

Lord,
Teach Me
to Pray
in 28 Days

Kay Arthur



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON

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Cover by Dugan Design Group

Lord, Teach Me to Pray in 28 Days Milano Softone™

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Published by Harvest House Publishers
Eugene, Oregon 97408
www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Arthur, Kay, 1933-
Lord, teach me to pray in 28 days / Kay Arthur.
p. cm.
ISBN 978-0-7369-2360-6 (pbk.)
ISBN 978-0-7369-7691-6 (Milano Softone)
ISBN 978-0-7369-3270-7 (eBook)
I. Prayer—Christianity. I. Title.
BV215.A77 2008
248.3'2—dc22

2008023046

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Printed in China

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 / RDS-RD / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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As You Begin...

Are you hurting, Beloved?
Does the pain run deep?

And when I call you “Beloved,” do you believe it?

Do you ever find yourself wondering whether you are truly loved by anyone—even God? Then again, perhaps pain isn’t the issue in your life right now. Even so, you feel torn by confusion, stress, or doubts. Perhaps you’re so pressured, so burdened, and so weighed down that you wonder how you’re going to make it.

The news is bad

the situation difficult

the crisis overwhelming

the insecurity debilitating

the decision-making process scary.

On any given day you can find yourself concerned about any or all of the following: yourself, your spouse (having one, not having one), children (wishing, wanting, having, wishing you didn’t), your friends, your finances. The future. The past. The present.

What will you do? How will you make it? Where will you turn?

There are answers to those questions, loved one, and you can find them in the Word of God and in prayer, as you cast all your cares on Him because He cares for you.

The Word of God is the foundation for everything else in our lives. According to Jesus Himself, man lives by every word that comes out of the mouth of God. The Word of God is God-breathed. That's the very term the apostle Paul used in his letter to young Timothy:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16).

The word “inspired” in this passage comes from a Greek word that literally means “God-breathed.” When God speaks on any given issue, what He speaks is truth. What He commands is to be obeyed. God has spoken and it stands. We are to believe and obey.

Yet being a Christian is more than merely believing promises and obeying commands. At its very essence, Christianity isn't a religion, it's a *relationship*. And as we all know, a relationship requires a high commitment to communication.

That's where prayer comes in. It is through prayer that you and I communicate with our heavenly Father.

Think about the everyday needs and demands in our lives: the decisions we must make, the wisdom we need, the resources we require, the relationships that need so much tending, discernment, and sacrifice. Is it any wonder the Bible says, “Pray without ceasing”?

We need the strength, wisdom, and love of the Lord in our lives, and we need these things desperately.

Though Scripture sets forth all of the goals and standards for everyday life in principle, it usually doesn’t fill in the practical details. That’s why we need to talk and listen to our heavenly Father.

This, Beloved, is prayer. And that’s what this study is all about—learning to pray God’s way, according to His Word. It’s about learning how to talk to God anytime about anything and everything. Or to put it in words that resonate with our spirit, prayer is about communion with God.

This journey of learning you’re about to embark on has already been completed by hundreds of thousands of people all over the world, many of whom have written to Precept Ministries with testimonies of what a help and an encouragement it has been in their lives.

I offer this book with the prayer that God will use it mightily to teach you to pray “according to His will,” and that His words on prayer will abide in you. Remember, Jesus said, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7).

I am so excited about the truths you are going to learn from the precious Word of God in the following pages, and

the incredible difference I *know* they will make in your life and in your relationship with the sovereign ruler of the universe. In just four short weeks we will learn God's basic precepts on prayer—principles that will give you a thoroughgoing biblical understanding of this crucial area of life.

What you learn in this study, dear child of God, will be yours to put into practice for a lifetime, just as Jesus intended when He taught His own disciples how to pray.

*Week
One*



Learning to Pray God's Way

Day 1: Faith Is a Relationship

Day 2: Prayer Keeps Us Connected

Day 3: Always Go to the Expert

Day 4: Come to the Father

Day 5: Prayer Begins with Worship

Weekender

Faith Is a Relationship

When the apostles of the early church suddenly found themselves embroiled in a controversy that consumed both their time and energy, they had enough spiritual presence of mind to know something *had* to be done. This was a very serious situation for the infant church. The apostles were in danger of missing the priority of their highest callings—the Word of God and prayer.

As a result, they summoned “the congregation of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word’” (Acts 6:2-4).

What wisdom! The apostles had to be careful lest they become so occupied with *servicing* God that they neglected the Word, which is *knowing* God, and prayer, which is *communicating* with Him. Serving God, valuable as that might be, is no substitute for knowing Him and communicating with Him. Real service flows out of relationship, not obligation.



A healthy, strong, and vital relationship is based on

communication: speaking, listening, and understanding. This is why, when the pressures of leadership over the affairs of the early church became too much, these leaders knew they had to take immediate steps to change their situation. And that's just what they did, taking action that gave rise to the very first church deacons.

Seeing what they did will help us too, so take a moment and open your Bible to Acts 6. In this study I'll be asking you to read from your own Bible, so you can mark it and note exactly what God is teaching you in that passage. (If you will actually do this you will find it will make an incredible difference in your study. Many—thousands—of men and women could happily confirm this.)

Read the first four verses of Acts 6 and list two things to which these early church leaders determined to devote themselves.

- 1.
- 2.

You might want to mark these words in your Bible. It would be good to choose a color, symbol, or both for each and then color-code your Bible as you do this study. Personally, I mark **Word** by drawing a symbol of an open book like this  with a fine-point purple pen (purple is the color of royalty) and coloring it green. Green is my color for life, growth. I mark **prayer** like this . It symbolizes to

me the cupping of two hands raised in prayer. I color it pink. You do what fits you! If marking is a new thing, just let me say that once you break down and do it, you will see it works! It's tremendously effective—and has in a sense become a science!

Now then, let's pause for a moment and reflect on our priorities as well. It was the very busyness of life, the pressures of ministry, that caused the Twelve to stop and reflect on what was most important. But busyness didn't stop after the first century, did it? Too often we find ourselves in a dizzying whirlwind of activities, responsibilities, and ministries to others. In the midst of our busy lives and multiple ministries to others, we need to periodically stop and evaluate our priorities. Otherwise we too might very well neglect the essentials.

What are your top two priorities for every day? What are your “*these-are-what-I-am-determined-to-do-day-in-and-day-out*” hopes? Be honest in your answer, for God meets us in our objective honesty. Writing out your priorities is helpful as well.

- 1.
- 2.

The apostles knew that prayer and the ministry of the Word were absolutely vital. They were building the church,

and the church had to be built on the solid foundation of truth. To neglect the Word of God would be nothing short of disaster.

Do you understand what they meant when they spoke of the “ministry of the word” in Acts 6:4?

Jesus gave a clear definition of “the word” on His way to the garden of Gethsemane, where He was betrayed and arrested. Let’s see what Jesus prayed on behalf of the disciples and all who would believe in Him...which, Beloved, includes you! (By the way, *Beloved* was a term used by the writers of the New Testament epistles—men writing to men and women. I wanted you to know that so you men don’t cringe. Just being biblical!)

In His time of crisis, what did Jesus desire for you and me? You can find the answer in John 17:17.

(Of course, I’d like for you to read more of Jesus’ prayer to His Father, in verses 1-17, so you can see the context—so vital in handling the Word of God accurately—but if you’re in a rush, I understand.)

Read verse 17 in your Bible, and record what the verse says.

Someone has said that prayer and the Word are like two wings of a bird—both are necessary if the bird is to fly. And both are necessary for us if we want to soar in our relationship with our heavenly Father. As did the apostles, we must give ourselves first and foremost to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. These twin priorities make a dramatic difference in the vitality of your relationship with God.

As you discovered in John 17:17, God's Word sanctifies us, setting us apart from the world for Him. Never forget that God's Word—from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse in Revelation—is pure truth! You can trust it completely, dear one.

Let's look at another verse that shows us the interlocking of prayer and the Word. Read John 15:7 in your Bible, and in one simple sentence write what you observed from this verse about the relationship of the Word and prayer.

By the way, if you were to mark all references to prayer in your Bible, what synonym for prayer would you mark in this verse?

Finally, let's look at 1 John 5:13-15. Because these verses contain such precious promises, the passage is printed for you so you won't miss a one.

Read these verses aloud, underlining or highlighting every use of "you," "we," and "us." Color-code them. (I always color-code the recipients in an epistle orange, and the author blue.) Then read the passage a second time and mark every reference to prayer. While you won't find the specific word *pray*, there is a synonym.

- 13 *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.*
- 14 *This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*
- 15 *And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.*

Now look at every place you underlined “you,” “we,” and “us,” and list every truth you learned from marking the text this way.

What did you learn about prayer, or *asking*, from these verses? The answer is right there in the text. Just look where you marked the word “ask,” and write down what you observe.

Now, reason with me: If you want God to hear you and provide what you ask, then you need to ask according to His will. And how will you know His will, Beloved? By listening to—knowing—His Word!

God speaks in His Word, and we are to listen; we speak in prayer and God listens. Awesome! Doesn't this truth make you want to give yourself to prayer and to the Word?

It's Time to Pray

This daily feature provides you with a wonderful oppor-

tunity to hear from God, speak to Him in prayer, record your thoughts, and record how He speaks to you. If you're like me, you'll find yourself wanting more time with Him each passing day.

So what is your prayer today in light of what you've learned? Make it short and simple. Write it here, and look back later to see how He specifically answers your specific requests. What a faith-builder that will be in your life!

Oh, God, I...