

## **Praise for *Pray These Things***

“Prayer is a topic that is critical to the Christian life, yet often neglected in the lives of individual followers of Jesus and among the churches they call home. Brent appreciates and practices the discipline of prayer, rooted in the teaching and instruction of Jesus, and is uniquely able to lead the reader to a greater appreciation for and practice of prayer. May God use this resource to compel His people to pray and pray well.”

**Dr. Matt Rogers**  
Pastor, Christ Fellowship Cherrydale  
Assistant Professor, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

“With thorough, readable precision, Brent Martin helps us maneuver toward one of the hardest struggles in the Christian life: the struggle to pray. This book will move your heart toward embracing the satisfying hope of that one thing that we often ignore or run away from: asking God.”

**Dow Welsh, Pastor**  
Holland Avenue Baptist Church, Cayce, S.C.

“Brent walks his readers through the Lord’s Prayer in a way that creates tension in the Christian’s life. This tension is vital to helping one choose the Kingdom of God over the ways of the world by reminding his readers that the gospel wins because Jesus is Lord. Brent also instructs his readers that walking with God is a journey that can’t be completed alone. I highly recommend this helpful book as you practice the way of Jesus wherever you go and for as long as you live.”

**Quintin Baldwin**  
Blue Ridge Regional Director for The Navigators

“Replete with Scripture, Brent Martin is a faithful guide for Christians in prayer. What is the posture of prayer? What are the purposes of prayer? Why is it that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray? In this faithful exposition of Scripture regarding prayer, which is supported by how the Church has instructed people in prayer, we have a steady and faithful support.”

**Dr. Matthew Wireman**

**Associate Dean of the School of Ministry, North Greenville University  
Pastor, Christ the Redeemer Greenville**

“This is a great devotional book with articles that take biblical passages on prayer and both teaching them and aiming them at our hearts. You will find it both comforting and convicting. It will inform you and expand your reflections on passages you have read before. I highly recommend it!”

**Dr. Jeff Elliott**

**New Covenant Presbyterian Church**

“There is only one topic the disciples asked Jesus to teach them: prayer. Few of us feel that our prayer life is what it should be. In this book my friend Brent gives us simple, yet powerful and practical words that will inspire and encourage you. Pick it up!”

**Rev. Toby Dix**

**Lead Pastor of Christ Fellowship Eastside, Greenville, S.C.  
Founder and President of Be Real Ministries**

# PRAY THESE THINGS

*A New Covenant Prayer Guide*

Brent Martin

*Pray These Things: A New Covenant Prayer Guide*

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*For all of those, like me,  
for whom faithful prayer is a struggle.  
And especially for my brother Shane,  
who struggles no more.*



# Introduction

To better understand and benefit from anything Jesus said, we need to know that He was wholly given to establishing the long-ago promised kingdom of God. This was, so to speak, His preoccupation. God the Son took on flesh to preach the coming of the kingdom, demonstrate the power of the kingdom, teach the ways of the kingdom, and make the way for us to enter the kingdom. This is how He spent His days.

Following His resurrection Jesus spent His remaining time on earth with His apostles “speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Ac 1:1–3). He passed His mission on to His followers and then gave them the new covenant measure of His Spirit (Ac 2; Jn 14:16–17). Jesus began His public ministry speaking of His kingdom (Mk 1:14–15; Mt 4:23) and finished it by instructing His messengers on the same topic. Then they passed on to their disciples the heart of Christ for the kingdom. And of course a part of what Jesus spoke of, and modeled, was a kingdom-minded prayer life.

In the Lord’s famous Sermon on the Mount, He begins to set before us kingdom values. And He makes clear that each of us must choose between His kingdom and the world. He says there are two kinds of righteousness, two treasures, two

masters, two ambitions, two gates, two roads, and two foundations. He also says that in addition to refusing to conform to the world we must also, when necessary, refuse to conform to the religious establishment. During this message, he gives considerable time to instruct His disciples in the way of fruitful prayer. He means for our praying to release the power of God for kingdom advancement. He wants our prayers to be means of His Father for kingdom gains. The model prayer Jesus gives His disciples is not simply a neatly packaged prayer option. It contains the categories that should form much of our prayer content. These are to be the supplications of those who desire to please God in prayer and to be useful to Him in His work of putting all things under the feet of His Son.

Following the ascension of Jesus back to His Father, the New Testament writers built on what Jesus taught and so add to our understanding of the great gift of prayer. Kingdoms are clashing. Biblical prayer is crucial. And this little book is an effort to draw a bit of attention to such things.

It should be added here, that while the focus of this book is prayers of the new covenant era, it is not meant to discourage use of prayers from the Old Testament. This is a New Testament prayer guide. But prayers from that testament do not altogether replace prayers from the previous one. They build upon them, and expand them. This is the nature of the redemptive covenants God has made with man throughout history; meaning the new covenant in Jesus Christ reaches back to Adam and Noah, Abraham and David to fulfill promises of salvation made to them. God has only one people. As Hebrews 3 shows us, believers of today are in the same redeemed household with Moses. So yes, along with the prayers of the New



Testament, we may also pray after that great cloud of believing witnesses that has gone before us.



*“My flesh is tired of seeking God,  
but on my knees I’ll stay.”*

—KEITH GREEN, from his song “Until That Final Day”

*“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.”*

—JAMES 5:17–18



## M E D I T A T I O N 1



### *Jesus says we are to pray for those who mistreat us.*

“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” MATTHEW 5:43–44 (cf. Ex 23:4–5; Job 31:29–30; Ps 7:3–5; Ro 12:14)

\* \* \*

**Y**our enemy is also your neighbor. And neighbors get loved (Lev 19:18; Mt 22:34–40; Lk 10:25–37). Jesus’s audience that day on the mountainside was misinformed. He says they had been taught that love is for neighbors and hatred is for enemies. Then He corrects their false beliefs. “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,” says the Lord (cf. Jas 3:8–10; Lk 6:27–28). But why? “That you may be sons of your Father in heaven” (Mt 5:45). In other words, be good to those who are not good to you because that is what God does. God “makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on

the unjust” (Mt 5:45). God, in some measure, is good to everyone, even those who curse or ignore him. If we love only those who love us, and are good only to those who are good to us, we are not being like Father God. We are not bearing the family likeness (Mt 5:46–47).

So let us think of those who have mistreated us, and pray for them. It is one way to love them. And as you continue this practice you may discover that it becomes increasingly difficult to despise those who are the subjects of your prayers. And your now growing concern for your enemies may open you up to love them in additional ways. This kind of intercessory, godly love is something that marks Christians as children of our Father in heaven (cf. Ac 14:14–17; Ro 1:28—2:4).

### *Scripture in Focus*

“While we were enemies we were reconciled to God” (Ro 5:10).

### *Think About It*

“It is impossible that God should not hear the prayers which with faith are made in Christ, though he give not according to the measure, manner, and time we dictate, for he will not be tied.” (Martin Luther, *Martin Luther’s Tabletalk*, #332)

### *Personal Reflection*

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## M E D I T A T I O N 2

### *Jesus teaches us to call on Father to spread His fame in His world.*



“Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” MATTHEW 6:9 (cf. Ps 115:1–3; Jos 7:1–9; Ne 9:5–6; Ez 20:8–14)

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God is greater, and better, than our very best thoughts of Him. And in giving His followers a prayer model, Jesus makes primary the knowledge of this greatness, as well as the Father’s honor and renown as the *hallowed One*, meaning our heavenly Father is holy, distinct, unique; not a creature (Job 9:32; Is 40:18, 25–26; 44:7–8; Ez 39:7; Jn 4:24; Ro 11:33–36). Jesus would have us embrace this reality and apply it to our prayers. The people of God want God to be known as He truly is, and to be credited with and praised for all of His works. He has revealed Himself in creation (Ro 1:20; Ps 19:1–6), conscience (Rom. 2:14–16), His Son (Jn 1:18; 14:9; Heb 1:1–4) and His Word (1 Th 2:13; 2 Ti 2:16; Heb 1:1; 2 Pe 1:16–21). Let us pray that He will take up these means, and

others, to make His holy name known and revered in a world that largely ignores Him.

It is necessary to notice that Jesus gives the model prayer as a contrast to the prayers He had been hearing (Mt 6:5–7). He speaks against the prayers of those who believe that God will hear and respond to them *because of their many words*. Insincere, empty, and thoughtless phrases are not acceptable.

Jesus also says that the prayer focus of some is a human audience. They want their prayers to impress. Because of this, says Jesus, they receive their reward from that human audience, not from their Maker. Regarding this, Jesus gives clear instruction: *Do not be like them* (Mt 6:8). God favors low pretense, which makes the way for high performance.

God is not inclined toward the self-satisfied petitioner making self-exalting requests. God likes to hear from people not particularly concerned with the praise of men and who therefore do not use prayer to seek the adulation of anyone whose title is not *Heavenly Father*. What moves God then is not our man-centered performance, but our humble dependent faith; faith in the holy heavenly Father who listens, and who *knows what you need before you ask Him* (Mt 6:8). With such faith as the fuel of their prayers, Father stoops to hear His children (Ps 40). When Jesus tells us to approach God as Father, He is saying we should approach Him as children, and children tend to speak to their human fathers without pretense, with boldness, and with great confidence in them. Children are more prone to authenticity and a sure faith than are we adults. This matters when we pray, because the real you needs fellowship with the real God. Trying to impress God with our rhetoric is not the way of Christ.

It is interesting how Jesus teaches related lessons in other Scripture texts. He does it by telling stories about adults who pray like children (Lk 11:1–16; 18:1–8). He also makes a point of putting on display those adults He encounters who have child-like faith, which is almost no one (Lk 7:1–10; Mt 15:21–28). Do not misunderstand; our praying is not to be *childish*, but *child-like*, as the New Testament repeatedly shows. And it is the gospel of Christ that drives such praying. When we are confident in the Father’s acceptance of us as the Bible declares it, then we are enabled to pray with faith, the way a trusting child engages his or her welcoming dad. We get to stand in union with Jesus, under the benefits of His intercession, led by His Spirit, and talk to our forever Father. To do so is to enter a realm where all things are possible. The heavenly Father can do anything He wants to do. And He does such for His children. There is nothing good for you that He will not do for you (Ro 8:28–32; Jn 16:23–24; Eph 3:20–21).

### *Scripture in Focus*

“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Ro 8:15).

### *Think About It*

QUESTION: Why did Christ command us to address God thus: “Our Father”?

ANSWER: To awaken in us at the very beginning of our prayer that childlike reverence for and trust in God, which are to be the ground of our prayer, namely, that God has become our Father through Christ, and will much less deny us what

we ask of Him in faith than our parents refuse us earthly things. (*Heidelberg Catechism*, #120)

QUESTION: Why is it added, “in heaven”?

ANSWER: That we might have no earthly thought of the heavenly majesty of God, and from His almighty power expect all things necessary for body and soul. (*Heidelberg Catechism*, #121)

### ***Personal Reflection***

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## M E D I T A T I O N 3



*Jesus teaches us to call on Father to fulfill  
His redemptive promises, purposes, and  
plans.*

“Your kingdom come.” MATTHEW 6:10a (cf. Ps 22:25–28; 145:8–13)

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**T**he gospel wins. The gospel wins because Jesus Christ is Lord, and has been given, by His Father, *dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him* (Da 7:13–14; Ps 110; Mt 28:18; Php 2:8–11; Re 11:15). This sweeping victory was announced in the Garden of Eden (Ge 3:15) and reaffirmed throughout redemptive history as recorded in Scripture. “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Ha 2:14). “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a person took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all the other seeds, but when it is fully grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree,

so that THE BIRDS OF THE SKY come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES” (Mt 13:31–32).

God rarely does much in a straight line. He likes to take the long, curvy route to kingdom completion. So the hand of God regularly moves slowly, but no less surely. God is building something (1 Pe 2:4–9; Mt 16:18). Day by day all around the world the redemptive reign of Christ is being ever more realized. This kingdom reign and work is priceless (Mt 13:44). Yet many, having their minds blinded by Satan, and their hearts darkened through their suppression of the truth about God, cannot see it (2 Co 4:3–4; Ro 1:18–21). They need to be born again or they will never enter this kingdom of redemption (Jn 3:3). Our work then includes this prayer—that the kingdom of God, already brought in by King Jesus, will be universally recognized and treasured, and that unbelievers will see and enter the kingdom through faith, and that the faithfulness of Christians as kingdom citizens will increase, that the world will be evermore *Christianized*. Biblical prayer begins with God and His mission, not us and our situations.

### *Scripture in Focus*

“The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour, until it was all leavened” (Mt 13:33).

### *Think About It*

“There is no tension or inconsistency between the teaching of Scripture on God’s sovereign foreordination of all things and on the efficacy of prayer. God foreordains the means as well as the end, and our prayer is foreordained as the means whereby

he brings his sovereign will to pass.” (J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology*, 189)

***Personal Reflection***

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