

40 DAYS OF prayer

DAY
36

WEEK 6

PRAYER AS AN EXPRESSION OF HOPE

For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

When we look around this fallen world, we see and hear so many incidents that seem so unjust and evil. If we let those things sink deep into our minds, we can easily fall into frustration and even have our faith come down with doubts and questions about the future. As children of God, this is where we are called to deepen our roots in His Word and grow in our faith. As the Word says in John 15:5, abiding in the relationship of Jesus is the key for us to have hope in this world as Jesus has promised that He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." We need to believe that our Lord is in control of everything in our life. Hence, prayer becomes an expression of hope. So, how do we use our personal and corporate prayer time as an expression of hope? In what ways could prayer effectively build believers to become His witnesses in this fallen world?

DAY

DAY

DAY

DAY

DAY

WE TRUST IN YOUR GOODNESS

TITUS 2:13

I ensure my future by remembering the past.

We've all gone through difficult moments in life. Sometimes we walk through circumstances that are adverse to us. But when we focus too heavily on our problems, we often lose sight of the blessing that God is more powerful than any situation we are experiencing. We cannot deny that the problem is there, that it troubles us, that it robs us of our joy and our hope. In our worst moments, we feel that heaven is closed to us. How can we escape these paralyzing thoughts?

The psalmist reminds us whom we serve: the Creator of the heaven and earth, the omnipotent Maker of wonders. He is always good. His love is everlasting. We must proclaim these truths with boldness and gratitude. We must take Scripture at face value and remember that there is no one like Him! If He is omnipotent, is anything too difficult for Him?

Regardless of your circumstance, declare the greatness of our God! Remember that He will work for His name to continue to be glorified in all things. His Word reassures us that He is always in control of every situation—even those we are not aware of. And in each of them, *His purposes will be fulfilled!*

How long should I wait for Him to answer? Knowing that His plans are always for His own glory and my own good, we must not lose hope or be discouraged—or least of all, tire of praying. Continue proclaiming that He is a doer of wonders and that His works are perfect.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

I believe that You are the almighty Creator and Sustainer of everything that exists. As I am Your child, You'll take care of my life and family. I know that You will care for the things that worry me because You seek to help Your children. I am experiencing situations that I cannot understand, but I look at the past, and the Scriptures remind me that You are good, that Your love is everlasting, that You are the omnipotent Doer of wonders, and *nothing is impossible for You!* Amen.

WE TRUST IN YOUR REDEMPTIVE PLAN **GENESIS 1-3; ROMANS 3:23**

God is good and can be trusted. He made a beautiful garden for mankind to live in and rule and then blessed us to be fruitful and increase in number. Sin entered the world through Eve and Adam's choice to break the boundary God established when He told them they must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or they would die. We see this sinful nature even in two-year-olds who walk directly toward the very thing their parents told them not to touch. I, too, have moments when I willfully disobey what God asks of me. God wanted Adam and Eve to freely choose obedience out of love for Him, but their choice to do their own thing led to separation from Him (see Gen. 1-3 and Rom. 3:23).

But the story doesn't end here. God would not allow sinful separation to be the final word. He had a redemptive plan for us in the same way good parents have a redemptive plan for their two-year-olds. God's heart is revealed in 2 Peter 3:9, which reads, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." God's plan is freely offered and available to all people, and though He knows not all people will choose Him, He will never stop His loving pursuit. Will you trust His redemptive plan for your life today?



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

Thank you for free will. I repent of my momentary lapses of defiant willfulness to go my own way and do my own thing. I surrender to Your Lordship. I acknowledge that I do not know better than You, and I will continue to come into Your presence and wait for Your direction before I act. I will trust Your ways, especially when I cannot see around the corner, because Your redemptive plan for my life is good. Thank You for always desiring deeper intimacy with me. I say "yes" to Your tender invitation to choose You. Amen.

WE PARTICIPATE IN YOUR KINGDOM AS AN END-TIMES MOVEMENT MATTHEW 24:14; ROMANS 10:13-15

It happened again—someone added something new to Scripture. I’ve read it many, many times before, but clearly that phrase is new since last I read through the Word. The first part of the verse I’ve heard and even preached on: “Therefore [Jesus] is able to save completely those who come to God through him” (Heb. 7:25a). These are powerful words on their own, but someone snuck in an added phrase: “. . . because [Jesus] always lives to intercede for them” (Heb. 7:25b). I had never seen that before; at least it had never registered until the Spirit pointed it out this time.

Yes, Jesus modeled a powerful prayer life while on earth. Jesus taught us how to pray. But here and now, I find that He, sitting beside Abba in heaven, is always interceding for me. It stands to reason that He prays more wisely than I do, with more power than I have, with greater insight than I ever could have, and with knowledge of the future that I could only wish for. My grocery list of prayer pleas and Christmas lists of requests seem somehow less needed when I discover Jesus is already always praying for me and with me. Yes, I should still share my heart in prayer, but I find I can more easily abide in Him with hope and rest when I realize that He is already, always, powerfully, wisely praying for and with us.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Jesus,

You have granted grace and salvation; I am eternally grateful. Further, You’ve gifted me with the companionship of the Spirit. I couldn’t imagine life otherwise. Beyond that, You continue to labor in love on my behalf by *always* interceding for and with me. Seeing the powerful impact of Your prayer life while You walked in this world makes me take a deep breath of hope as I abide in the reality that You are praying for my life and journey in the same all-powerful way. And here I exhale in rest, peace, and hope. Amen.

WE KNOW YOUR KINGDOM IS ETERNAL AND HAS NO END **EXODUS 15:18; PSALM 145:13; DANIEL 4:3**

My friends and the youth I serve often tease me because one of my favorite places to go for quiet reflection is the cemetery. When I first started visiting the cemetery, I didn't know anyone who was buried there, but sadly I do now. Nevertheless, it's a place I go to talk to Jesus, to slow down, and to remember that the time I have here is limited. Though I find comfort in knowing that this life is temporary, I confess that the thought of eternity sometimes scares me. I can't wrap my head around "forever."

It's overwhelming to think that those who have passed before us are already experiencing "forever," either with Jesus or eternally separated from Him. While dwelling too long on "forever" can be frightening, I find comfort in knowing that in the "forever" that I will experience, the Lord—our good, good King—reigns. While whatever peace and goodness we experience here is often overthrown by heartache and evil, the goodness, faithfulness, and kindness of God rules over the whole universe forever. There will be no end to His wonderful and mighty dominion. In moments when life is hard, dark, and heartbreaking, let us remember that our God is on His throne, that His goodness reigns supreme, and that one day we will see it with our own eyes and enjoy it forever.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Our Father,

You have put eternity in our hearts to remind us that we have been made for more than what our eyes can see, what our hands can touch, and what our minds can conceive. I praise You because You are the God whose wonders are mighty and whose Kingdom is everlasting. Jesus, by Your Resurrection, You have provided the foundation of our hope—that the day we are absent from the body, we will be present with You. Holy Spirit, please help us today to set our minds on things above and live faithfully for You. Amen.