



Talking
with
GOD

Workbook

A practical supplement

David Bailey

Talking with *God* Workbook

A workbook to supplement the book
Talking with God

Author and designer: David Bailey
Published by Wilderness Voice Publications December 2024
www.wilderness-voice.org

Version: 2411W1.0

Copyright:

By law, copyright is automatically applied to original written material. In downloading this book and its companion resources, you are permitted to make copies for you and/or for members of a class. You are not permitted to make any changes to the text. You are not permitted to sell any of these books. Permission to produce or use this book and its complementary books outside of this may be obtained from: publications@wilderness-voice.org.

Scripture:

All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible or the author's translation unless otherwise stated.

This workbook resource

This book is one of three that make up the workbook resource to supplement Talking with God. The full resource includes:

Talking with God workbook (this book). It contains information and instructions for the exercises.

My Prayers book. This is where you write in your responses to the exercises. It is also used in conjunction with the Prayer Journal subsequently.

Prayer Journal. This is used for some exercises but is also the main tool for your prayers in the future.

Copies of this resource may be obtained from wilderness-voice.org/talking-with-God/workbook.



Contents

THIS WORKBOOK RESOURCE	4
PURPOSE, AIMS, PROCESS	6
BEFORE WE BEGIN...	7
<i>Lesson 1</i>	
INTRODUCTION: A PROPER LOOK.	9
<i>Lesson 2</i>	
THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER	11
<i>Lesson 3</i>	
WHAT GOD WANTS IN PRAYER	15
<i>Lesson 4</i>	
WHAT GOD DOES FOR US IN PRAYER.	21
<i>Lesson 5</i>	
THE WORD OF GOD IN PRAYER.	24
<i>Lesson 6</i>	
LIVING A PRAYERFUL LIFE.	28
<i>Lesson 7</i>	
CONCLUSION: AMEN.	31
<i>Lesson 8</i>	
USING THE PRAYER JOURNAL AND MY PRAYERS BOOK	36
WHERE TO FROM HERE....	39
RESOURCES	40
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:	41

Purpose, aims, process

Purpose

The purpose of this workbook is to assist a person in implementing the principles and conclusions reached in *Talking with God*.

Aims

We all want to pray like the faithful of old and build a genuine relationship with the Father, His Son, and His angels. To do this, we must be honest, look at how we pray, and see where the common pitfalls are. The practical exercises in this book are designed to make you think about prayer and how *you* pray but also start building that healthy life of prayer and meditation that we see in the faithful of old.

Goal

We will be building a system for your prayers. This system is designed to help overcome the usual pitfalls of default prayers. You will be encouraged to prepare your prayers by thinking about them before you give them, and you will be preparing the tools for this as you undertake the exercises.



Process

The book *Talking with God* is broken up into sections called Parts. The exercises in the workbook are designed to correspond to each Part. Some exercises prepare you for future workbook sections so you can capitalise on the material covered in that section of the book.

You should read the whole section (or Part) in *Talking with God* and then the corresponding section in this workbook. Most of the work will be done in the My Prayers workbook.

Conventions

We will use the following conventions:

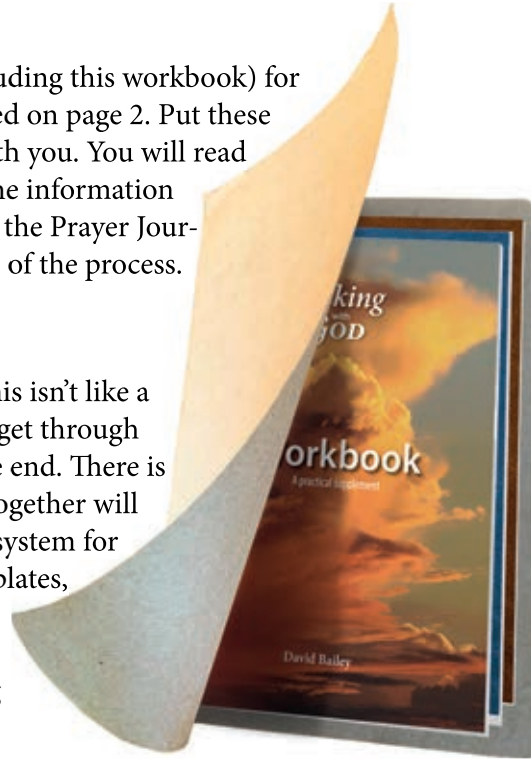
-  Exercises will be highlighted with the book bullet and indented, as demonstrated in this sentence.
-  In the exercises, I reference the My Prayers workbook as **MP/Preparation** or **MP/Prayer Lists**, etc. I reference the prayer journal as **PJ/Prayers**, etc.

What you will need

Ensure you have the three handbooks (including this workbook) for the lessons in these exercises. These are listed on page 2. Put these workbooks in a folder that you can keep with you. You will read the information from *this* book and write the information for each exercise in the My Prayers book or the Prayer Journal, but the latter is mainly for the last stage of the process.

Pace yourself

Don't try to do everything in one sitting. This isn't like a business course where you have to cram to get through everything so you can get a certificate at the end. There is no examination. The information you put together will enable you to build your prayer habits and system for yourself. While they will provide good templates, you are encouraged to build your own system by adapting what we have provided to suit your own needs. The key is spending time to do this.



Before we begin...

Before you even begin reading *Talking with God*, I would like to suggest you do the following:

- 📖 **PJ/Prayers:** Take ten minutes to write out a prayer to ask God's help with your study on prayer. I ask that you give this prayer each time you pick up the book to read it. (Alternatively, you may wish to write out the prayer on a separate piece of paper, fold it up, and use it as a bookmark in the book *Talking with God*, as suggested at the beginning of that book.)

Quite apart from the fact that we ought to seek God's blessing upon all our endeavours in His Word, I have another reason for this exercise, which will become apparent later. As I suggested in the book, you could write the prayer out on a piece of paper and use it as a bookmark. You may like to add to this prayer as you progress through the book.

Problems with Prayer

finding time
concentration
always the same
not sure God hears me
get too tired at night



Lesson 1

Introduction: A proper look


First, from the book *Talking with God* read the section *Introduction: A proper look*.


Objective

Our objective in this lesson is to lay some foundations so we can use the Bible to help us solve our problems with prayer.

Problems with prayer

If we want to improve our prayers, it's important that we are honest about them. We need to identify the areas in which we have difficulties. Not so that we can "get it right", as that often ends in formulaic prayer. No, we need to change our mindset. But it is helpful to discover the areas in which we have difficulties.

 **MP/Prayer Lists:** Make a list of the things you find difficult with prayer. You may discover some of these in the book *Talking with God*.

 You may also like to take the survey referred to in *Talking with God* and use that to help identify your issues. You can find the survey in the list of resources at the end of this book.

You may want to add these items to the prayer you wrote out to give each time you read the book. Ask God to help you find answers to these problems.

Default words

Think about your prayers. Are they made up of jargon, clichés, and sayings that you use by default? Default expressions often lead to our minds wandering or thoughtlessness during our prayers.

Do you give "default" prayers? These prayers follow the same pattern each time you give a prayer.

This isn't saying that your prayers are unacceptable; God alone judges that. But, if we want to give prayers that don't slide into "automatic", we must consider this.

It's not just a case of stopping the use of these expressions and replacing them with others. That would mean that you are thinking about words and not thoughts, which reduces prayer to legalism. At this stage, it's a case of being aware of the issue. The rest of the book and this workbook will work on changing this tendency.

Priorities

In this section of *Talking with God*, we considered how we struggle with putting God first. To do this, we must be as honest as we can.

 **MP/Preparation:** Make a list of important things to you in life. Use the *Priority*

list in the section entitled “Preparation”. Then, prioritise the list (column 2).

We tend to prioritise in the order things *ought* to be, but the reality is quite different. To make changes in our lives, we need to be honest. You may like to guess as to what time you spend on each of these, but mark it in pencil.

- Think about how much time you give to each item or role you have in the list. Add this to the “Time spent” column. Is God truly first? If He is not, what can you do about it?
- Ask God to help you make changes. Include this in your regular prayers.

We’ll come back to this list later.

wilderness voice PUBLICATIONS

Priority list:

Item	Current priority	Time spent	Priority should be	How can you change?
Wife				
Children				
Wider family				
God				
- Bible Study				
- Prayer				
Ecclesia				
Job				
house				
garden				
friends				
car				
pottery classes				
language course				
neighbours				

8

Lesson 2

The purpose of prayer


First, read Part One of the book, *Talking with God*. Remember to give the prayer you wrote out before you read the book. Pray also before you begin these exercises.

Objective:

Our objective in this lesson is to understand why we should pray and understand the purpose of prayer. We need to turn our prayers from a wish-list to focussing on God. We need to turn our prayers from a process we go through to a real conversation with God.


Purpose of prayer

Without knowing the purpose of prayer, we will flounder. We need to know this purpose in order to guide us in our own prayers.


 **MP/Purpose and Power**, write out this purpose. Think about what it means for you and your own prayers.

Need for God

Part of the purpose of prayer is to express our need for God.


 **MP/Prayer Lists**: On a new page, write down a list of what you deem to be your needs. Write alongside each item in the list *why* you need God to provide it. You may incorporate items from the list you created of your problems with prayer.

You may seem a little self-conscious about doing this, but there's nothing wrong with asking God to help us with our needs, both spiritual and natural. Paul said, "In everything by prayer, make your requests be known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).

 Take one item from the list and write out (in **PJ/Prayers**) what you want to say to God about it, then talk to Him about it. You may like to use an item from your list each time you pray. Ensure you write out what you want to say to God about the item. This practice makes you think about what you want to say to God.

God's purpose

Involving ourselves in God's purpose is what God wants of us, in a practical sense and also in our prayers.

 **MP/Notes & Planning**: On a new page, write in the heading box "God's Purpose", then write out a list of areas relating to God's purpose that you think you should pray about. You can categorise these.

Some suggestions:

- Gospel proclamation
- Bible Mission
- Ecclesial activities
 - Sunday School
 - AGM
- Bible Schools
- Those who are unwell
- The Lost
- ...

📖 Add to this list as you think of new items or as you come across them in your daily readings.

📖 **MP/Meditations:** Write out the Lord's prayer from Matthew 6. If you don't know this prayer, start memorising it. Not for the purpose of saying it by rote but so that you may be able to bring it to mind.




Talking with God

Assess your prayers. To do this, you may need to break through the security walls we build up around us and be honest. Be prepared to make changes. When you pray, do you run through a set prayer-by-rote, or do you talk with the Father? Think about this for each kind of prayer you may give:


- Personal
- Thanks for meals
- Prayers on behalf of family members
- Public prayers

While God is to be approached with great reverence, He wants us to talk with Him naturally without affectation. We are not filling out words to say; we are simply talking to Him about matters we've thought worthy of bringing before Him.

 **Try this.** One way that may help you to talk with God naturally is to speak to Him out loud.

Walking and talking with God

Walking is good for us.


 **Try this.** Go for a walk, and as you do, take one item from your list of things to think about and talk to God about it. Alternatively, take one statement from the Lord's prayer and use that to think about and talk to God about that. You may find it difficult at first, but try it and keep at it. If necessary, find a secluded spot to stop and think about the chosen matter.




Time log

In the Introduction to the book, we considered priorities. You should have made a list of your own. Let's take this further.

Many have expressed how hard it is to fit prayer (and Bible study) into their lives. I would like to suggest that you check out where you are spending your time. I have created a time log that you can use to monitor how you spend your day.

 **Download:** You can download the time log from wilderness-voice.org/timelog

 To get the real picture, you should use this log over two or even three weeks because each week can be beset by unique interruptions.

Filling out the log can be tedious, but it's worth doing this exercise. I think you will find it revealing. You may be surprised by where you are spending most of your time. This exercise will also become handy later when looking at times for prayer.

Once you have completed the exercises here, move on to read Part Two of *Talking with God...*

Personal time log

Date: _____ to _____

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
4:00 am							
4:15 am							
4:30 am							
4:45 am							
5:00 am							
5:15 am							
5:30 am							
5:45 am							
6:00 am							
6:15 am							
6:30 am							
6:45 am							
7:00 am							
7:15 am							
7:30 am							
7:45 am							
8:00 am							
8:15 am							
8:30 am							
8:45 am							
9:00 am							
9:15 am							
9:30 am							
9:45 am							
10:00 am							
10:15 am							
10:30 am							
10:45 am							
11:00 am							
11:15 am							
11:30 am							
11:45 am							
12:00 pm							
12:15 pm							
12:30 pm							
12:45 pm							
1:00 pm							
1:15 pm							
1:30 pm							
1:45 pm							
2:00 pm							
2:15 pm							
2:30 pm							
2:45 pm							
3:00 pm							
3:15 pm							
3:30 pm							
3:45 pm							

www.wilderness-voice.org/time-log

Lesson 3

What God wants in prayer

First, read Part Two of the book. Remember to give the prayer you wrote out before you read the book. Pray also before you begin these exercises.

Objective

Our objective is to build the attitudes that God looks for in our prayers. The good habits and attitudes He wants in prayer are outlined in both the golden altar and the ingredients of the incense.

From last time...

Have you completed the time-log exercise? It will help to have completed this before moving on with the exercises for this section. It should show you where you spend your time. You may feel the need to make adjustments: things to cut out or down and things to add in.

- 📖 **List of priorities:** Compare your time log with of Priorities (**MP/Preparation**). You may want to make some adjustments. You may also like to give some consideration to the last column: How can you make some changes?

Good practice and attitudes for our prayers

Based on the altar of incense and its use in Exodus 30:1–9

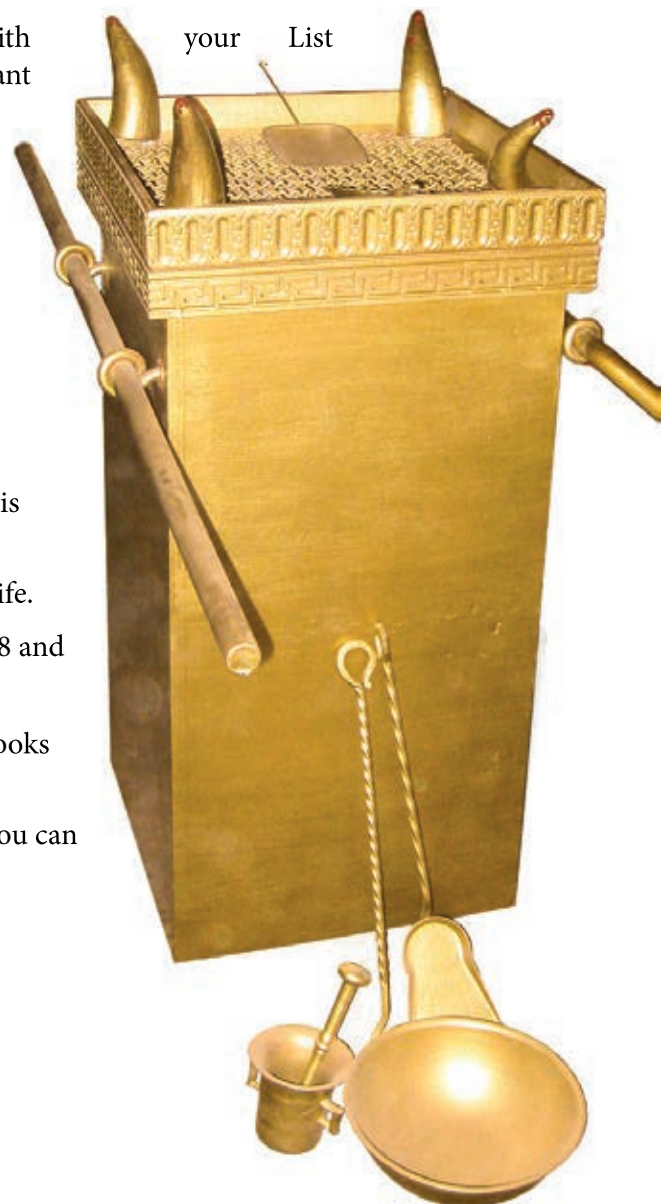
- 📖 **MP/Preparation:** Make a list of things God is looking for in the chart provided

Think about what this means for your own prayer life.

From the ingredients of incense in Exodus 30:34–38 and from reading Part Two of *Talking with God*:

- 📖 **MP/Preparation:** Make a list of what God looks for in prayer in the chart provided

These are all really about attitudes. Consider how you can build these attitudes into your prayers.



Seeking God

Faith requires us to seek God. We have seen that seeking God primarily refers to seeking Him in His Word and in prayer. The third is worship, which includes both the Word and prayer, and this brings about fellowship with God. We've seen that this is not something we do once; it's a lifetime work, a lifestyle. It's got to become what we do. We must become "Seekers of God".

📖 Begin a little study on "Who God is"

📖 **MP/Meditations:** Write down your thoughts about God. Add any Bible passages to support these thoughts. Add to this list of thoughts as you do your Readings and Bible study. You can keep adding to this list as you progress through *Talking with God*. Talk to God about your desire to come to know Him and ask Him for His help. Don't forget about this little study; seeking must be earnest and persistent.



Prayer times and places

We have seen in *Talking with God* how important set times for prayer is. These may interrupt our day, but that's good, too, for it means we turn our focus back to God. And, it can't just become a ritual; rather, it is an opportunity to spend time with the Father, so He becomes the focus of our day. God really comes first.

Prayer times

Think about the best times for you to pray. This may be three times or two times a day. The time log you filled out may help you. You will need to be practical about this, but be careful that God doesn't get shunted to the bottom of your list of priorities. If at all possible, make your prayer times when you are most fresh and alert.

📖 In your personal diary or calendar, block these times out as an appointment.

📖 These appointments must be kept—sacrosanct.

Places for prayer

Work out where you may give these prayers. Find a place where you will not be interrupted and have quiet. A place where you can spend time with God. I go for a walk after lunch and walk around the local streets and parks. I can block out the cars and passers-by while I meditate upon God's Word and pray. Try it and see how you get on. Everyone is different, so it may not work for you.

Instant in prayer

You may already practice instant prayers to God, but if you don't, it is a good way of remembering God during your day. Include Him in it. Our busy lifestyles leave little time to remember God during our workday. Perhaps you could set yourself reminders. But our intention is to bring Him into everything we do, so we talk to Him about those things. It may feel alien, but it's one of those good habits we should try to develop.



Aids to concentration for our prayers

As we mentioned at the outset, practical advice is often a queue for formulaic worship: quick fixes to make our prayers right. So, the following suggestions to help with concentration come with this problem in mind, but you also need to bear them in mind when implementing them.

Preparation

Chapter 8 shows the emphasis in Exodus 30 on preparation and how important it is in prayer. Preparation goes a long way to helping us with concentration. We have already provided examples of how preparation helps to prepare the mind on who we are praying to, what we want to say, and how we want to say it. A mind aware of these things is a mind that is able to focus.

There are other things we can do to prepare our minds in order to focus, too. The first two of the following suggestions fall into this category.

Prayer Journal

Using a prayer journal can help. Make up your prayer lists. Don't just list names or items, but make sub-lists with reasons under each heading. Before you pray, specifically select each item and think about it. In this way, your mind is prepared to focus on who you are speaking to and what you want to talk about with Him.

Use Scripture

Read through a psalm or prayer from Scripture, meditate upon it for a while so you understand its meaning, then put that passage into your own words—or even use the same words if they express how you feel—and offer that unto God. Scripture is full of examples of people who cite other faithful people's prayers. God loves to hear words from Scripture if they are uttered with understanding and sincerity. Again, it's about attitude and being affected by God's Word. God hears those prayers.



Write out prayers

Another way to assist concentration is to write your prayers down. Paul wrote prayers in his epistles; Nehemiah did in his diary, so why can't we? Obviously, this is not meant as an exercise of putting together a perfect prayer; it's writing down our deepest thoughts and pouring them out to God on paper. It's like writing a letter and then reading it out to God.

If you followed the exercises I suggested at the end of Part One, you should have written out a prayer that can be given each time you read this book. How did you find that exercise? Did you find that you became a little more thoughtful as to what you put down? And, is the prayer more fluent, without repetition? Does it contain all the usual clichés? There's the benefit of preparation, as well as writing the prayer down. I want to consider this practice again in Chapter 21.

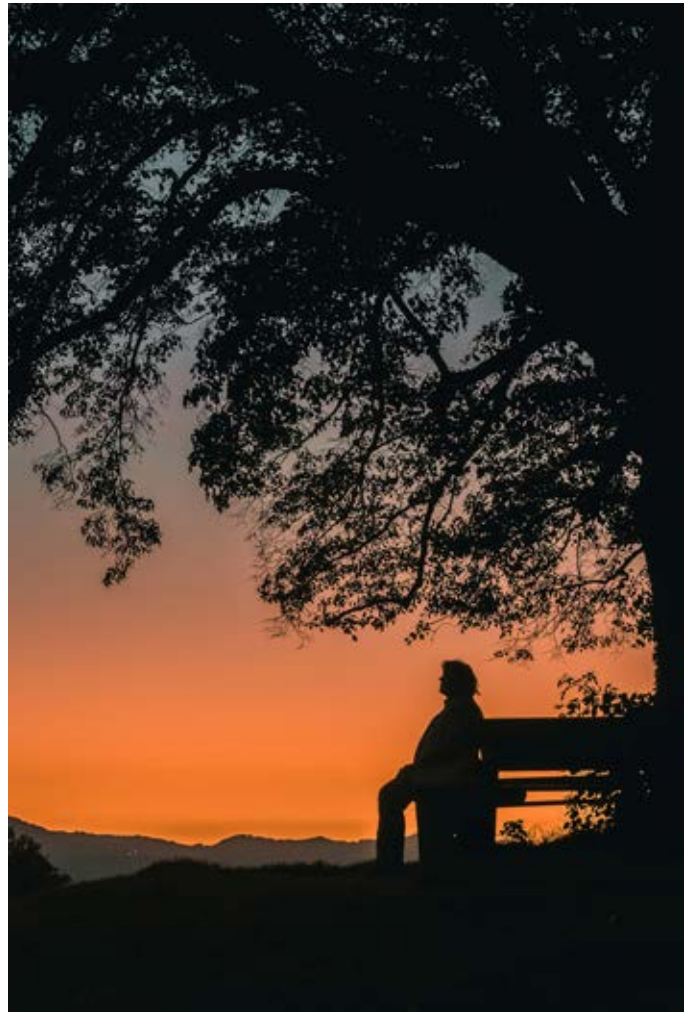
Solitude and quiet

The Lord often sought solitude for prayer. So should we.

Have you ever wondered why Jews pray toward a wall? The most well-known example of this practice is at the Western, or, Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. I heard a rabbi explain that the scriptural basis is Hezekiah, who turned his face to the wall and prayed (see Isaiah 38:2), but the purpose of the practice, he suggested, was for better concentration with less distraction. I doubt that Hezekiah turned towards the wall for this reason, but eliminating distractions for prayer is a no-brainer.

Everyone's circumstances are different, and so are everyone's tolerance levels and capacity to deal with different environments. For example, some are able to close off from background noise; others can't. Here are a few suggestions:

- Choose a time when your spouse, children, workmates, or friends are not liable to interrupt or demand your attention.
- Find a place in your home, indoors or outdoors, where it is quiet, or you can lock yourself away without fear of interruption.
- Go for a walk, find a quiet park, book an office room, put a seat in your shed or garage, or even go out and sit in your car.
- Set up a routine so that no one may interrupt you when your study, bedroom, or lounge door is closed at certain times of the day.
- Don't forget to turn your phone off.



Stance

One way to assist concentration is to make ourselves less comfortable. Part of lulling ourselves into a mind drift is settling into a comfort zone, and then habit or nature takes over. That's why it's best not to give our prayers lying in bed. As we've seen, it's better to give God the best time of the day, not the last thing at night. If no other time is possible, it's best to at least sit up, get up, or even stand up. Or, kneel. Coming home late after a tiring day and trying to give a prayer before going to sleep often ends in waking up wondering whether you actually finished the prayer or, alternatively, racing through a few words because your tiredness is uppermost in the mind. If you want full attention to be on God, take any measure possible to give Him His due importance. Wash your face in cold water, sit in a colder room, stand—even outside. And don't forget to prepare your mind to enter His presence.



Concentration in communal prayer

One of the hardest areas for concentration is when trying to engage in a prayer someone else gives. A suggestion I have always found helpful from a brother many years ago was to repeat the words of the person praying. This means you listen intently to what the person is saying and repeat them to God so that the words and sentiments become your own. You truly can say “Amen” at the end of that prayer! You can even add to the words spoken by the person praying. If we think about it, in the process of speaker and hearer, that's what we are doing anyway, but if we deliberately do it, it helps us focus and concentrate.

📖 Try these suggestions and see if any of them work for you.

Remember also the lists you have begun:

📖 **MP/Notes & Planning:** *Reminder* about the previous list of your needs and the list of matters concerning God's purpose. Keep adding to these lists.

📖 **MP/Notes & Planning:** Look at the list of items you wrote under the heading “God's Purpose”. You should have several areas (or “Categories”) about God's purpose you could pray for. Transfer each of those to **MP/Prayer Lists**. Each category should become a heading, so you should have one heading per page. Now you can add items to each category as you think about each area. Where possible, use Bible passages to support the items on the list. You should be able to find them, as they each are about God's purpose.

Don't give up! God looks for genuine seekers. Don't forget to ask Him for His help.

Lesson 4

What God does for us in prayer

First, read Part Three of the book *Talking with God*. Remember to give the prayer you wrote out before you read the book. Pray also before you begin these exercises.

Objective:

Our objective is to build our understanding of how we may effectively and consciously enter into the presence of God in prayer. We want to be more conscious of God in our daily lives and build a closer relationship with Him.

The power of prayer

We learned that the power of prayer is Christ. He is the *means, motivation, and inspiration* for prayer.

- 📖 **MP/Purpose and power:** Write down what the power of prayer is underneath your entry on the purpose of prayer:

The power of prayer is Christ.

He is the means, the inspiration, and the motivation for prayer.

- 📖 Underneath this, describe in your own words why this is so, using Bible passages to support it.

- 📖 **MP/Mediations:** On a new page, make a list of what God has accomplished in Christ. Include Bible passages in support.

- 📖 **MP/Prayer Lists:** On a new page, write down at least five things that God has done for you.

Meeting God in Christ

One problem we have with prayer is where to focus our minds during it (in both private and public prayers). We find it hard to communicate with Him because we don't see His face, hear His responses, or get any feedback. It's almost like we're talking to ourselves, which is what it can sometimes become. How do we convince ourselves that we are actually speaking to a person: to our Father in Heaven?

In 2 Kings 6:17, Elisha prayed for his servant, "Yahweh, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see". He wanted to show his servant that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (v. 16). We, too, can't see the heavenly host, but they're there. There is a "veil" over our eyes (or scales or a wall) that blocks us from seeing them. Periodically, we get glimpses of this unseen world through the Word. It is the same with God: He's there, but we can't see Him. We cannot see His representatives, the angels. This knowledge can be very helpful in our prayers. By faith, we know God is there, as are the Lord Jesus Christ and the angels. They all listen in to our prayers on the Father's behalf. It's like He is on the other side of a wall we can't see.

Most Israelites never saw the altar of incense, let alone the ark of the covenant. They could only go there by faith by what they had been told by those who had seen these items, and most, from what the Scriptures say about them—like us.

One other thing we have to assist us is that God hears all prayers “in that place”—the place of the covenant, or “in Christ”. It’s in Christ that we meet with God. This can only be by faith, but it is very helpful to remind ourselves of this as we pray that our Father in Heaven is listening to our prayers *because* we are in Christ. We know He is there because He has told us, yea, reassured us, that He is.


Again, speaking out loud helps us to be rooted in reality. So can keeping our eyes open.

The conscience and being conscious of God

We are not naturally conscious of God. We must remember Him to become conscious of Him. Somehow, we need to remember more regularly so we don’t forget Him. If we’re honest, most of us could easily forget about God for hours at a time unless we

have reminders. If you have set times for prayer during the day, that’s one way to remind yourself of Him. Are there any other ways?



 **MP/Notes & Planning:** Think of ways to remember that God is always present, always listening, always watching. Write them down and work out how you can implement them as triggers.

Being conscious of God is not just knowing that He is watching (like Big Brother). He’s a loving Father who cares for us and has feelings about us. We need to build up our understanding of how God feels about everything so that we remember Him as a personality. You began a study about “Who God is”. You can now build on this by adding examples of how God thinks of His people’s actions and how He feels. Try to think about how God feels about any given Bible incident (it will be there in the Bible), then apply that to yourself.

Christ’s role in prayer

How do we view Christ? It’s important that we see his elevated role. He is not our buddy, yet he is our friend if we are subservient to him. Nor is he an idol that we can worship separate from the Father. God manifestation is the key.

Understanding Christ’s role in heaven will assist us in our prayers. It’s not technical or mechanical, as if Christ is the conduit through which our prayers get a pass or a rejection and then handed on to the Father. Our prayers are to the Father, but Christ hears our prayers, as does the Father. It is Christ, as representative of the Father, who acts on our prayers (Rom. 8:26–27) and who organises the angels to respond all in the name of God and “to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11).

📖 Read through the article on God manifestation, especially on Elohim on the resources page on wilderness-voice.or/talking-with-God/resources.

Understanding the subject of God manifestation is helpful in understanding the Bible, but also understanding providence and who is involved in our prayers. Knowing how it works assists us in building our relationship with our Father in Heaven, His Son, and the angels, His ministers. It is encouraging to remember when we pray to know that in speaking unto the Father, His whole family in Heaven is there to assist.



Providence and answers to prayer

Providence is an area fraught with difficulties, especially when we are desperate for reassurance that God is with us. It's important to interpret according to the Word of God and always respond to circumstances in our lives according to the Word, not superstition or wishful thinking. On the other hand, it's important to know that He *is* working in our lives, even though it would appear to anyone outside the Truth that our lives look just the same as theirs; good and bad things happen to us all, even coincidences. But the Bible reassures us that God, His Son, and the angels are working behind the scenes. Usually, it's only well after an event that we can see that the hand of God was at work.

Think about the times when God has acted in your life. These are things we ought to be thankful for.

📖 **MP/Prayer Lists:** Start a new page with the heading "Thanksgiving". Start a list of things to be thankful for, including the times when you've witnessed the hand of God in your life.

We have learned that God answers all prayers, but only those that are according to His will. This is also reinforced by the fact that we ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, they are matters Christ would endorse or ask for.

📖 **MP:** look through the lists you created of your needs (**Prayer Lists**) and your priorities (**Preparation**) in Lesson 2. Are there any items on that list that are really wants rather than needs? Would Christ ask for these things? If they don't belong on the list anymore, cross them off.

Lesson 5

The Word of God in prayer

First, read Part Four of the book *Talking with God* and give the prayer you wrote out.

Objective:

We aim to develop our ability to meditate upon God's Word like those in Bible time.

We covered several matters relating to prayer and the Word of God in this section:

- Using the Word to prepare our minds for prayer
- Using the Word as a basis for what we want to say in prayer
- Meditating upon God's Word is a form of prayer.

Psalm 1 encourages us to meditate upon the law day and night. It's like a tree drawing upon the Word day and night and applying it to the circumstances of life. It is interwoven with speaking to self, to God, and even to others. Meditation is a form of prayer, for it is done in the presence of God and involving Him in it.



But how do we do this? It's all so different and strange to our way of thinking. Because it's foreign to our Greco-Roman-oriented minds, we need to retrain them.

Meditation is an important part of Bible study. We don't need to change the methods we use to study our Bibles, but it's important that we develop this skill. *Anyone* can do this; it's not about academics. In Bible times, many were illiterate, and even those who were literate did not have access to a Bible. They used memory and thinking about what they learned. We need to develop this good habit, too.

You may find yourself fumbling along at first. Because it's alien to us, we can easily be discouraged. But, if we want to reap the benefits of biblical meditation and build our relationship with God, we must persevere.


Here are some ideas that may help.

Use Scripture as a basis for prayer:



Choose a Bible passage upon which to meditate. This appears to be what Nathanael was engaged in when the Lord first confronted him (John 1:45–51). It is evident that Nathanael had been sitting under a fig tree, meditating upon Jacob's dream at Bethel of angels ascending and descending upon the stairway into heaven in Genesis 28:10–15.

To ease your way into practicing this concept, one idea is to take a psalm—any psalm that expresses how we are feeling—and write out that psalm in your own words. The psalm may spark other thoughts; you can add those in, too, including other passages the psalm reminds you of. If you particularly like how the psalmist expresses something, copy that down. But the idea is to make the sentiments of the psalm your own. By doing this, you are thinking about the words of the psalm in a form of meditation. Think of it as writing a letter to the Father. You have Him in mind and are mindful of Him being aware of what you write. Once done, you express those thoughts to the Father in prayer—even read it out loud to Him; it's simply talking to Him. See how that goes. One thing is for sure: you should find no default language or stock phrases. And, it should make you more conscious of God when you give that prayer, for you have spent time thinking about Him and those things recorded about Him in the Word.

 **Try** meditating upon a psalm as described above.

Daily Readings:


An excellent opportunity to practice meditation is our Daily Readings.

One thing we can start practicing is to read God's Word in His presence. We need to remind ourselves that it is His Word, and He speaks to us through it. It can really change *how* we read it.

Another option is to talk to yourself about God's Word: ask it questions and look for answers, and talk to God about His Word. Ask Him to help you understand the lesson, thank Him for the example, and praise Him for what He has done. Involve Him in our reading, in our thinking.

Because of the variety of different styles in each portion of the Readings and different sections of Scripture, our approach may be different. To start with, we may generally look at the portion to find God's intention behind giving the passage. Or, we could choose just one section, a verse, or a phrase to think about. Write down some thoughts: what you want to tell yourself, what you want to tell others, and what you'd like to talk to God about the passage, thought, or thoughts. Don't just make bullet points; write it out in full so you can mull over the matter or matters as you write. In doing this, you are "talking to yourself" about it. But, it's up to you to then talk to others about it, and particularly to the Father.

I have developed the practice of using my midday portion of the Readings (which may be any portion of the Daily Readings), choosing a thought from it, and I then go for my daily walk and I meditate upon that matter, and I do that with the Father. It usually begins with a prayer unto the Father, but then I fall into mulling over and adding to the thought, then end in prayer to thank the Father, to praise Him, or to ask His help in grasping or applying that matter in my own life. It's a wonderful experience as it is time spent with God.

 **Try** meditating on something from the Daily Readings. It may be the chapter, several verses, a verse, or just a phrase.


Sometimes, for these times of meditation, I will choose from my Meditation List.

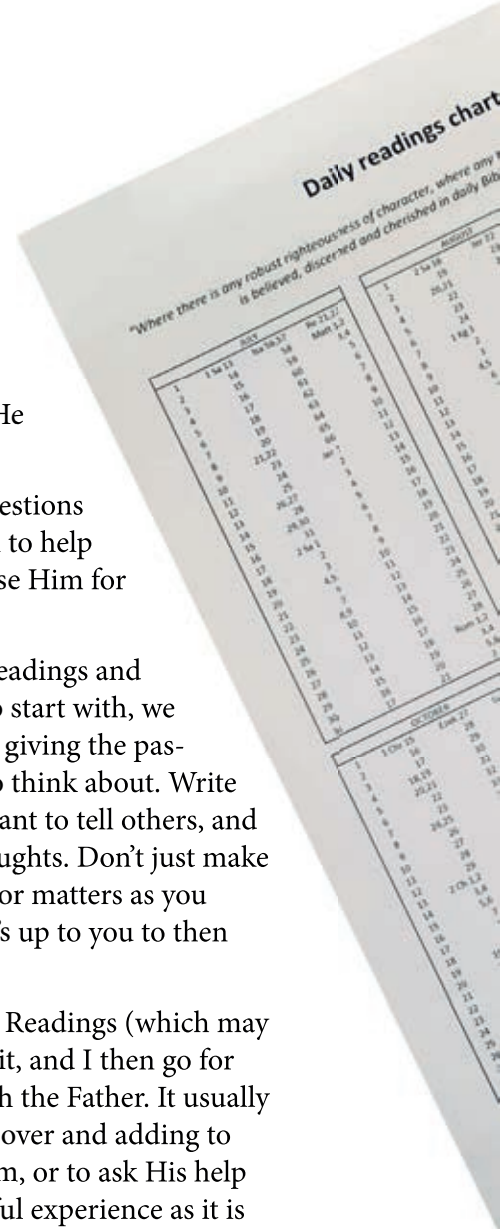
Meditation list and memory verses

In my prayer journal, I keep a meditation list that I find helpful for meditation. It contains passages, verses, and chapters about God, His character, His power, His works, His Son, His Word, and His purpose.

The point of this list is very simple. Unless we think about God, how can we praise and extol Him? At least with sincerity? Unless we see how He works, how can we marvel at his greatness and express that in our prayers? Unless we think about what He has done in Christ for us, how can we appreciate the relationship we have in him with the Father? When we look at the Bible in this way, it changes our view of Bible study and the need for meditation.

My endeavour with these lists is to try and commit the passages to memory.

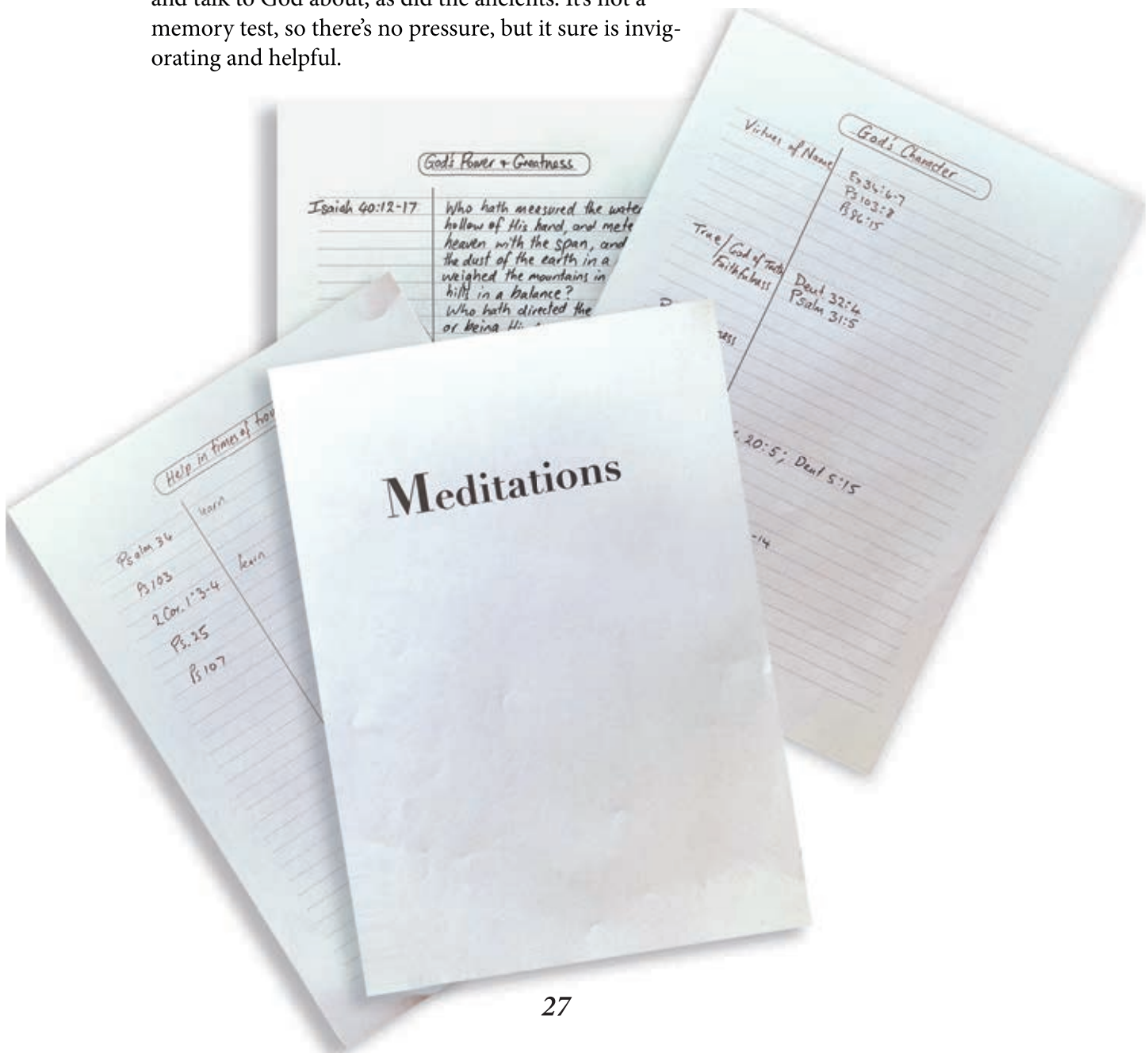
 **MP/Meditation:** In the Meditation section, create lists of areas to meditate upon. For example:



- God's character (the virtues of His Name, His faithfulness, His righteousness, zeal, etc.)
- God's power and greatness
- God's work (with His people Israel, the Ecclesia, with individuals)
- God's help in times of trouble
- God's judgements
- God's work in Christ [You have already begun a list for this in Lesson 4]
- God's salvation from sin or trouble
- God's purpose

After making a page for each of these, find three Bible passages to demonstrate each of them. Write those passages out under the heading.

Keep adding to your Meditation list(s). Commit the passages to memory, and you will slowly build a wealth of Scripture you can call to mind when needed to think upon and talk to God about, as did the ancients. It's not a memory test, so there's no pressure, but it sure is invigorating and helpful.



Lesson 6

Living a prayerful life


First, read Part Five of the book *Talking with God* and remember to give the prayer you wrote out.


Objective:

Our objective is to make prayer a part of our daily lives. Each section here (under each main heading) may take some time to complete. It's important that you complete each section. Take your time as you endeavour to build healthy prayer habits in your life.

Bringing God into our daily lives

By now, you should be allowing your appointments with God to interrupt your day. These are good reminders of our God, especially if you give time to thinking about Him in meditation and in preparing for each prayer. Now, we should try to bring Him into every part of our daily lives.

 **MP/Notes & Planning:** Jot down ideas about how you could bring God into your language and dealings with others. It may feel a little daunting and perhaps contrived, but just talking about God and bringing Him into our daily language brings our focus to Him and means we involve Him in everything we do.


 **MP/Notes & Planning:** Jot down ideas on how you could bring the following into your conversations with others:

- Greetings and farewells
- Salutations in letters and emails
- If the Lord will
- Blessings

It's important that we don't skip this step. Likewise, with the next.

Be thankful

Thankfulness should be a big part of our lives in Christ. Thankfulness should underpin and be a motivation for everything we do. Thankfulness can't be manufactured or enacted; it must be genuine; therefore, we need to keep reminding ourselves of what God has done for us in Christ. Again, this means spending time in the Word and coming to know God.

 **MP/Prayer Lists:** You have begun a list of things to thank God for in Lesson 4. Think about each item (use each item to meditate upon). Once done...

 **PJ/Prayers:** Write out a prayer of thanks. Give the prayer.



Special prayers

Special or dedicated prayers are, as the name suggests, for special occasions. The ecclesia may get together to offer a prayer for someone who is unwell or for some special event. The shepherds of the ecclesia may get together to pray for someone struggling spiritually (for example, James 5:14–15). Nehemiah and his friends got together to pray for the situation in Jerusalem (Nehemiah chapter 1). These prayers were generally for God’s purpose or for others’ needs. You can personally pray for special matters.

As *Talking with God* shows, preparation was key for these prayers. In Bible times, they would prepare by fasting and Bible study.

- 📖 **MP/Notes & Planning:** Write down some suggestions for special prayers. They should be matters that are of importance to the Father and His purpose.
- 📖 Choose one of those items. Set a day when you will give that prayer.
- 📖 Prepare for the prayer by compiling Bible passages related to the issue you wish to pray for. Study those passages to thoroughly understand how God thinks about the matter so you can be in tune with Him in your prayer.
- 📖 In **PJ/Prayers:** Write out a prayer using the Bible passages as a basis for your prayer.
- 📖 On the set day, give your prayer.

📖 An alternative would be to ask some others to join you and contribute towards the preparation of the prayer. You could share the final copy of the prayer, so even though one may read it out, you are all in tune with it. Alternatively, you could share in speaking the prayer.

Prayer Journal:

We want our prayer journal to become even more meaningful to us. We will begin working in earnest on this, which will need your persistence to ensure it becomes integrated into your daily life and your prayers.

We need to add a few more lists.

Prayer for others

We should be praying one for another (James 5:16), so who better to start with than your own ecclesia?

📖 **MP/Prayer Lists:** On a new page, put in the heading “My Ecclesia”. Write down a list of members in your ecclesia. It may be simpler to use your ecclesial handbook or phone list, but it’s better to write down the names of each brother and sister (and their families). That way, you think about each person. Alongside each person (in the wider column to the right), write down things you can pray about them: give thanks for them, about their needs, etc.

We ought to be mindful of the poor and those undergoing trials. There are also those who are unwell.

📖 **MP/Prayer Lists:** Start a list of those who are undergoing trials. Give the list an appropriate heading. You can add to the list as you come across others. Write down their particular trial in the right-hand column.

📖 **MP/Prayer Lists:** Start a list of those who are unwell. Again, you can add to the list as you hear of others.

Look back over each of these lists for other people, and ask yourself, what can you do to help them? To pray for them is one thing, but to mean what we say in our prayers, we need to back it up with action.



Prayer Lists

Lesson 7

Conclusion: Amen

First, read the section of the book *Talking with God*, entitled Conclusion. Remember to give the prayer you wrote out before you read the book. Pray also before you begin these exercises.

Objective:

We want to bring everything to a conclusion, but one that will affect the rest of your life. This part of the process may seem a little technical and somewhat laborious, but the benefits will be enormous. It's like the engine room; get this working, and you will benefit from work well done. It frees you to think about your prayers in a manner that works for you. And you already have a foundation laid in the work you've done so far.

What we want to achieve is:

- Set up the subject areas for prayer (we'll call them categories and subcategories)
- Allocate those categories to each of your prayer times
- Show how you use the prayer journal in conjunction with your My Prayers companion
- Show the benefits of this approach

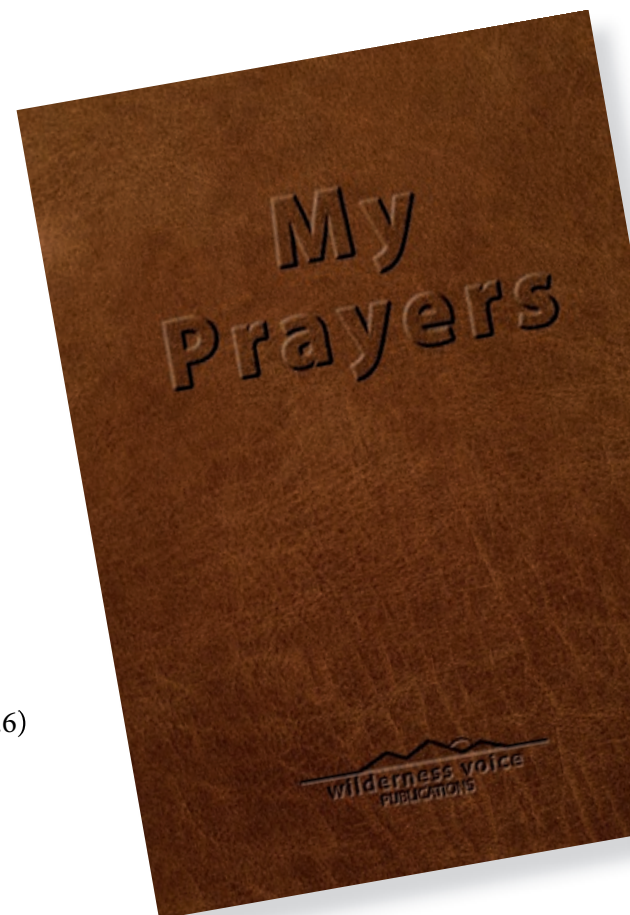
First, let's take stock.

Taking stock:

So far, what you should have is the following:

My Prayers book:

- Prayer Lists
 - Your problems with prayer (L.1)
 - Your needs (L.2)
 - God's purpose (L.3)
 - Things God has done for you (L.4)
 - Thanksgiving (L. 4)
 - List of brothers and sisters in your ecclesia (L.6)
 - List of those undergoing trial (L.6)
 - List of those unwell (L. 6)



- Meditation List
 - The Lord's prayer (L. 2)
 - Thoughts about God (L. 3)
 - What God has accomplished in Christ (L. 4)
 - About who God is (L. 5)

Prayer Journal:

- Prayers:
 - Prayer for this study (Intro)
 - Prayer about your needs (L. 2)
 - Prayer of Thanks (L. 6)
 - A special prayer (L. 6)

While we must continue to add items to these lists (it never finishes), we have enough here to get underway for our set prayers.


Setting up your set prayers

By now you should see that there is a lot we ought to be praying for! In fact, it may seem rather daunting, but you need not fear. It does not mean that your set prayers will take up a disproportionate part of your day. By organising this, you will, in fact, reduce the time because you will prepare your prayers better, and those prayers as a result will be with more focus, and with sincerity.

There *are* too many matters to pray for each item each time you pray, so you need to organise what you will pray for and when. You will pray for some of these each time; others will go on a rotation.

Confirming your prayer Categories:

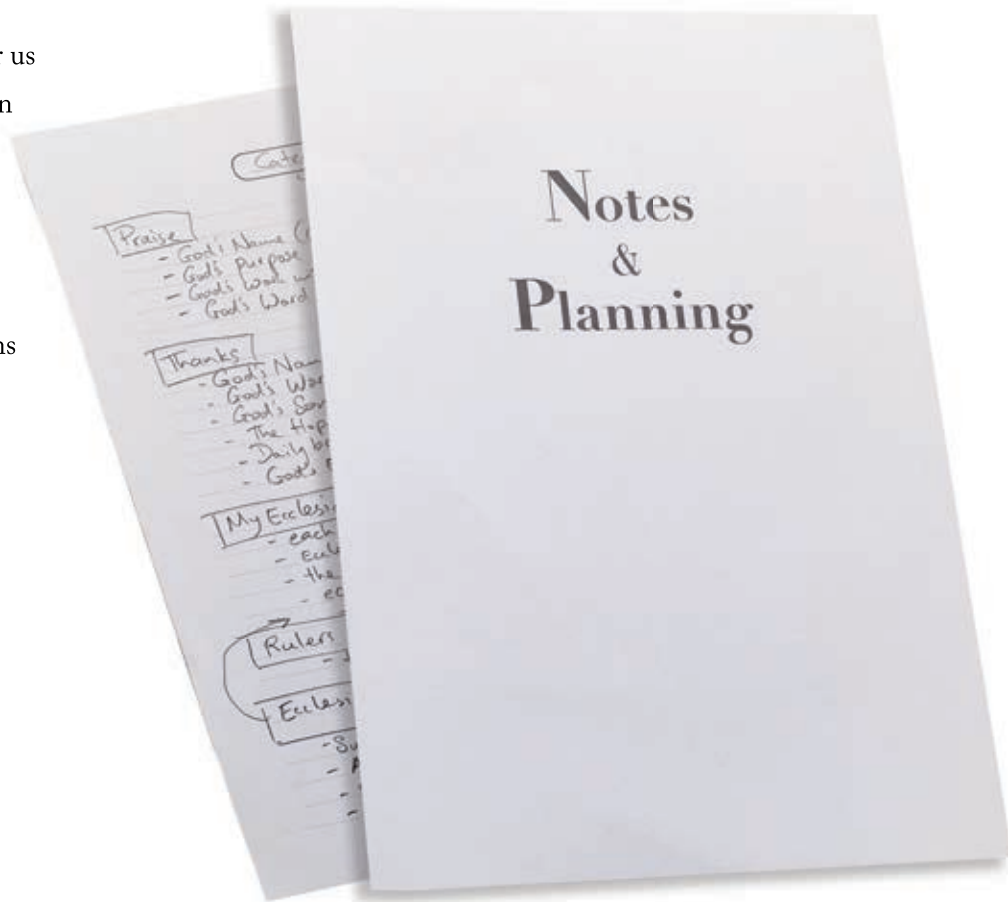
You need to complete the main subject areas for your prayers.

 **MP/Notes & Planning:** Work out your categories and sub-categories.

Following are some suggested categories, some with sub-categories. You need to sort this to fit your own circumstances.

- Praise
 - God's Name and character
 - God's purpose
 - God's work with Israel
 - God's Word
- Thanks
 - God's Name
 - God's Word

- God's Son
- The Hope
- Daily bread and provisions (both natural and spiritual)
- God's Ecclesia
- The Brotherhood
 - All ecclesias and brothers and sisters
 - Those who labour
 - The problems confronting ecclesias in different parts of the world
- Your ecclesia
 - Each member
 - The shepherds and those who labour
 - Ecclesial needs
- The Nations
- Those who rule over us
- Gospel proclamation
- Ecclesial activities
 - Sunday School
 - AGM
 - Special effort
 - Ecclesial elections
 - Youth group
- Organisations
 - Bible Mission
 - Bible schools
- The Lost
- The Sick
- Those suffering trial
- The Aged
- The grieving
- Widows
- Family and Friends
- Personal
 - Responsibilities (marriage, children, ecclesial etc.)
 - Needs
 - Faults/forgiveness



Under each of these categories, you should insert the appropriate prayer lists. Bring together several of the lists you have already begun (such as the lists of God's qualities and his works).

Allocate categories to each set prayer


You should also allocate the categories to your set prayers. Spend some time thinking through this. You need not pray for every category each time. Some categories may appear in each prayer (for example, praise, thanksgiving). Others will only appear in one of the set prayers. Others again you will need to allocate a rotation system to your list. For example, prayers for each ecclesial member: I pray for six ecclesial members each morning prayer. That way, I can think about the needs of each person before I pray. The next morning, I move on to the next six. It means I get through the whole ecclesia once a week. Should there be a special reason to pray more often for a particular person—for example, they are unwell, going through a grievous trial etc.,—they will appear in a list under those categories.


Prayer Times

Now that you have an idea of the number of Categories you have to pray for, you need to allocate those Categories to your set prayers. First you need to confirm your prayer times.

In the Prayer Journal the first couple of pages are headed Prayer Times. This section is placed here for convenience, so you can reference it for setting up your daily prayers each time you write down what you want to pray for.

Here, you place your prayer times and the categories you would like to pray for each time you give that prayer. It's not hard and fast; it's a guide. Generally, you would pray in the morning and evening and, if possible, at noon. You may wish to adjust what you pray for on the weekends, hence there are extra "Prayer Times" slots. Give some thought to this before you allocate Categories to each of them

 **PJ/Prayer Times:** Set up your prayer times (e.g., morning, noon, evening, Sunday morning).

 **PJ/Prayer Times:** Allocate Categories to each of these set prayers. It may be helpful to provide the page number on which the particular prayer list is placed in the My Prayers book for quick reference. I suggest you use pencil, as you may wish to change things around as you find what works for you best.

Example:

The following example is just a suggested arrangement based on an abbreviated adaptation of my own schedule.

Morning:

- Praise
- Thanks
- The Brotherhood
- Governments
- Your ecclesia
- The Lost
- The Sick

- Family and friends
- Personal

Noon:

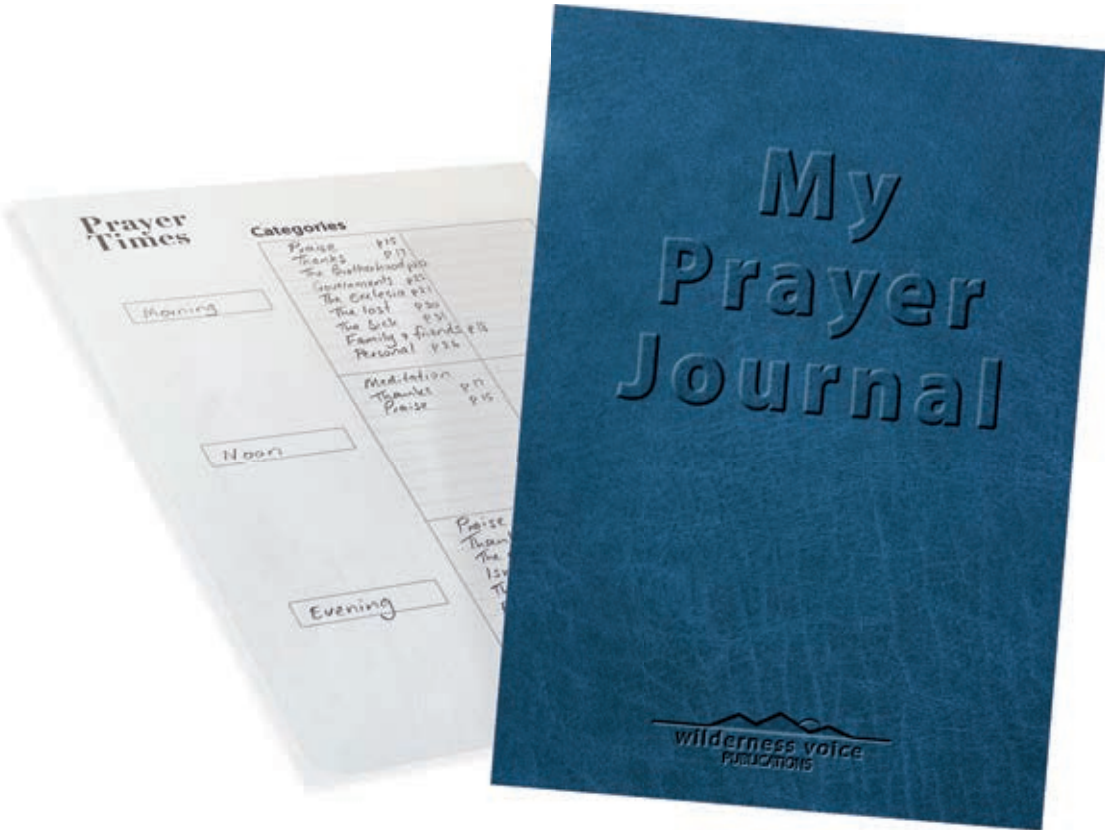
- Meditation
- Thanks
- Praise

Evening:

- Praise
- Thanks
- The nations
- The Brotherhood
- Ecclesial events and activities
- Gospel proclamation
- Those suffering trials
- The sick
- The grieving
- Widows
- Family and friends



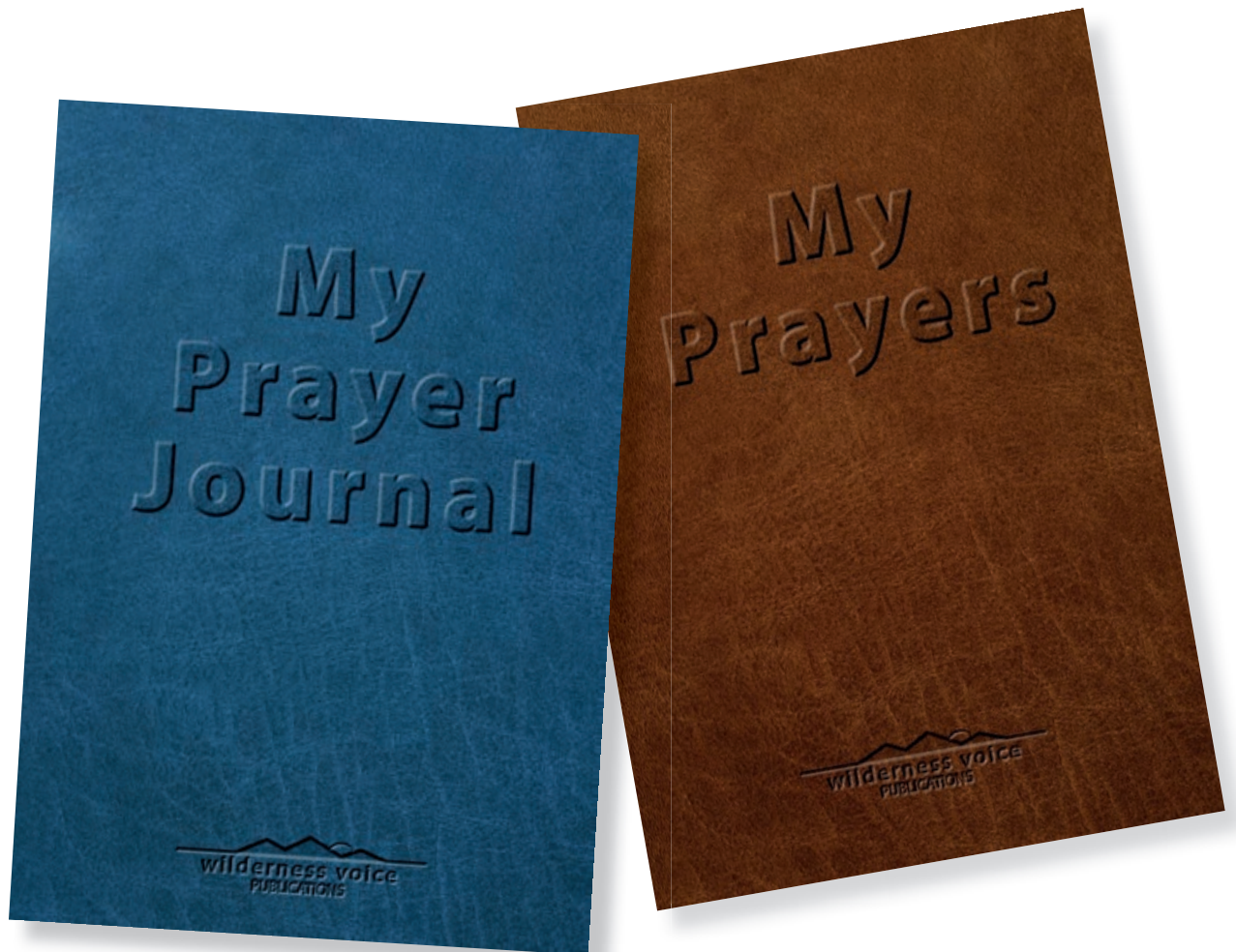
Once you have completed this, you are ready to start using your Prayer Journal and the prayer lists for your prayers. Let's look at how this all works.




Lesson 8


Using the Prayer Journal and My Prayers book

What we have is *a system for our prayers*. We have seen that systems are notorious for causing us to fall into default and not give thought to our prayers. The system I have devised is predicated on overcoming this issue; it is designed to get us to think about our prayer *before we give it*. In fact, at first, the system may seem cumbersome: in preparing each prayer you use *two books* (the Prayer Journal and the My Prayers book). It's not as arduous as it may sound, especially if we've put in all the groundwork already laid. But, it is designed to get you to think.



What we have, then, is two books:

 **The My Prayers book:** This contains your notes about prayer, your planning, but particularly your prayer and meditation lists. It is vital for preparing each prayer

 **My Prayer Journal:** This primarily contains pages for preparing what you want to pray for in each prayer, but also contains a quick reference to what subjects you would generally want to pray for in each set prayer, and any prayers you have written out.

The primary purpose of the Prayer Journal/My Prayers system

If there is anything we've learned through the study of prayer, it is preparation. Preparation helps us prepare our minds for prayer—who we are going to talk with and what we want to talk about. Preparation helps overcome many of the problems we have with prayer, including our problem with “default mode”. Nevertheless, preparing your prayer is not a slow or laborious process, and we will find that our prayers themselves are more succinct.

The Prayer Journal

First, you need to become familiar with the Prayer Journal, where all your physical preparation takes place.

The Prayer Times pages

The Prayer Times pages are for a quick reference for the subjects (Categories) you wish to pray for in each set prayer. It's the blank journal entry pages where the work is done for each prayer.

Journal entry pages

Each page is the same.

At the top left is a space for adding the date. At the top right is a place for adding in the Daily Readings. I find that giving my prayer after doing one of the Readings is very helpful for having a right mind before God. It's not always possible, but if you can, it helps. It's put there for convenience, but also a reference.

Each page of the Journal entry pages is broken into three sections on the assumption that you will, like the faithful of old, pray three times a day. The middle portion is shorter, on the assumption that this prayer will be shorter (I use this time for meditative prayer). Regardless, you can use the page how you like. For example, you can use the whole page for just one prayer. Or, you can break it into two. Make it your own.

The column at the left is for writing down each of the subject (Category) matters you want to pray for. The column on the left is for adding specifics.

My Prayers pages

You should already be familiar with what this section is for.

Let's try this out.

How it works

We are going to assume for the sake of this exercise that this is your first (morning) prayer of the day.

Step 1: Prepare your mind—relax

Often, we may feel we are in a hurry (we all have lot's to do), but this is an appointment with God; we need to prepare for Him, so it's important that we have an attitude acceptable to Him (see Chapter 8 of *Talking with God*). We will often need to remind ourselves of this.

Step 2: Set up your prayer subjects

Open your Prayer Journal to the first available (unused) page of the journal entry section. Write in the date. Write in the Daily Readings for the day. You may like to do one of those readings before you begin your prayer, and draw from that reading in your prayer, and it helps prepare the mind for who you are praying to.

By referencing your Prayer Times section, write in each of the subject areas (Categories) you wish to pray for. You may do this as a simple list of headings, or you may like to incorporate this with Step 3.

Step 3: Add in the specific items

Once you have written down your Category, go to the page in your My Prayers book containing the list of items under that category, and choose the matters you wish to specifically pray for. Some of those items you may have put on rotation, so you must select those items. However, it's not just a case of quickly adding items; you must think about each item. If it is a person, think about that person and their needs. Write those things down.

By the way, some lists such as praying for members of your ecclesia will be too large for the space in the Prayer Journal. It's best to have that list open while you give your prayer so you can refer to it. For prayers for your ecclesial members you could use a copy of your ecclesial phone list.

Step 4: Review

Review your list so you have it in your mind. While you may have to refer to the list as a prompt, you will find that you will mostly remember what you have written.

Step 5: Give your prayer

Give yourself a moment to set your mind to speak with God. Perhaps read one of your meditation passages about God.

He will listen in to your prayer in the place of the covenant—Christ. Talk to Him. The fact that you may have to refer to your notes as well as a list on another piece of paper makes your prayer very real, just like a real meeting—this is real.

Where to from here...

What we have tried to do through this workbook is:

- To develop your awareness of how you talk with God
- To help you see the need for preparation
- To develop your ability to meditate
- To enable you to call upon things you have meditated upon naturally in your prayers
- To set up a system built upon the principles of the book *Talking with God* that enables you prepare your prayer and your mind before you give it.

You may feel a little awkward at first as this approach may feel alien to your usual practice. While the ancients may not have written things down like this—although, it is evident that some did—it is a simple and effective way to ensure that our prayers are succinct, relevant, sincere, and meaningful.

*May our Heavenly Father bless you in all your endeavours to
build your relationship with Him.*

Amen.



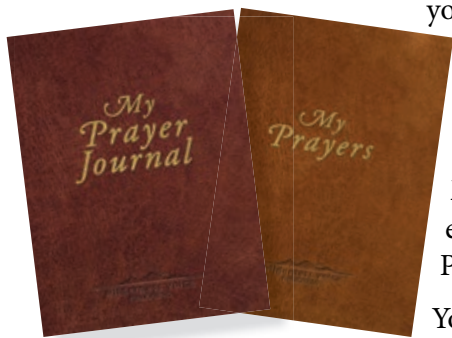
Resources

Survey: wilderness-voice.org/talking-with-God/survey (PDF)

Time log: wilderness-voice.org/timelog (PDF)

My Prayers and My Prayer Journal

If you find the system proposed in this workbook (or your adaption of it) works for you, you may like to make use of the printed versions of the My Prayers book and the My Prayer Journal.



My Prayers is a hardcovered book for extra protection and longevity, and is nicely styled.

My Prayer Journal is a softcover book with a single page for each day of the year. It is designed as a companion for the My Prayers book.

You can use each book independently or as a companion to the other as illustrated in this workbook.

The MyPrayers iPhone and iPad app

For those of you with an iPhone or iPad, you may be interested in an app called MyPrayers that was built according to the principles of this system.

You can view more information here:

wilderness-voice.org/myprayers



Acknowledgements:

Cover:

Designed by author

Cover photograph: by [Michael & Diane Weidner on Unsplash](#)

Body:

All graphics were created by the author except for the following:

Walking and Talking with God (p.13) walk in forest photo (modified): [Cedar Wheeler on Unsplash](#)

What God wants (p. 15) golden altar photo (modified): [Ori229 on Wikimedia Commons \(CC-asa 3.0\)](#)

Seeking God (p. 16) man meditating photo: [Ben White on Unsplash](#)

Prayer times (p. 17) planner page from [TemplateLab.com](#)

Instant in prayer (p. 17) man meditating photo: [Majestic Lukas on Unsplash](#)

Use Scripture (p. 18) Bible, note pad, glasses photo (modified): [Debby Hudson on Unsplash](#)

Solitude and quiet (p. 19) man gazing at night sky photo: [Walking Tour Salzburg on Unsplash](#)

Stance (p. 20) man looking at sunset photo (modified): [Keegan Houser on Unsplash](#)

Consciousness of God (p. 22) CCTV camera photo (modified): [Randy Laybourne on Unsplash](#)

Christ the power of prayer (p. 23) censer with incense photo: [Sayak Bala on Unsplash](#)

The Word of God in prayer (p. 24) trees by river photo: [Simon Wilkes on Unsplash](#)

Use Scripture as basis (p. 25) turning Bible pages photo (modified): [Kiwihug on Unsplash](#)

Living a prayerful life (p. 29) woman praying in the street photo: [Bruno Ngarukiye on Unsplash](#)

Where to from here (p. 39), woman contemplating photo: [Alexey Demidov on Unsplash](#)

