

PERSPECTIVE

JULY 2022

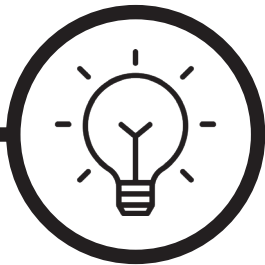
WHY DO WE PRAY

*In Jesus'
Name?*

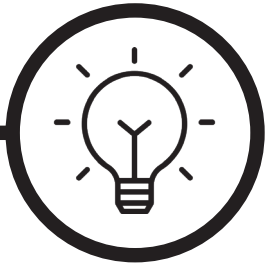
CONTENTS



ARTICLE	1
<i>Why Do We Pray in Jesus' Name?</i>	
Zack DiPrima	



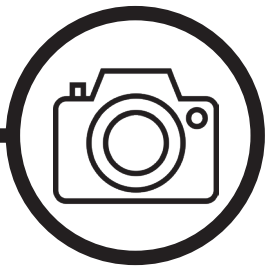
BOOK HIGHLIGHT	5
<i>Prayer and the Knowledge of God</i>	
by Graeme Goldsworthy	
Recommended by Kalep Kanode	



BOOK HIGHLIGHT	6
<i>Teach Them to Pray: Cultivating</i>	
<i>God-Dependency in Your Church</i>	
by Paul Tautges	
Recommended by Darius Tucker	



BIBLE READING PLAN	7
<i>Take Up & Read</i>	
July	



NEW MEMBERS	8
<i>Joju & Betty Abraham, David Garcia, Kacie</i>	
<i>Grella, Tyler Hartwig, & Ashley Waddington</i>	

Why Do We Pray in Jesus' Name?

"O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God,
Who haft safely brought us to the beginning of this day;
Defend us in the same with thy mighty power;
And grant that this day we fall into no sin,
Neither run into any kind of danger;
But that all our doings, being ordered by thy government,
May be righteous in thy sight; **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**
Amen."ⁱ

The Book of Common Prayer (1662)

If you're a Christian, I can assume at least one thing about your walk with God—you probably pray in Jesus' name. Whether pleading in your closet or offering your routine mealtime petitions, you likely close every prayer with something like, "in Jesus' name, Amen." You've always done this, and that's wonderful! There's nothing wrong, *per se*, with regular habits. God sees beauty in consistency. One author has described the Christian life as "long obedience in the same direction." But have you ever paused to consider, "Why do I pray in Jesus' name? What do I mean by this phrase I repeat every day, often multiple times a day?" Perhaps you've assumed it's a nice way for Christians to conclude their conversations with God.

In reality, Scripture commands us to pray in Jesus' name. Jesus himself teaches us to pray this way. Throughout the hallowed discourse of the Upper Room, he persistently instructs his disciples to pray in his name (John 14:12–15, 15:14–16, 16:22–24). He says, "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." (John 14:13–14). In his infinite wisdom, God has purposed his people to praise, confess sin, give thanks, and make petitions in the name of his Son (Colossians 3:15–17). Even though the simple command of God should be sufficient for our obedience, he has graciously revealed *why* we should pray in the name of Jesus.

WE PRAY IN JESUS' NAME BECAUSE OF WHO WE ARE

The main reason we Christians pray in Jesus' name is

because of who we are. The most common description ascribed to saints in the New Testament is those who are "in Christ." This indelible status makes access to God possible. Therefore, we should make our praise, confession, thanks, and petitions in light of our union to Christ.

When my wife took on my last name "DiPrima" in marriage, she didn't do so merely out of convention or love for Sicilian culture. (Though, nothing beats Italian-American food!) She took on my name because she had a new identity. She united herself with me in marriage, which significantly changed her life. Her assets changed. Her social life changed. Her priorities changed. Today, when she owns my name, she bears witness to who she is, including any resources and status attained through her relationship with me. It's an imperfect analogy, but this is something of what happens when we wed ourselves to Christ in prayer. When we say "in Jesus' name," we state to the Father who we are in his Son. When we as a church offer our prayers in Jesus' name, we declare to the world that we are nothing apart from Christ.

Jesus said in the Upper Room, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Therefore, the only way to truly be reconciled to the Father is through a living relationship with Jesus. Our initial reconciliation to God emerges from an identity in Christ. And our subsequent fellowship with God is maintained based on our identity in Christ, which is why John Calvin (1509-1565) asserted prayer is the essence of faith: "The principal exercise which the children of God have is to pray; for in this way they give a true proof of their faith."ⁱⁱ A new believer's prayer is the infant impulse of a soul united to Jesus through faith. But the same Christ who *saves* us is the same Christ who *keeps* us. Therefore, praying in Jesus' name is the mature expression of ongoing, unbroken, faithful fellowship with the Lord.

Of course, faithless, rote recitations do little to honor God. The promises to those who pray in Jesus' name are for those who persevere in Christ (John 15:7). Abiding must accompany asking. Hypocrites have no hope that the Father hears their prayers. Speaking of the Day of Judgment in Matthew 7, Jesus said, "many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness'" (Matthew 7:22–23). Saying the Savior's name means nothing if unaccompanied by total reliance on him. The prayer genuinely offered through Jesus flows from a heart

of faith. Christians pray in Christ's name because they are in Christ, which entails at least three convictions.

FIRST, WE PRAY IN JESUS' NAME BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS HAS DONE.

"Thy work alone, O Christ,

Can ease this weight of sin,

Thy blood alone, O Lamb of God,

Can give me peace within.

Thy love to me, O God,

Not mine, O Lord, to thee,

Can rid me of this dark unrest

And set my spirit free."ⁱⁱⁱ

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

When we pray in Jesus' name, we make our petitions based on what Christ has already done in his life, death, and resurrection. Hebrews emphasizes what Jesus did in the past in the letter's repeated reference to the work of the cross.

"He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, **since he did this once for all when he offered up himself**" (Hebrews 7:27).

"**He entered once for all into the holy places**, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12).

"And by that will we have been sanctified **through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**" (Hebrews 10:10).

"But when Christ had offered for all time **a single sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12).

When a defendant in a trial pleads "not guilty," he claims his innocence. He asserts his own merits to the judge and jury. In God's economy, this logic turns upside down. Christians turn to the righteousness of another. When we pray in Jesus' name, we're staking our hope on the finished sacrifice of the Lamb of God. His obedient work on the cross has satisfied the wrath of God on our behalf,

which is why 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Faithful to what? God is faithful to his just character, satisfying his wrath in the death of Christ. When I ask God to pardon my sin for Jesus' sake, I'm not trusting in my tears or sincerity but in Christ's atoning work at the cross.

SECOND, WE PRAY IN JESUS' NAME BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS DOES.

"He ever lives above,

For me to intercede,

His all-redeeming love,

His precious blood to plead."^{iv}

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Though the work of the cross was a "once and for all" act, Christ's current ministry is vital. Jesus is alive and currently seated at the Father's right hand, where he ministers as our great High Priest. Hebrews 7 speaks of the indispensability of the Lord's present priestly ministry: "The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrew 7:23–25).

Evangelicals too easily forget what Scripture makes plain: namely, the reason why Christians remain Christians is by the active work of Christ to keep them in the name of the Father. True Christians persevere in the Lord, but only because the Lord preserves us! It is the intercession of Christ that preserves us. Hebrews 7:25 says he can save us to the uttermost since he intercedes on our behalf.

Christian, how can you be sure you'll be in Christ tomorrow? What makes you think you'll choose to attend church next Sunday? How can you lean on God's everlasting arms, safe and secure from all alarms? It is by the fact the Lord Jesus intercedes on your behalf. It's not due to the strength of your will or your righteousness. Instead, it is because Christ is actively keeping you in the faith. If you could lose your salvation, you would. As Christians, we are keenly aware that if left to our own devices, we would abandon Christ and shipwreck our faith. Yet, our heavenly Friend holds on to us. We can

have confidence that the Lord will bring the good work he has started in us to completion.

We pray in Christ's name because we are in Christ. Adopted into the family of God, we plead the merits of the One whose prayers God never turns away. The Father cannot turn away the presence of his Son. "For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

THIRD, WE PRAY IN JESUS' NAME BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS WILL DO.

"O Lord, haste the day

When the faith shall be sight,

The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;

The trump shall resound

And the Lord shall descend;

Even so, it is well with my soul."^v

Horatio Spafford (1828-1888)

To be a Christian is to wait. We anticipate the arrival of our King. And in our heavenly home—face to face, with the Lord—he will wipe every tear away. We will partake of everlasting joys. No more sin. No more sorrow. No more prayer. We *now* pray in Christ's name in light of the joy *awaiting* us. Jesus says as much in John 16: "So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:22–24).

Yes, we pray in Jesus' name to experience joy now. But such joy is merely a foretaste of what's to come. On that day, faith—of which prayer is the essence—will turn to sight.

APPLICATION

As Christians, union to Christ is the governing principle of our prayer lives. As we pray in Jesus' name, we trust in what he's accomplished, cling to his present ministry,

and hope in his return. In light of all of this, consider the following three practical applications.

AVOID PRAYING IN THE FATHER'S NAME.

Although prayer to the Son has its place,^{vi} Scripture prescribes prayer to the Father. For years, I routinely closed my prayers to the Father by saying, "in your name, Amen," which was incoherent and unbiblical. In Scripture, we are not encouraged to pray in the Father's name at any point. Instead, Christians pray to the Father, *through the Son*, by the Holy Spirit.

CONSIDER THE LANGUAGE YOU USE TO PRAY IN JESUS' NAME.

Many Christians struggle in their prayer lives because they feel they just keep praying "the same old things." Donald Whitney has helpfully pointed out that our issue is usually not *praying* for the same old things but *saying* the same old things when we pray for the same old things.^{vii} I think this is true of how Christians pray in Jesus' name. If you close every prayer with "in Jesus' name, Amen," it's possible you may forget the richness of what you're saying. I would suggest you consider using a variety of phrases to keep your prayers fresh. For example, you can say "in Jesus' name," "for Jesus' sake," "in the precious name of the Savior," "by the blood and merits of Your Son," etc. I favor closing prayers with the phrase "through Jesus Christ our Lord." All of these phrases ground our prayers in our union to Christ.

APPROACH THE FATHER CONFIDENTLY IN PRAYER BY PRAYING IN JESUS' NAME.

Perhaps the saddest reality of the Christian experience is that many saints lean away from the means of grace when they sense their sin. When brought low, many Christians leave their Bibles unopened, prayers unsaid, and churches unattended. Yet, the moment sin plagues our hearts is precisely the moment when we must cling to the promises of God. Moreover, our sin is why we pray in Jesus' name. We have no hope outside of Christ. But holding fast to him, we have everything. My hope of acceptance from the Father stems not from my performance but the past sacrifice, present ministry, and final work of Christ. Christian, let the name of Jesus lend you the confidence to approach the Father boldly in prayer.

“My God is reconciled;
His pard’ning voice I hear.
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And ‘Father, Abba, Father!’ cry.”^{viii}

Charles Wesley

– Zack DiPrima

ⁱ The Church of England. *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church according to the use of the Church of England*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

ⁱⁱ John Calvin, Sermon on 1 Timothy 2:1-2

ⁱⁱⁱ Horatius Bonar, “Not What My Hands Have Done,” in *Trinity Hymnal*, (Philadelphia: Great Commission Publications, 1961).

^{iv} Charles Wesley, “Arise, My Soul, Arise,” in *Trinity Hymnal*, (Philadelphia: Great Commission Publications, 1961).

^v Horatio Spafford, “It is Well,” in *Trinity Hymnal*, (Philadelphia: Great Commission Publications, 1961).

^{vi} John Piper, “Should I Pray to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit?” *Desiring God*.

^{vii} Donald Whitney, *Praying the Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015).

^{viii} Charles Wesley, “Arise, My Soul, Arise,” in *Trinity Hymnal*.

Prayer and the Knowledge of God

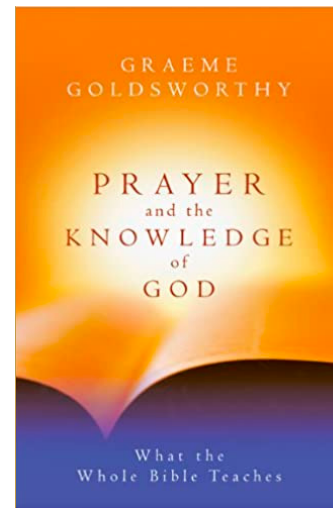
Written by Graeme Goldsworthy

If you are looking for a quick fix for your prayer life, I suggest you stop reading this book review and move right along. On the other hand, if you are willing to engage in the hard work of careful, biblical thinking and honest self-reflection, this book will significantly benefit your soul. *Prayer and the Knowledge of God* by Graeme Goldsworthy is not your average book on prayer. While many (if not most) books on prayer focus on practical tips or a new method for how to have a better prayer life, Goldsworthy argues that a robust prayer life fundamentally grows out of one's knowledge of God. Because our actions spring forth from what we believe, our prayer lives reflect what and who we believe God to be.

Goldsworthy divides the book into two main sections. In the first, he answers four basic questions regarding prayer: Is it possible to talk to God? Does he listen to us? How do we know what to say? Will it make any difference if we pray? In the second section, he takes a biblical-theological approach, from Genesis to Revelation, tracing the progress of prayer throughout the Bible's unfolding storyline. While many Christians may find this approach to the topic of prayer to be elementary or boring, Goldsworthy wisely perceives that this study takes us to the very heart of who God is and thus challenges our understanding of prayer at its most basic level.

It is particularly enlightening to study the development of prayer through the Old Testament. As New Covenant Christians, we often lean heavily into the New Testament to inform our understanding of prayer. While this has merit, the Old Testament provides the essential framework and foundation for experiencing God and understanding how Christ reconciled us to him. Meditating on the truth that prayer is only possible because Christ made us sons and daughters of God is impactful and refreshing. *Prayer and the Knowledge of God* may not be for everyone, but it is well worth the work for anyone who desires to better know and respond in prayer to our glorious God and Father.

— RECOMMENDED BY KALEP KANODE



Excerpts from the Book

1

"In the Incarnation of Jesus, who is God's final word of revelation, God shows his sovereignty over all things, he reveals the way we are to understand the world and ourselves, and he comes among us to make his dwelling with his people. To know God is to know this creating, sovereign, guiding God who is with us."

— Finding the Reality of Prayer, p. 36

2

"In Christ we cannot be condemned as inadequate or failed prayers. I should not think, because I don't pray as I ought, that God is less inclined to listen to me than he is to some prayer warrior."

— The Basis of All Prayer, p. 50

3

"Only knowledge of the God of the Bible can assure us that our lives have both meaning and eternal destiny. Only such assurance can make prayer a meaningful part of our daily lives."

— Conclusion, p. 194

Teach Them to Pray: Cultivating God-Dependency in Your Church

Written by Paul Tautges

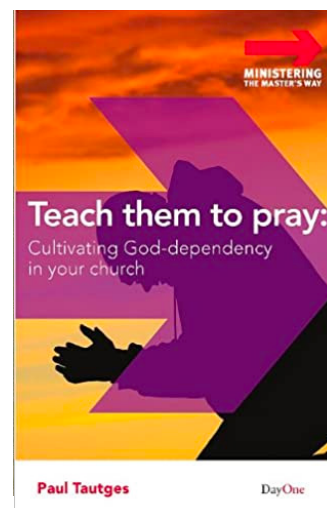
Do you have a biblical mindset about prayer? *Teach Them to Pray: Cultivating God-Dependency in Your Church* helps us answer that question. Paul Tautges wants churches to think biblically about prayer because a life of prayer is irrefutable proof of God-dependency (12). He gives a biblical theology of prayer by focusing on nine Scripture passages. Part 1 focuses on prayer being an expression of dependency on God (14). Part 2 is a collection of brief sermons on prayer (43). His goal is that biblical corporate prayer would be increasingly present in churches.

We want to be God-dependent, but sometimes our prayer life may say otherwise. Prayerlessness reveals a heart of self-dependency. We are declaring we don't need God. It keeps us from being spiritually alert. No one enters an important meeting unprepared, so how much more should we prayerfully prepare as we wage spiritual warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The disciples' failure to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane led them to abandon Jesus (Mk 14:26-50). That challenges me to pray and recognize my desperate need for God.

Tautges also points out the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer. I don't think much about the Spirit praying for me, so it was helpful to think deeply about this truth in Scripture (Rom 8:26-27). I know what I need to pray for on one level, but on another, I don't. So, the Spirit helps me in my ignorance to pray for precisely what I need because he is God. What a comfort it is that the Spirit prays for us, and he never prays outside the will of God (99).

This book pushes readers beyond praying more frequently to having a biblical mindset about prayer and God. Tautges wrote this book for pastors, but it's helpful for anyone seeking to grow their prayer life. It was a personal reminder that I need not sideline my prayer life. Instead, I need to prepare for it every day. If you read this, I pray it would cultivate a greater God-dependency in you.

— RECOMMENDED BY DARIUS TUCKER



Excerpts from the Book

1

"It is impossible to stubbornly make demands of God and truly pray in Jesus' name at the same time. To pray in His name means to pray in agreement with who he is and with what He has revealed in His Word. Acceptable prayer flows from a heart that is surrendered to the authority of the Bible."

— Praying in Jesus' Name, p. 53

2

"No Christian husband should presume to think that any spiritual good will be accomplished by his life without an effective ministry of prayer. And no husband may expect an effective prayer life unless he lives with his wife "in an understanding way, bestowing honor" on her. To take time to maintain a good marriage is God's will...it is a spiritual activity pleasing in His sight."

— How Husbands Get Their Prayers Answered, p. 90-91

3

"When the battle against indwelling sin has left us completely discouraged, the Spirit intercedes for us. When we are ignorant and we don't even know how to pray, the Spirit silently takes our need to the throne of grace. When our limited understanding wrestles with the will of God, the Spirit prays for us. And he never prays outside the will of God."

— When the Holy Spirit Prays, p. 99

JULY

These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message. Take Up & Read!

July 1	1 Peter 5:1–11	July 17	Titus 1:5–16
July 2	Psalms 125	July 18	Psalms 101
July 3	Psalms 126	July 19	Psalms 97
July 4	Titus 1:1–4	July 20	Psalms 98
July 5	Galatians 2:1–10	July 21	Psalms 99
July 6	2 Corinthians 7:2–16	July 22	1 Peter 1:13–25
July 7	2 Corinthians 8:1–24	July 23	Psalms 100
July 8	Numbers 23:16–26	July 24	Psalms 101
July 9	Hebrews 6:1–20	July 25	Titus 2:1–10
July 10	Titus 1:1–4	July 26	Titus 1:1–15
July 11	Titus 1:5–16	July 27	Titus 2:11–15
July 12	1 Timothy 2:1–6	July 28	Titus 3:1–11
July 13	1 Timothy 2:7–14	July 29	Psalms 135
July 14	1 Timothy 3:1–7	July 30	Titus 3:12–15
July 15	Ezekiel 34:1–10	July 31	Titus 2:1–10
July 16	1 Peter 5:1–5		

*Sermons in bold

TAKE UP & READ

NEW MEMBERS



Joju
Abraham



Betty
Abraham



David
Garcia



Kacie
Grella



Tyler
Hartwig



Ashley
Waddington



Mount Vernon
BAPTIST CHURCH