

RELATIONSHIP NOT RITUAL

Conversations With God Message Series Week 2

Matthew 6:9-11

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January 4, 2026

A. Foundations for prayer:

1. Relationship—not ritual. (Matthew 6:9; Philippians 3:7-8)

“We are surrounded by relationships but driven by accomplishment. God is the opposite. Though surrounded by His accomplishments, He has given Himself in relationship. Though not in need of interaction, He has chosen to pursue it. For God, fellowship is the goal.”

-Victoria Brooks

Bill Thrasher, *A Journey to Victorious Praying*,
Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2003, p. 69.

“As we try to squeeze prayer into our busy lives, God stands at the other end of the field, saying, ‘Turn around! I’m over here; I *am* the goal!’ Influence, productivity, and efficiency flow out of our immersion in Christ.”

Ryan Skoog, Peter Greer, and Cameron Doolittle, *Lead With Prayer*,
FaithWords, Nashville, TN, 2025, p. xxiv.

2. Submission—not demands. (Matthew 6:10; Luke 22:42)

3. Dependency—not self-sufficiency. (Matthew 6:11;
Mark 1:32-38)

“Prayer fills man’s emptiness with God’s fullness.”

-E.M. Bounds

Bill Thrasher, *A Journey to Victorious Praying*,
Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2003, p. 75.

“We often forgo the strength of heaven and rely on our own ability. We eschew the wisdom of heaven for our own ideas. We rely on our own energy and favor when the energy and favor of heaven are available. All of heaven’s resources are available every moment when we stop filling our busy lives beyond capacity in order to be filled with His life, stop pursuing our agendas to receive His guidance, and stop our running to take time to walk with Him.”

Ryan Skoog, Peter Greer, and Cameron Doolittle, *Lead With Prayer*,
FaithWords, Nashville, TN, 2025, p. xxv.

B. Tips for growing your prayer life:

1. Practice being in the presence the God.

(1 Thessalonians 5:17)

“Staying in tune with the Spirit is often not about doing different things but just doing them *with God*.”

Ryan Skoog, Peter Greer, and Cameron Doolittle, *Lead With Prayer*, FaithWords, Nashville, TN, 2025, p. 48.

2. Have a structure and a plan. (Colossians 4:2)

“The devil defeats most praying before it happens because we didn’t make a plan. Another praying leader described his Rule of Life this way: ‘I set my prayer life, then I organize the rest of my life around it.’”

Ryan Skoog, Peter Greer, and Cameron Doolittle, *Lead With Prayer*, FaithWords, Nashville, TN, 2025, p. 23.

3. Pray specifically and with expectations. (Psalm 5:1-3)

“Vague prayers get vague answers; specific prayers get specific answers.”

Ryan Skoog, Peter Greer, and Cameron Doolittle, *Lead With Prayer*, FaithWords, Nashville, TN, 2025, p. 85.

4. Discover how you best commune with God.

- Walk, journal, sing worship songs, read Scripture, kneel, pray out loud

5. Slow down, listen, and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 6:18)

“True prayer starts with God and the prayer burden He places on our heart. For that reason the greatest discipline in prayer is the discipline of communicating with the Holy Spirit as He aids us in sharing our real concerns, burdens, and desires.”

Bill Thrasher, *A Journey to Victorious Praying*,
Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2003, p. 58.

“As we seek to obey the Spirit’s guidance in prayer, let me tell you what will often happen—*nothing*! But sometimes ‘nothing’ means that the Spirit desires to slow us down and lead us into silence. Our society is addicted to noise, and for that reason we are often insensitive to the Spirit of God.”

Bill Thrasher, *A Journey to Victorious Praying*,
Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2003, p. 61.

6. Pray in light of the gospel. (Ephesians 1:3-14)

- A great prayer life doesn’t mean God will love you more, and a pathetic prayer life doesn’t mean God will love you less because in Christ, you are loved apart from your performance.
- Sin, shame, and guilt don’t need to be barriers to prayer because in Christ, you are loved and forgiven.

Resources:

- *A Journey to Victorious Praying* by Bill Thrasher
- *Lead with Prayer: The Spiritual Habits of World-Changing Leaders* by Ryan Scoog, Peter Greer, and Cameron Doolittle