

Praying the Bible

- Dave's summary based on D.A. Carson's *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* -
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Lessons from the school of prayer [ch1]

(1) Plan to pray; (2) Adopt practical ways to impede mental drift; (3) Develop prayer-partner relationships; (4) Choose models, but choose them well; (5) Develop a system for your prayer lists; (6) Mingle praise, confession & intercession, & tie as many requests as possible to Scripture; (7) Work at your public prayers; (8) Pray until you pray

2 Thess. 1:1-12 > The framework of prayer [ch2]

1:3-4 ESV > *We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. ⁴Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness & faith in all your persecutions & in the afflictions that you are enduring.*

Look for signs of God's grace in the lives of Christians, and thank God! ... thank God that the faith of Christians is growing, that their love is increasing (Jn 13:34-35), and that they are persevering under trial.

2 Thess. 1:1-12 > Worthy requests [ch3]

1:11-12 ESV > *To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹²so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ask that God would count Christians worthy of their calling (ie: to become what we are not) and pray for people from eternity's perspective (eg: what do we want for people in 40 bn years)

- > Pray that God would bring to fruition each Christian's good-prompted, faith-prompted purposes ... so that glory would be brought to (1) Jesus, and (2) Believers. Remember the ground of this prayer is grace.
- > Pray for the revival of *people*, not an abstract blessing called revival.

1 Thess. 3:9-13 > A Passion for people [ch5]

3:12-13 ESV > *and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.*

The grounds of Paul's prayer are: intense longing to be with believers, passionate affection that seeks the good of others, and delight at the report of believers' faith.

- > Pray that we might be able to strength other believers, Pray for an overflowing of love among believers, Pray that believers will be strengthened in heart so they're blameless & holy at the end.

Colossians 1:9-14 > A challenging prayer! [ch6]

1:9-12 ESV > *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. ¹¹May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*

Pray unceasingly! ... and try to link prayers of thanksgiving to prayers of petition

- > Pray that God would fill believers with the knowledge of his will.
- > Pray this so that believers might be utterly pleasing to the Lord Jesus. That is, that they (1) Bear fruit in every good work, (2) Grow in knowledge of God, (3) Strengthened so as to display great endurance and patience, and (4) Joyfully giving thanks to the Father.

Excuses for not praying [ch7]

- | Too busy; too spiritually dry; no need to pray; too bitter; too ashamed; content with mediocrity

Phil. 1:9-11 > Overcoming the hurdles [ch8]

1:9-10 ESV > *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ*

Pray for excellence – that believers' love would increase, so they can discern what is best

- > Pray for a pursuit of excellence, that turns on delicate choices that reflect God's values & purposes.
- > For this to happen: love must increase; must perceive the difference then choose what is best; there must be positive improvement in discipleship (not mere maintenance.)
- > Pray for the long view. And praise God.

Eph. 1:3-23 > Praying to the sovereign God [ch10]

1:16-18 ESV > *I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe*

Thank God for his intervening sovereign grace in the lives of believers.

- > Pray that God's sovereign holy purposes in the salvation of his people may be accomplished. That is, that believers would know God better, and have insight to grasp certain crucial truths.

Eph. 3:14-21 > Praying for power [ch11]

1:16-19 ESV > *that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth & length & height & depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

Pray for power, that through God's Spirit, in our inner being, Christ might dwell in our hearts through faith

- (Carson: it's true that Christ dwells in every believer from day one, but Paul prays here that we would so grow to maturity that Christ would be 'at home' in our lives).
- > Ask for God's strengthening to live in the knowledge of Christ's amazing love (that is beyond knowing!)
- > Remember: God is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine!

Romans 15:14-33 > Prayer for ministry [ch12]

15:31 NIV > *Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there*

Pray with earnestness, urgency & persistence

- > Pray for ministers of the word, that: (1) They'd be rescued from the opposition of outsiders who want to destroy their ministry, and (2) Christian leaders would find their service acceptable to those they lead.
- > Praying for ministry envisions further ministry.
- > Remember: Some of Paul's prayers were not answered how he would have liked.

And some other passages to guide our prayers

The Psalms (lots of them!); **The Lord's Prayer** (Matt 6:9-13); **Prayer for more workers for the harvest** (Matt 9:38); **Prayer that God's word would speed ahead** (2 Thess. 3:1); **Prayer for bold proclamation** (Eph 6:19-20)