

Launch Into Prayer Cards **Course Manual**

For use with *Launch Into Prayer Cards*, a seeJesus video course



By Lydia Leggett and Bob Allums

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Version 2

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We help people see and reflect the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus through our discipling resources.

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Quotations marked “*A Praying Life*” refer to *A Praying Life* by Paul E. Miller, Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2009.

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Foreword

Have you ever noticed how much you learn by simply observing and then imitating others?

As a private pilot, I think I have picked up more helpful tips by sitting up front and watching my pilot friends fly than by anything else. The way they work the radio or their techniques for handling challenging landing situations and other such observable things go a long way to help me. Not only have I found I learn good things but, I also find I enjoy the process of learning much more than if I was simply reading a flight manual. Observing and imitating others is both helpful and more enjoyable.

When you think about it, this is exactly how children learn. They are constantly observing and then trying to imitate what they notice in adults. It is one of the key reasons they grow and mature so quickly in picking up language, developing their motor skills, etc. It makes perfect sense that Jesus would say repeatedly that the key to being in relationship with the Father is to become like a little child.

The same is true in finding help in one's walk with God. The Apostle Paul said it this way in 1 Corinthians 4:14-16, "I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me."

At seeJesus, we may not be your spiritual fathers, per se, but we hope you pick up some ideas worth imitating in the "Launch Into Prayer Cards" course that complements both the book and the seminar known as *A Praying Life*.

You will notice that you are seeing real prayer cards and hearing real prayer stories from Paul Miller and myself. Note that they are smudged with the ink of real life, faded with usage and time. Note that they are often not very neat. Prayer and prayer stories are not things that you can simply engineer in life. The real you is meeting the real God in the midst of an often messy and challenging life. Like you, we are simply children who are dependent upon our Father.

We hope you enjoy this manual as you go through the video segments. It is designed to offer helpful quotes from others who, down through the centuries, did all of life through prayer as dependent children and as a result saw much fruit come through imitation.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. – John 15:7-8

Bob Allums

Director

A Praying Life: a seeJesus Ministry

Introduction

If you've got this in hand (or on screen), then you've probably attended one of our seminars or read the book, *A Praying Life*. In either case, welcome! You are likely a bit familiar with the concept of prayer cards already, but seeking some pointers. You are not alone. By far, the most common question after a seminar is, "How do I start these?"

Prayer cards are a helpful, rubber-meets-the-road tool to keep you engaged in the stories God is weaving. They will help you slow down, look at people, think through what your heart longs to see happen, and then do as Jesus said (six times!) in John 14-16: ASK!

They are *not* magic. They *are* helpful. And our prayer is that this manual, with the video lessons from Paul Miller and Bob Allums, would be another helpful tool in your journey. Each of the videos has a corresponding chapter in this manual. There are also other encouraging sections and exercises to keep you going. You can watch the videos with this manual in front of you, or come to the questions here after watching the videos. We recommend having a journal or notebook with you as you work through these questions.

Keep in mind that as your stack of cards grows, you most likely won't pray through all of your cards every day. This isn't legalism; allow yourself to be led by God's Spirit.

One final word. Like any other discipline, there will never be a perfect time to start prayer cards, or a magical hour of the day to sit and spend time in the Word. Start with five minutes each morning. Our encouragement to you is—just do it. Don't wait for everything to line up perfectly, your schedule to clear, your kids to need you less. As Paul Miller reminds us, "Learning to pray does not offer us a less busy life; it offers us a less busy heart."

You are about to have your eyes opened and your faith built up!

Lydia Leggett
Seminar Coordinator
Assistant to the Director
A Praying Life: a seeJesus Ministry

Oddly enough, many people struggle to learn how to pray because they are focusing on praying, not on God. Making prayer the center is like making *conversation* the center of a family mealtime. In prayer, focusing on the conversation is like trying to drive while looking *at* the windshield instead of *through* it. It freezes us, making us unsure of where to go. Conversation is only the vehicle through which we experience one another. Consequently, prayer is not the center. . . . Getting to know a person, God, is the center.

Paul Miller

Lesson 1 | Praying Through Marriage

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 5

Isaiah 62:4

Ephesians 5

Philippians 2:14-16

Colossians 3

1 Peter 3:1, 7

1 Peter 5:10

Create Your Card:

Begin a prayer card for your spouse, or, if not married, for a key relationship in your life.

What ways are you thankful for your spouse?

"I like to think of all the ways Jill is God's perfect gift to me." – Paul Miller

If you are not married and want to be, what do you hope for in your future spouse?

Be honest and share your heart.

What do you really long for in your marriage (or other key relationships)?

For example, "I would love for my wife to be more thoughtful about my needs for intimacy," "I wish my husband would become a great listener when I share my heart," "I feel we are late to everything and I would love that to change," or "I wish he was more organized."

What new ways is your Father prompting you to love your spouse? What practical ideas come to mind?

What "pressures" do you notice in your husband's or wife's life that you can be praying about?

Help Along the Way:

“How would you love someone without prayer? I mean, what would it look like if you loved someone but couldn’t pray for that person? It was a puzzle to me. I couldn’t figure out what it would look like. Love without being able to pray feels depressing and frustrating, like trying to tie a knot with gloves on. I would be powerless to do the other person any real good. People are far too complicated; the world is far too evil; and my own heart is far too off center to be able to love adequately without praying. I need Jesus.”

– A Praying Life, pg. 261

- “When you do marriage deliberately through prayer, get ready. Now you’ve invited the Father to come in and be right in the middle!”*
- Look for Scripture passages that mirror what you would like to see in your spouse, like an increased desire for discipleship (consider 1 Timothy 4:7-8), or that he or she wouldn’t be ashamed of the gospel in evangelism (look at Romans 1:16). You are praying that these words would become a reality in their lives.
- Seek out passages that put to words how you would like to grow in loving these people, such as the example of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet (John 13:14).

Real-life prayer example: “Father, my wife is anxious. I don’t know why. There must be something deeply internal going on. Please give me insight as to how I can meet her where she is and love her in a way that is truly helpful. Please give her faith in yourself as revealed in your Word. Please cause her to pray today. Give her confidence that she doesn’t have, today. I pray the words of Psalm 5 that she would ‘take refuge in you and rejoice.’ I pray she would call upon you, and feel such faith and such release that she would ‘sing for joy.’ Please ‘cover her with your favor as with a shield.’”

* Unattributed quotes throughout the manual are from Paul Miller and Bob Allums, from the lesson’s accompanying video.

Lesson 2 | Praying Through Parenting

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 51:6
Psalm 86:11
Psalm 127:3
Isaiah 38:19
Isaiah 43:6-7
Isaiah 49:25
Isaiah 59:21
Isaiah 60:4
Isaiah 65:23
Ephesians 6:1
Colossians 3:20
1 Peter 2:11
1 John 2:15
3 John 2

Create Your Card:

Start a prayer card for each of your children.

What ways do you feel helpless in your parenting? Jot them down, on a separate card if necessary.

Examples of helplessness in parenting:

- I have noticed that they are picking up bad language or bad habits.
- He is getting rebellious and sassy.
- She seems to be having trouble with her vision, but resists when I take her to the doctor.
- I can tell he is struggling with sexual temptation.
- She is worried about something, but I can't tell what's bugging her.
- What college would be best for him? What field of study should I suggest?

What strengths do you see in your children? Thank God for the strengths and, with time, he will give you ideas/hopes for each of your children. After praying for some time for each of them, look for an opportune time to tell them that you have noticed

a particular strength in their lives. Be sure you don't tell them about it in a critical way, though.

“One of the things I noticed in praying for each of my children is that I began to get a vision for their callings in life. Prayer cards helped me slow down and take a healthy look at each child. I began to pray in light of that vision, which led to asking my son, for example, when it was time to explore college and a field of study. ‘Have you thought about engineering? I think you would be successful and really enjoy it.’ I was pleasantly surprised at how receptive he was to hear my input after I had spent time praying before approaching him on it.”

A Praying Life Seminar Trainer

Be honest about what you're asking the Father about your children. What do you long to see in their lives? How about in your relationship with them?

What ways would you like the Father to work in their hearts?

Keep in mind:

- The culture can be overpowering to your children.
- In their minds, there's often disconnect between their spiritual heritage and real life.
- The temptation as a parent is to “move in and lower the boom with criticism.” Instead – start praying for them daily. Give God time and space to work in them.

Help Along the Way:

- “If I don't pray for each one of my kids, by name, every day, they will kill one another!”
- In praying for each child, it's important that you spend time just looking at them.
- When you're praying through cards, you might not be praying every single item every day. It might be one or two items per day.

Lesson 3 | Praying for the Next Generation

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 22:29-31

Psalm 51:17

Psalm 78:4-6

Psalm 79:13

Psalm 89:1

Psalm 102:18

Psalm 145:4

John 5:30

John 8:28

Ephesians 4:12-15

Ephesians 4:31-32

Romans 12:21

Create Your Card:

Put together prayer cards for each of your grandchildren, or if you don't have any, for the next generation in general.

Bob labeled his card "My responsibility to the next generation based on Psalm 78." Is this a new thought for you? How is the Father stirring in you to care about and pray for the next generation?

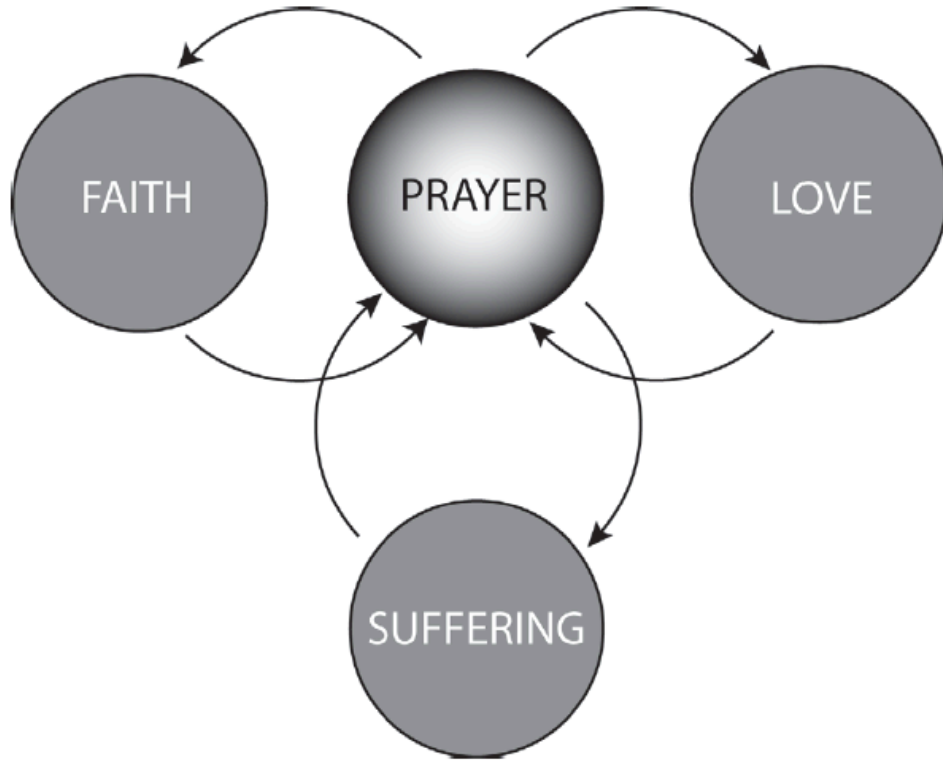
For your grandchildren, or other relationships, how can you apply the Jesus model in the Gospel of Luke that love first looks, then feels compassion, then acts?

If you don't have grandchildren, think through ways you'd like to see our culture change through the influence of the next generation. In what ways can you be part of God's work in building them up?

Help Along the Way:

- We are just as helpless with grandchildren as we are with our own children. We need God to work in every generation!
- You get a "feedback loop" between prayer and love. As you pray, you love, and you learn more ways to pray. Every relationship becomes a divine

community when you pray, because you're bringing God into it.



Lesson 4 | Praying for Relatives

Anchor in the Word:

Isaiah 52:7, 10

Psalm 57:5

All of the Proverbs

Try praying a chapter of Proverbs a day on the corresponding day of the month, and watch what happens when you pray for wisdom, discretion, courage, etc., for siblings, cousins, and in-laws, in specific situations they are facing.

Create Your Card:

Begin prayer cards either for individual relatives, or for your relatives in general. There's freedom here, just bring people before your Father in honesty and genuineness!

What real-life situations are coming up in your relatives' lives that you can pray for? Remember, you can involve your Father in the nitty-gritty details of life.

Help Along the Way:

- The value of the prayer card method is that things come up that you wouldn't ordinarily pray for. (Who prays for relatives unless they are sick, or they just happen to come to mind?) This is deliberately entering into a relationship with them by creating prayer cards.
- When you enter a prayer story with someone, your heart is drawn to love them.
- As you pray, you'll begin to see doors open naturally for helpful conversations.

Lesson 5 | Praying Through Life Decisions and Big Issues

Anchor in the Word:

Proverbs 3:5-8

Proverbs 16:9

Isaiah 41:10

Ezekiel 17:24

Habakkuk 3:17-19

John 14-16

Create Your Card:

Draft a prayer card on some big decisions you have coming up in life. Moving? Child choosing a college? Contemplating marriage? Thinking about adopting? Career change? Bring God into *everything*.

What do you long for in these situations?

Help Along the Way:

- Praying through big decisions or life issues, like praying through anything else, focuses your heart on that issue. It brings both your heart and the issue to God.
- These cards are tools to help you slow down your life and become aware of the story.

There is no substitute for praying through the big issues you face in life. In fact, when you get alone and pray through the big decisions you have coming at you, or face the dependence you see in your life, you are actually being like Jesus.

Paul Miller is known to remind us: "Jesus was the most dependent person who ever lived."

Thomas Brooks, a puritan, put it this way: "... When Christ was on earth, he did much exercise himself in secret prayer; he was often with God alone, as you may see in many Scriptures: [such as] Matthew 14:23."

Lesson 6 | Praying for Your Church

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 126

Psalm 133:1-3

Mark 9:22-24

Luke 22:32

Romans 12:2

Romans 15:5-6

Galatians 5:13-15

Galatians 5:16-26

Galatians 6:10

Colossians 3:16

Hebrews 13:7, 17

Hebrews 10:24-25

1 Thessalonians 5:11-12

Create Your Card:

Make a prayer card for your pastor and/or other church leadership.

Make another card for your church's ministry, or a church plant.

What would you like to see God do in your church?

What ways can you thank God for the church leadership?

Statistics show most pastors only last about five years in the ministry before struggling with serious burnout. How can you pray for your pastor(s)?

What things can you pray for them? (Consider – faith, the fruits of the Spirit, protection from discouragement)

What ways can you minister? How can you love the Body of Christ?

Help Along the Way:

- It's easy to sit back and just complain about your church or its leadership. Instead of complaining, pray.
- A prayer card is helplessness written down.
- See also Lesson 9 | Praying for Small Groups

Lesson 7 | Praying for Non-Christians

Anchor in the Word:

Isaiah 52:7, 10

Psalm 57:5

Luke 5:32

Romans 2:4

2 Corinthians 4:1-10

2 Corinthians 7:10

Colossians 4:5-6

2 Peter 3:9

Jude 22-24

Create Your Card:

Make a card simply for non-Christians (or not-yet-believers!). You can add names as people come to mind. Evangelism begins with prayer for them.

What details can you pray about for each of these people? What do you hope to see in their lives?

Help Along the Way:

- It's helpful to pray that they will pick up the Bible and read a bit, or that they would enjoy a gospel conversation with an old friend who comes across their path in life.
- Again, as you pray for people and begin a story with them and God, you will see new and practical ways you can love them. This card is a helpful tool in evangelism – focusing your prayers on those who don't know the Lord.

Lesson 8 | Praying Through Friendships

Anchor in the Word

Proverbs 27:6, 9-10, 14, 17, 19

Luke 24:32

John 15:14-15

John 17:20-21

Romans 15:13

2 Cor. 1:3-11

Colossians 3:16

2 Timothy 1:3-5

Create Your Card:

What friends in your life are going through particular difficulties, or crises, right now? Ask yourself, "What is their world like right now? How can I encourage them?"

How might you be praying for them in their daily life, without any crisis?

What particular ways is the Father showing you to slow down and "look" at them, and love them? If you don't know, try jotting down on your card that question, asking the Father to make it clear to you.

Help Along the Way:

- You may find that as you pray for a friend, you'll want to contact them just to connect. Even a text message that says something like, "I just had a great time praying for you!" can turn out to be a great tool of encouragement by the Spirit.
- How do you know you should start a prayer card for a friend? If your heart feels a particular burden for someone going through a situation, it's time to jot it down on a card.
- Feel complete freedom to pray not just through situations they are going through, but also where their heart is, where they are with Jesus.
- Find Scripture passages that mirror what you long to see in their lives.

Lesson 9 | Praying for Small Groups

Anchor in the Word:

1 Samuel 23:16

Psalm 55:14

Psalm 133:1

Romans 15:13

Colossians 2:2-3

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Hebrews 10:23-25

James 5:16

1 John 1:7

Create Your Card:

Draw up a card for the people in your small group, or other groups through your church.

What particular things do you see in their lives that you can talk to God about?

What heart issues, life circumstances, or blessings could you pray about?

Help Along the Way:

- Talk to your Heavenly Father about anyone with whom you are in consistent relationship.
- As you pray, you'll be watching for your Father's hand in your small group's stories. Both Jesus and Paul combine the idea of watching and praying, such as in Matthew 26:38-41 and Colossians 4:2.

Lesson 10 | Praying Through Work: Relationships in the Workplace

Anchor in the Word:

1 Corinthians 1:4

1 Corinthians 9:19, 22

Ephesians 5:4

Ephesians 6:18-20

Colossians 4:3-5

Create Your Card:

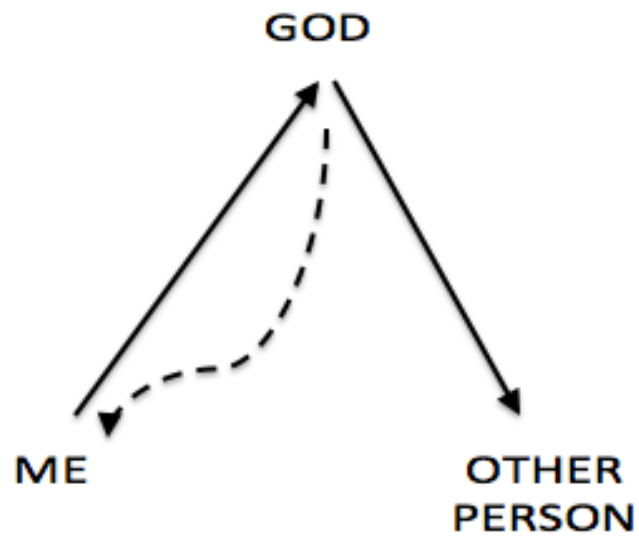
Who do you work with on a daily basis? This can be in your job, in the home, in volunteer organizations, anywhere you find yourself.

Create a single card with everyone's name on it, and jot down a few things that you can either thank God for, or begin praying for them in the real-life details of their days.

Or, create a couple of cards for different people.

Help Along the Way:

- Some cards take some time to fill in. There will be gaps when you first start the card. Paul gave the example of his grandson's card that just had his name at the top for almost a year. It's okay; bring those people before your Father and watch to see what he does.
- When you begin to pray, you are beginning, as Paul said, to "live in the universe as God created it." You're inviting the Center of the universe (your Heavenly Father) into the conversation.



- As you pray for others, the Father works not only in that request, but also in you.

Lesson 11 | Praying for Friends Who Want to Be Married

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 52:8

Isaiah 54:5

Zechariah 9:9

Romans 8:38-39

Galatians 6:18

Create Your Card:

Who do you know who would like to be married? Jot their names down on a card so you can pray specifically.

As the Lord directs and you have opportunity, think about going to them to encourage them and help them dream of what they long for in a spouse.

Help Along the Way:

- Don't feel pressure to tell people that you have been making prayer cards for them. Let God lead you in when that is a good idea. Aligning your heart to God's heart in praying for people usually happens in secret, as Jesus encourages us to do in Matthew 6:6: "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Lesson 12 | Praying Through Difficult Relationships

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 34:14

Daniel 4:37

Matthew 5:43-48

Luke 6:35

John 13:34-35

Philippians 2:14-16

2 Timothy 2:24-25

James 1:5

1 John 4:18

Create Your Card:

Brainstorm the difficult people God has given to you. Create one card or several, depending on what God brings to your mind.

What do you long to see in your relationship with them? What do you long to see in their lives?

Take a look at these Three Jesus Patterns in loving people:

Three Jesus Patterns	Myself: Entering my own heart	Situation: Entering their heart (the person I'm praying for)	God: Entering God's heart
Compassion (Incarnating)	Where am I? How and what am I feeling?	How do I love in this situation? How do I incarnate in this? What is their world like?	Thanking God Enjoying God
Honesty (Truth, Justice)	Do I repent? What does God's Word say to me?	Do I need to speak truth to someone? Am I fearful of being honest?	Lament praying? Do I need to open up my broken heart to God?
Dependence (My Will)	Wait and pray? Am I pushing my will into this situation?	Do I need to push into this situation out of love? Do I surrender?	Watch? What is God doing? What is happening in the story?

Help Along the Way:

- Difficult people are a gift from God to you. (Though that's often very hard to see.)
- Praying for them keeps you from writing them off as hopeless. You're inviting God in!
- As you pray, watch what the Father does in your own heart too.

When you pray, push yourself past the obvious and external. We usually ask God to change events in people's lives: health for the sick, to get a job, and so forth. But think about the spiritual needs in each of these life situations. Is this sick person fearful of death, as well as sick? Is this mother angry at her straying teen, as well as wanting the stray to be found? Does this man define his meaning through his work? Does he need to grow in finding identity in his God, along with needing a job? Does your pastor need to be delivered from people-pleasing, as well as to preach the truth well? Pray not only for circumstantial blessings, but also for what God is changing in the person through the circumstance.

David Powlison

Lesson 13 | Praying Through Work: Vocation and Calling

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 111:10

Proverbs 4:5

Philippians 4:6-7

Colossians 3:23

1 Timothy 6:1

James 1:5

Create Your Card:

What daily parts of your work have you just gritted your teeth to keep going? How can you invite God in?

What do you long for in your work? Are you just working for a paycheck? How would you like God to direct your path?

Like Paul praying for Kim (his daughter with disabilities) to find her calling (see Lesson 5), ask big things of your Heavenly Father.

Help Along the Way:

Take a look at *Gray Matter* by David Levy, M.D., an endoscopic neurosurgeon who prays for his patients while doing very sensitive brain procedures. It is a powerful example of doing one's work through prayer.

Lesson 14 | Praying Through the Holy Spirit's Prompting

Anchor in the Word:

1 Kings 19:11-13

Romans 12:2

1 Timothy 4:16

1 John 4:1-2

Create Your Card:

As you read books, listen to sermons, have ideas strike you, jot them down and pray through them. Even *this* is doing life deliberately through prayer – believing that the Holy Spirit works today.

Help Along the Way:

Pray to “be part of what God is doing, rather than in the way of it” (Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*).

Lesson 15 | Praying Through Work: Projects

Anchor in the Word:

Proverbs 3:5-6

Proverbs 16:9

Jeremiah 17:7-9

Matthew 6:25-34

Philippians 4:6

Create Your Card:

What project(s) do you have at work that you often think about? Or, those you don't worry about but instead do "in your own strength"?

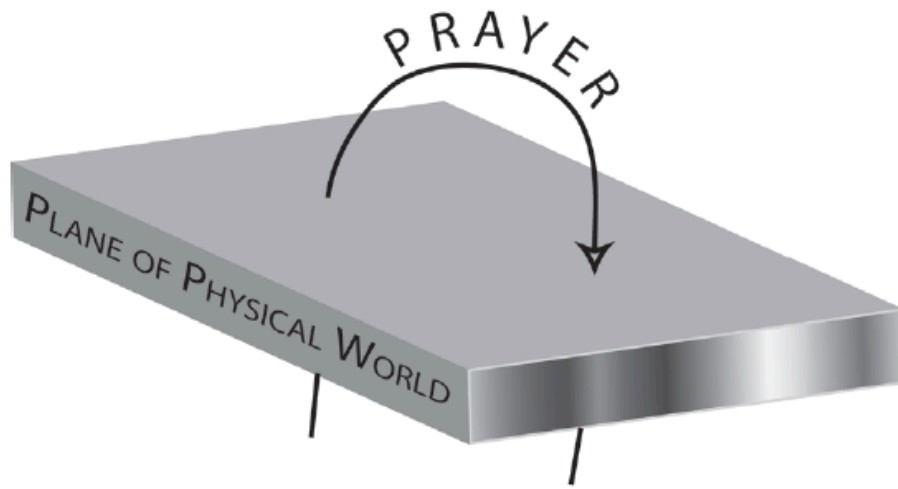
Jot down questions you have about the project(s), seeking direction and guidance from the Lord who establishes your steps (Proverbs 16:9).

"I have enjoyed my work much more when I have stopped to reflect on, for example, the top five projects I want to accomplish in my work this fall."

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Help Along the Way:

- It's not about a prayer discipline, or prayer box, but rather understanding that your world *works* when your Father is at the center of it.
- Ask questions of God; ask big things. By praying through work, you are breaking down the wall that was set up during the Enlightenment, which divided the "spiritual" from the "earthy." Those things are not separate; your Father is the God of it all – see "Prayer Assumes an Unseen Connectedness" chart, next page.



PRAYER ASSUMES AN UNSEEN CONNECTEDNESS

Lesson 16 | Praying Through Work: Management Responsibilities

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 86:6

Ephesians 6:5-10

Colossians 3:22-24

Colossians 4:1-2

2 Corinthians 1:2

Create Your Card:

In what ways are you relying on your gifts instead of on God?

Start a card on managing your work and/or employees.

What needs do you have in your work? In what ways do you feel helpless? Jot those down and bring them to God.

If you don't have management responsibilities over employees specifically, how can you pray for your management of other things? For example, how can you invite God in to help you manage your home, finances, time, job?

Help Along the Way:

- Just as loving people is often messy, praying and using prayer cards can be messy. But life itself is too, so it makes sense to recognize the messiness and invite your Heavenly Father in.
- Life gets overwhelming – defeat your temptation just to shut down by slowing down to notice your Father's hand.

Lesson 17 | Praying Through Personal Ministries

Anchor in the Word:

2 Corinthians 2:14-17

Ephesians 6:5-8

Colossians 3:16

1 Thessalonians 2:4

1 Timothy 1:5

Hebrews 9:14

1 Peter 4:10-11

Create Your Card:

Start a card on the ministries you are currently involved in. Ironically, it's easy to skip praying for ministry and just go do it in our own strength.

If you're wondering where you fit in ministry for the Lord, start a card on that. Where can he use you and your gifts? Where is he directing you to serve? Ask those questions of your Father, on the card.

Consider taking some time to journal about the questions you have for your Father about how he wants to use you in ministry, or what you can do differently to serve. The Father loves to give ideas and direct thoughts.

Lesson 18 | Praying Through Sadness

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 10:1, 12, 17-18

Psalm 13

Psalm 22

Psalm 28:6-9

Psalm 40:1-3

Psalm 102

Psalm 103

Create Your Card:

Are you struggling with sadness or depression in your life? Create cards for these situations, and/or for your sadness in general.

Jot down some honest ASKS for your Father on those cards. Where is your heart? What do you hope to see change?

Help Along the Way:

- You don't have to dress yourself up before coming to God. That's the gospel, too. We don't clean ourselves up before believing in Christ; we don't clean ourselves up before praying. God grows and changes us through it.
- Consider starting a card just on how you're feeling, being honest before your Father.

Lesson 19 | Praying for Missionaries

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 51:12

Psalm 126:4-6

Psalm 145:14

Acts 13:1-2

Romans 15:24-29

Galatians 6:10

Colossians 2:2

Colossians 4:3

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, 5:11

Create Your Card:

Begin a card for missionaries you know or support. Jot their names down, and ask questions of God about how you can encourage them.

Help Along the Way:

- Pray through day-to-day kinds of details, as well as heart and spiritual needs. Notice Bob's card had items like their support raising, a roommate situation, and needing a car to sell.
- Missionaries often need encouragement and are often weary of asking you to pray for specific things for them.
- To do this, you'll need to be in contact with them. Then tell them you're praying for them specifically!
- Pray about going to see them in their world and their field of ministry.
- Pray for "doors to open" for them to share the Word with the people.
- Pray for courage to take those opportunities.

Lesson 20 | Praying Through World Events

Anchor in the Word:

1 Chronicles 16:24

Psalm 9:18

Psalm 24:1

Psalm 46:10

Psalm 67:1-3

Daniel 1:8-10

Daniel 6:25-28

Romans 15:13

1 Timothy 2:1-2

Create Your Card:

What news events are distressing to you? Create a card or cards with these items.

Help Along the Way:

Engage the culture and events in the news through prayer. This can help avoid what Paul called “Christian crankiness”! It also leads your heart into hope, as you give what distresses you to your Father.

Lesson 21 | Praying Through Personal Suffering

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 34:18

Psalm 145:14

Isaiah 40:30-31

Isaiah 61:1, 3

Romans 5:3-5

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Philippians 3:13-14

1 Peter 4:12-13

1 Peter 5:10

Hebrews 13:5-6

James 1:2-4, 12

Create Your Card:

Suffering is often something that doesn't go away in a quick period of time. Begin a prayer card for people in your life who are suffering or grieving.

How can you draw alongside people in their grief?

Help Along the Way:

- When we cry out in suffering, Jesus is most available to us. As we encounter "the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death," our lives start to reflect his life.
- Love comes alive when the miracle takes longer than you'd like. Fight against the weariness and keep turning to your Father. "When things don't go away in a 'mission trip' timeframe, it's often then that God is most active."
- Some verses that can be helpful guides for prayer cards are ones that, in context, specifically refer to Christ. But praying them in your own life is a way to reflect God's heart.
- Prayer becomes a way of "de-selfing."
- Immerse yourself in Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and in the Psalms, to notice grief and suffering. The suffering of those around you will feel less foreign and help you recoil less.
- Read slowly through Luke 7:11-17. Watch closely how Jesus loves the widow. To dive deeper, see the *Person of Jesus* study from seeJesus, Lesson 1.
- See also Lesson 28: Praying Through Life's Deserts.

Lesson 22 | Praying Through Personal Finances

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 37:3

Proverbs 16:16

Ecclesiastes 5:10

Matthew 25:21

1 Timothy 6:10

Hebrews 13:5

Create Your Card:

Are you thinking about money every day? Begin a card on how you think about money, what money does to your heart, and/or any money stressors you feel weighing on you.

Start another card on financial wisdom.

Help Along the Way:

- In challenging economic times, and in more settled times, we can intentionally be praying not only for God's provision (and blessing), but also against materialism in our own hearts.
- Consider this: "Jesus wants us to be primarily lovers with our money. Focusing primarily on stewardship is like focusing on the fine print. It gets people thinking about preserving money. In parable after parable Jesus tells stories about people who give it all, who love with abandon. Stewardship is the fine print. Love is the large print. He wants us to love with abandon. Jesus presumes stewardship and teaches love." – Paul Miller, from *Money and the Heart* seminar.

Lesson 23 | Praying Through Lust, Shame, and Other Besetting Sins

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 119:9-11

Proverbs 4:23, 26-27

Proverbs 7:7-9, 25, 27

Romans 13:12, 14

Ephesians 4:22, 24

Ephesians 6:11

Colossians 2:11-12

Colossians 3:5-9

2 Timothy 2:22

1 Thessalonians 4:3

Create Your Card:

How do you look at those of the opposite sex? Think about this: “If I look on you with lust, I am asking myself how I can *take* from you. But, if I look on you with love, I am asking myself how I can *give* to you” (Paul Miller).

Start a card to remind you to pray for protection, for the ability to look at people as sisters/brothers created by God.

What habits and tendencies do you need to “put off,” and what do you need to “put on”? Add to your prayer cards with ones on these items.

What steps in a wrong direction have you been taking? Start cards against those trajectories.

Help Along the Way:

- An example of something to pray: That you would look at others “as people with worries, fears, joys, sadness; as those who need Jesus; with a heart so filled with Jesus that I am completely self-forgetting.”
- Instead of heading down paths (again) that lead to shame, why not get deliberate about praying against them? Face them head-on, knowing your heart’s tendency, and pray for God’s grace in defeating those patterns.

Lesson 24 | Praying Through Habitual Sins

Anchor in the Word:

Proverbs 15:31-32

Romans 3:27-28

Galatians 6:14

Ephesians 4:20-24

Colossians 3:12-17

Create Your Card:

Ask God to help you see your habitual sins. These are often hard to see. You can create a card just on *seeing* these sins. Then you can pray specifically through each one, creating individual cards as you feel is necessary.

Help Along the Way:

The individual items and stories we are praying through are important, but equally important is what the Spirit is doing in our hearts as we bring them to Him.

These habitual sins can be, as Paul said, “skin sins” in that they are ways you look at the world. God is good to reveal to people individually what these are, and lead each to repentance.

Lesson 25 | Praying Through Cynicism, Unbelief, and Other Heart Sins

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 23

Psalm 27:4

Luke 8:50

Romans 5:13

Galatians 2:21

Philippians 4

1 John 4:18

Revelation 21:5

Create Your Card:

What cynicism or unbelief is uncovered in your heart as you pray?

Jot those down, asking for childlike faith from your Father.

How do you try to live and serve without the heart of Jesus and the spirit of Jesus? Write those down, confessing the tendency to do things in your own strength.

Do you shut down in difficult circumstances or among difficult people? How? Jot those items down too, to remind you to pray intentionally through these heart-tendencies.

In what ways have you fallen to sluggishness in your devotional life? Start a prayer card on setting time aside to get alone with the Lord.

Help Along the Way:

Take a look again at chapters 9-11 on cynicism in the book *A Praying Life*.

Thinking about difficult situations and people that bring up your heart sins is also a good way to remember to pray *for* the situations and people. Consider starting a prayer card on those things, if you haven't already.

Paul shows multiple prayer cards of his, including those on cynicism, shutting down, devotional life sluggishness, idolatry, self-righteousness, anger, etc. What sins keep reappearing in your life, like a beach ball that you can't keep under the water?

Spend some time brainstorming areas of your internal and relational life that you'd like to see God transform by his Spirit. Make cards based on that list.

Lesson 26 | Praying For Wisdom

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 90:12

Psalm 111:10

Psalm 119:34

Proverbs 1

Proverbs 2:6

Proverbs 3

Proverbs 4:5, 7

Proverbs 8 and 9

Proverbs 10:19

Galatians 6:9-10

Ephesians 1:7-10

James 1:5

Create Your Card:

Write “wisdom” at the top of a card, adding some verses from Proverbs that reflect what you’d like to see increase in your life.

Jot down specific areas in which you need wisdom.

Help Along the Way:

Prayer for wisdom often leads to prayer for other things. Go with your gut here!

As your stack of cards and “asks” grows, feel the freedom to make monthly, weekly, and daily stacks. This is not a call to make it through every card every day.

Lesson 27 | Praying For Faith

Anchor in the Word:

Matthew 15:28

Mark 9:24

Luke 7:7-9

Luke 18:1-19:10

Romans 11:20

Romans 12:2

Create Your Card:

How has the culture of cynicism and/or life's circumstances drained you of faith?

Spend some time journaling about or brainstorming the areas of life where you sense your faith is low. Write those areas on your card, asking your Father for faith and the ability to trust him.

Bob brings up multiple cards – from praying through the fifth commandment for his family, for help in not taking people for granted, for learning to intercede for others. Consider starting a card on eyes to see what areas you haven't turned over to your Father, if there are any. They can be subtle, hidden areas that haven't occurred to you to bring into a prayer story.

Help Along the Way:

Think about these things:

- Whereas cynicism looks at a prayer story and says, "It would have happened anyway," faith looks to the Father and marvels at his provision, creativity, and power.
- As Paul said in the video: The two things that Christ gets angry at in the Gospels are unbelief and a lack of love. Love, as the Apostle Paul says, will go on forever. But faith is the battle now.

If a desire for more faith didn't immediately come to mind as a need in your life when you were brainstorming in Lesson 25, in what ways do you see now that it is important to include in daily prayer?

Lesson 28 | Praying Through Life's Deserts

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 34:18

Isaiah 30:15

Isaiah 40:30-31

Isaiah 50:10

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Ephesians 4:2-3

Philippians 2

Colossians 3:12

James 1:2-3

1 Peter 4:8

1 Peter 4:12-13

Create Your Card:

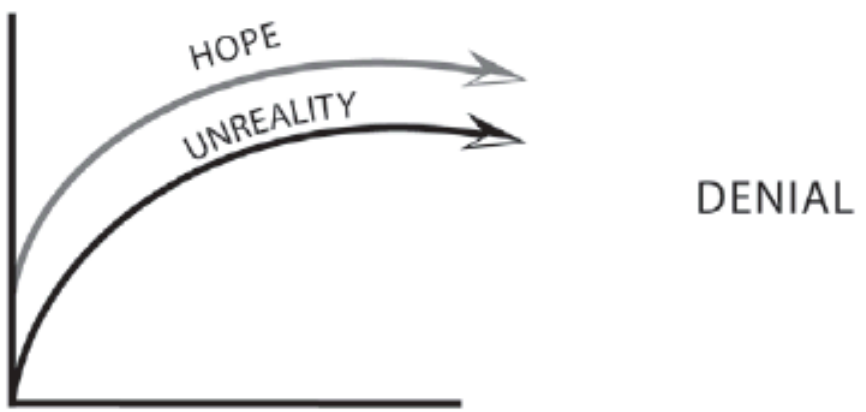
Make a card titled "Suffering," whether you're in the midst of a desert right now, or you remember what it's like.

What ways might God be calling you to allow your suffering to comfort others?

How can you remain intentionally *in* the story, rather than withdrawing or running?

Help Along the Way:

- Using Scripture on your cards doesn't save you, but it functions as a mirror of where your heart and spirit are. It can help when you don't have other words to pray, when you're "frozen on the couch."
- Review these charts from the *A Praying Life* book (page 181) and seminar Participant Manual (page 48). God works in the desert!



Lesson 29 | Praying Through God's Promises

Anchor in the Word:

Psalm 42:8, 11

Psalm 65:5

Isaiah 42:6-7

Isaiah 45:2-3

Isaiah 55:1

Ezekiel 17:24

Habakkuk 3:2

Habakkuk 3:17-19

John 12:24-26

Romans 5:1-5

Romans 8:35-39

Romans 15:13

Create Your Card:

Create a card that is about your heart and its pursuit of hope. Are you feeling hopeless? In what areas? As we've been doing, jot those things down. Bring them to the feet of your Father.

Don't let hopelessness take over. Go at it directly by praying against it, asking for hope, seeking evidence and encouragement of hope in Scripture.

Begin to *dream* again. With your Father, all things are possible (see Matthew 19:26 or Mark 10:27).

Help Along the Way:

- In deep or even low-level suffering, fight for hope as much as you fight for faith.
- In the midst of despair, pray for resurrection, as your sufferings mirror the sufferings of Christ.

Lesson 30 | Praying Through Physical Illness

Anchor in the Word:

1 Chronicles 29:12

Job 5:8-9

Psalm 6:2

Psalm 10:17

Psalm 28:7

Psalm 30:2

Psalm 41:3

Psalm 59:17

Psalm 103:1-5

Isaiah 38:14-17

Isaiah 40:29

Jeremiah 17:14

Mark 9:23-24

Colossians 1:9-11

Create Your Card:

Put together a card on any worries you have about your own physical health, then other cards on the physical illnesses or difficulties of others.

We are all familiar with the prayer list in the church bulletin. Feel free to use that as a springboard, particularly for those with whom you have a relationship and you are part of the story already.

Help Along the Way:

- You may have individual cards for each person dealing with illness, or you may have one card titled “Cancer” where you list all of those people in your life who are suffering in the midst of that disease, for instance.
- Your cards don’t always have to deal with really “heavy” things. Some of them can contain items that may seem more mundane, from losing weight or eating more healthfully to being intentional about taking medications on time. Nothing is too small to bring before your Father.
- Notice in Bob’s cards that he is praying for more than just healing of ailments or comfort in sickness. Instead, he is intentional about praying through specifics regarding health. As he went along in the story, ideas would strike him and he would jot them down. That can happen in prayer; as you pay attention to the Spirit, ideas can come to you.

Wrap-Up and Recap

Now that you have been through the videos and used some of the tools in this manual, you may have a new stack of prayer cards. They may feel a bit daunting. Don't worry – just use them as the Spirit leads. It might even be time already to separate them into stacks of daily (i.e., maybe spouse, kids, work, faith, hope), weekly (i.e. people who are suffering), and/or monthly cards. There is no right or wrong way to do this.

One friend who attended a seminar shared her experience of starting her cards, and particularly how she would nearly stress out about her penmanship or the “correct” Scripture reference. Eventually, she realized starting the cards was exactly like starting a prayer story. It's not going to be perfect, and it doesn't need to be. Jesus said ASK, and that means he will change you in your asking. Watch for Jesus in the mundane, in the story that developments, as you are shaped through prayer to be more like him.

In *A Praying Life* (page 232), Paul gives an outline of a possible sample deck of prayer cards. Don't feel any pressure that this is the way it must be done, but many have found this little guidance helpful in reminding them there's more to pray for than they might first think.

- 4-10 family cards (one for each person)
- 1-3 people-in-suffering
- 1 friends card
- 1 non-Christian card
- 1 church's leadership card
- 1 small group card
- 1 missionary/ministries card
- 1-3 world- or cultural-issues cards
- 3 work cards
- 1 co-workers card
- 3-5 repentance cards (things I need to repent of)
- 3-5 hope or big-dream cards

Further Resources

Suggested Reading:

Beals, Timothy J. *Teach Us To Pray: 365 Prayers from the Bible*. Wheaton, IL:

Crossway Books, 2008.

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_____. *Setting Their Hope in God: Biblical Intercession for Your Children*.

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and H.J. Appleby. London, England: Grace Publications Trust, 1997.

Hallesby, O. *Prayer*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1994.

Horton, Michael S. *Ordinary: Sustainable Faith in a Radical, Restless World*. Grand

Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

How Prayer Impacts Lives: 41 Christians and Their Conversations with God, ed.

Catherine Mackenzie. Ross-Shire, IV 20 1TW, Scotland: Christian Focus

Publications, 2013.

Levy, David. *Gray Matter: A Neurosurgeon Discovers the Power of Prayer... One Patient at a Time*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2011.

McIntyre, David. *The Hidden Life of Prayer: The Lifeblood of the Christian*. Ross-Shire, IV 20 1TW, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1891, 2010.

Michel, Jen Pollock. *Teach Us to Want: Longing, Ambition, and the Life of Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

Miller, Paul E. *A Loving Life*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2014.

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Murray, Andrew. *Andrew Murray on Prayer*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1998.

The Puritans on Prayer, ed. Don Kistler. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1995.

The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions, ed. Arthur Bennett. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2007.

Tripp, Paul David. *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2012.

Apps and Websites:

- For Scripture help: Visit seeJesus.net/prayercards and *Nave's Topical Bible*, available on BibleGateway.com/Topical.
- Looking for an app for your prayer cards? The *PrayerMate* app is available in the app stores for Apple and Android devices. There are many other notecard apps created for studying, but *PrayerMate* is prayer-focused and particularly helpful if you'd like to keep your prayer cards electronically.

- Books, Bible study materials, and other resources available from seeJesus.net.