasons we are prone to worry is that we are often so ungrateful. And because our lives are short on praise, they are short on peace... Interestingly, Paul’s prescription for anxious minds includes thanksgiving, and if it is part of the prescription, it is often a component of the diagnosis – thankless hearts produce anxious minds.” (pg. 184)

The ACTS Acronym for Prayer:

“S” is for Supplication = *a request or an appeal*

Philippians 4:6

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

→ (Latin) *sup* = *under or below* + *plicare* = *to fold or bend*

Supplication implies bowing down or kneeling, suggesting a humble request or plea.

“We pray that God would grant us our ‘daily bread’ because each day we need to be reminded that we are not strong enough or sufficient enough to survive on our own... Far too often, we live as if we personally provide for ourselves and then call on God only when we are ‘in a pickle’.” (pgs. 184-185)

The ACTS Acronym for Prayer:

“S” is for Supplication = *a request or an appeal*

Philippians 4:6

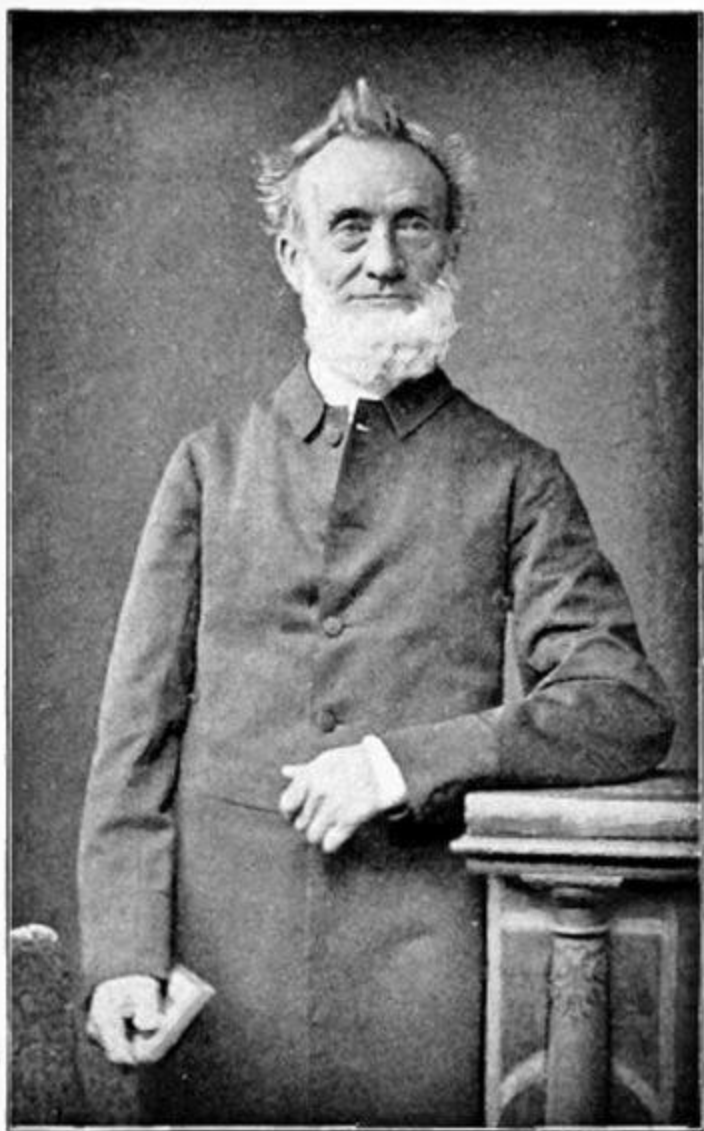
Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

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Supplication implies bowing down or kneeling, suggesting a humble request or plea.

“We make supplications to God because we live in a world of trouble and pain. And the peace of God does not come from denying trouble but by bringing our trouble to God.” (pg. 185)

“A courageous spine is dependent on bruised knees. You will never stand tall in biblical courage unless you kneel in pleading prayer... Trust in God is the product of communion with God. Where there is no fellowship, there can never be any deep faith... Our trust in God will only be as deep as our prayer lives.” (pgs. 189-190)



George Müller

“During Müller’s ministry, he cared for more than 2,000 orphans at a time, and even though his needs were many, he never mentioned them to anyone other than his heavenly Father in prayer. In his journal, Müller recorded more than fifty thousand specific answers to prayer – that’s more than 500 answers to prayer every year! Müller’s life not only serves as an example of a man who prayed fervently but, more importantly, functions as the validation of what we have been examining: your Father hears your prayers.” (pg. 190)

“God does grant peace and joy, but He does not offer compartmentalized victory in the Christian life. If we want to grow in one area of our Christian lives (for example, learning how to handle worry), we must pursue God holistically. We do not simply pray, ‘God, take away my worry.’ We pray in this manner:

‘Lord, help me to love You; give me an exalted view of Your holiness and power. Thank You for all that You have done for me in Christ. Thank You for forgiving me of my sin. Thank You for preparing a home for me in heaven. Lord, today I pray that You would grant me the peace that comes from knowing that You are in total control of my life. I confess that my heart is prone to worry and despair, so, God, please forgive me of my worry and give me the joy only You can provide.’” (pgs. 178-179)

Next Time: Chapter 13

Mission, Family, Future