



**Prayers for Your
Wilderness
Journey**

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Table of Contents

1. Praying Scripture
2. Prayers I Pray Often
3. Prayers for the Battle
4. 12 Specific Requests for a Prodigal
5. A Prayer for Forgiving
6. Praying Blessings Over Your Loved One
7. Praying the Promises
8. Seeking God's Vision
9. Turning Curses into Blessings
10. Prayers for People You Love

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Sometimes I just don't know what to pray. What does my loved one need? What do I need? What is God's will? When I don't know what to pray, I turn to the Word of God. Many prayers can be prayed directly from Scripture. Other verses tell us of God's desires and intentions for His children. So I turn those Scriptures into prayers!

Here are some words from God's Word to guide your prayers:

From the Old Testament:

Deuteronomy 31:8: The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

Psalms 27:14: Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Psalms 55:22: Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall.

Isaiah 40:31: But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 41:10: So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Jeremiah 24:6,7: My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

Jeremiah 32:27: I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?

Micah 7:8-9: Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light. He will bring me out into the light; I will see his righteousness.

From the New Testament

Romans 8:28: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

2 Corinthians 12:9: *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

Philippians 1:6: *Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Colossians 1: 9-14: *⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,^[e] ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^[f] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

1 Thessalonians 5:18: *In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Hebrews 4:16: *Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Prayers I Pray Often

Whether I am praying for my own loved one, or someone named on our Prayer for Prodigals site or in response to a tearful parent, I often find I use the same prayers, requests, Scriptures over and over. Perhaps these brief prayers will help you beseech the Lord when you have no idea what to pray. I ask these things in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, capture his heart and his mind. May he grasp how much you love him and how greatly you desire to pour your mercy and grace on him. May his thoughts and desires turn to you in surrender.

Convict of sin even as you convince her of your love. Yes, Lord, may she recognize her sin as sin and comprehend how that separates her from a relationship with You. But may she then recall that you desire to give grace and mercy to forgive her sin and draw her back into a loving relationship with you.

Remind him of the love he has experienced with his family and with Your big family. May people he encounters, words he hears, pictures he sees and events he experiences bring to his memory the joy and peace of the times he walked with You and those who love You. And may familiar or memorized Scriptures come to him at times he needs wisdom and guidance.

Open her eyes to see what you think of her: she is beautiful, a work of art, made in your image. May she grasp that she is a treasure to You and so reject the words the world hurls at her and her own mind accuses her with. May she receive and believe and live out her great worth and value to You.

May he realize that You extend open arms of love, mercy and grace. When he chooses his own way and encounters negative consequences, may he turn and return to Your welcome home.

Break down the strongholds of the enemy of his soul. Hear and answer our requests on his behalf as we resist Satan and rebuke his demons. May our loved one grow weary of his chains and imprisonment and turn to You, asking You to give him liberty. Set him free.

Give her a vision of the person you have made her to be and good works you have already prepared for her. May she understand that Your way is always better than her way. May she remember that You are always working, even when her circumstances don't reveal it. May she determine to become the person you created her to be and choose to do what you made her to do.

May this verse remind her/him of the truth of this verse: "...God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (1Corinthians 9:8)

PRAYERS FOR THE BATTLE

When you are on a wilderness journey, with a prodigal or any other challenging event, you know it is really a battlefield. We have an enemy—the devil himself—seeking to destroy us. Our natural tendency is to cringe in fear or to run and hide. God’s Word, though, tells us to do just the opposite: “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7) How? How do we stand up against the lion seeking to devour us and those we love? Here are some helpful prayers for resisting:

1. Praise God. “But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.” (Psalm 22:3)

When the devil hears us praising God, he leaves. How do you praise Him? Here are a few ways: Name His names, attributes and qualities: He is good, faithful, loving, merciful.... He is God Almighty, Jehovah Jireh, our shepherd.... Read aloud from the Psalms that especially praise our Lord, such as Psalms 95-100.... Sing the Doxology.... Sing praise songs.

2. Thank God.... “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

When we thank God, even in difficult situations, we announce to the devil that we believe God is God and God is good. He flees.

3. Speak truth. “...Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)

Quote Scriptures that speak the truth of our God, such as:

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6)

“The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. (Deuteronomy 31:8)

12 SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR A PRODIGAL

Ask God to:

1. Give him a deep sense of how valued, loved, special, accepted he is to Jesus; and that he was created for very high purposes that are far more exciting and challenging than anything he can create himself.
2. Soften her heart, awaken her conscience, and remove any spiritual blindness.
3. Reveal the truth about the people he is associating with: show him their true characters and motives and the final result of their lifestyles; tear away the glamor and excitement that may cover up any sin involved. (John 16:13, Gal. 5:19-26)
4. Break up any relationships that are hindering God's purpose and leading her to ungodliness. (1 Cor. 15:33)
5. Reveal the truth about his own choices and where those choices will lead him. (2 Cor. 7:9)
6. Bring to her memory many of the Scriptures she memorized in earlier years, that her mind would be bombarded with the Word of God—whatever God knows she needs to be reminded of. (John 16:13, 2 Cor. 8:9, Gal. 3:24)
7. Show him in an unforgettable way that He is alive, very real, powerful, holy, personal, standing with open arms to welcome him.
8. Humble her and get her attention, as gently as possible and preferably without longterm effects on her life.
9. Bring Christians into his life to remind him of all the positive experiences he had with God's family and be drawn to desire to be part of that family fellowship again.
10. Not allow her to "get away with" anything illegal or immoral.
11. Make some supernatural provision for specific needs he has—job, car, education—so that he knows it is from God.
12. Put a hedge of thorns around her, to keep her from going her own wrong way and to protect her from the evil one.

A PRAYER FOR FORGIVING

Relationships require forgiveness. In marriages, in families, with neighbors or coworkers, we tend to offend or hurt one another. If you have a prodigal in your life, he/she will do many things that hurt or offend you. And perhaps you will also do the same to them.

Jesus made it clear: We are to forgive. If they ask for forgiveness, or even if they don't. Our model is Jesus Himself, who said from the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

Here is a prayer to help you take this important step:

A PRAYER FOR FORGIVING

Father, thank You for Your mercy and grace toward me, and for forgiving my sins through Your Son's death on the cross. Thank You that You forgive me over and over, for repeated sins and for new sins, big or small. I am so grateful for your grace.

Lord, I need to forgive _____, who has wronged me, hurt me, betrayed me, offended me, sinned against me. It is hard for me to do this—I am still hurt, angry, confused. So I come asking You for the power to forgive _____. Fill me with Your Spirit and remind me of Your love and mercy to me—and to _____.

By Your Spirit, I choose to forgive _____. I choose to extend grace and mercy to him/her, even as You have done for me. I choose, as You enable me, to live at peace with this person. I ask that You bless _____ in Your love. Please may we be reconciled and our relationship healed. And if that does not happen, may I continue to love and forgive.

Thank You that this is possible in the power of Your Spirit. In Jesus' name.

PRAYING BLESSINGS OVER YOUR LOVED ONE

Blessing: Our Father spoke it, Jesus lived it, the Spirit makes blessing come true in our lives. To bless is to speak good into another's life.

Here are some blessings you can pray into your loved one's life:

May the eyes of your heart be enlightened to truly know Him.

May you know that you have been rescued from darkness and brought into the light of the Son.

May you know your sins are forgiven.

May you experience always the assurance that you have been adopted into the family of God.

May you be filled with the Spirit and thus walk in love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

May you be rooted and grounded in love and have the power to grasp how great God's love for you is.

May God comfort you in the pains and losses of your life.

May you hunger and thirst for Him and His righteousness.

May you be satisfied by God alone as He fills you with His Spirit.

May you know and choose the good plans God has for you.

May you fan into flame the gifts God has put in you.

May God do in and through you immeasurably more than you can ask or think.

May God pour out blessing on you and through you every day of your life.

PRAYING THE PROMISES

Often as I have read Scriptures, words from God—promises—to His people seemed to be exactly what our son needed. So I would turn those promises to the children of Israel into prayers—asking God to do that for our prodigal. Sometimes He did just what He promised. For some we are still waiting. As you read these promises I claimed for our son, perhaps God will speak to you through some of them—and you can pray them too.

Before you were born, I called you. You are my servant in whom I will display my splendor. (Isaiah 49:1)

Listen to me. I upheld you since you were conceived and have carried you since your birth. I will sustain you and rescue you. (Isaiah 46:8-9)

I am your Redeemer. I teach you what is best. If you obey me, your peace will be like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. (Isaiah 48:17-18)

I have swept away your sins like a cloud and your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you. (Isaiah 44:22)

Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name; you are Mine. (Isaiah 43:1)

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing. I formed you for myself, that you may proclaim my praise. (Isaiah 43:18-19)

I have called you. I have chosen you and have not rejected you. I will strengthen you and help you. (Isaiah 41:9-10)

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

I will put breath in you and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord. (Ezekiel 37:6)

Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified or discouraged, for I will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:8)

I will guide you and satisfy your needs. You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls and Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. (Isaiah 58:11-12)

I am the Lord. In its time I will do this swiftly. (Isaiah 60:22)

SEEKING GOD'S VISION

When the choices my prodigal is making created despair and hopelessness in me, and I lost sight of a hopeful future, I asked God to begin to give me His vision for our son. Over time God began to show me pictures of His desires for him. Perhaps you could ask God to give you a vision of the good plans He has for your loved one.

The Lord said to Josh: *For you are My handiwork (masterpiece, work of art), created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which I have prepared in advance for you to do.* (Ephesians 2:10)

A new person: *Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing.* (Isaiah 43:18,19)

Lover of truth: *Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.* (John 8:32)

Man of peace: *If you pay attention to my commands, your peace will be like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.* (Isaiah 48:18)

A faithful husband: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.* (Ephesians 5:25)

A loving daddy: *He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.* (Malachi 4:6)

Called one: *I have called you. You are my servant. I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you. I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you.* (Isaiah 41:9,10)

Counselor/helper of the hurting: *You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.* (Isaiah 58:12)

Persuader: *Since we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men.* (2 Corinthians 5:11)

God said to Josh: *You are my servant, in whom I will display my splendor.* (Isaiah 49:3)

TURNING CURSES INTO BLESSINGS

Life is hard for a prodigal. Their lives are filled with fear, failure and frustration. Yes, much of it is of their own making. And their poor choices often elicit negative, harsh words from those in authority over them, and even from those who love them.

We have an enemy who hurls curses at us, but we have a God who loves to bless. See how we can turn our hurtful words into prayers of blessing.

“You can’t do anything right.”

May you be built up, not torn down; planted, not uprooted. May you return to God with all your heart. (Jeremiah 24:6,7)

“You have failed again.”

May you rise when you fall and come out of the darkness into God’s light. (Micah 7:8,9)

“You will never amount to anything.”

May you hope in the future of God’s good plans for you. (Ephesians 2:10)

“God will punish you for what you have done.”

May you comprehend that it gives God joy to always do good to you.
(Jeremiah 32:40)

“You are hopeless.”

May you receive the new heart and new spirit God is giving you.
(Ezekiel 36:26,27)

“You are such a loser.”

May all the days and years of your life stolen by the evil one be restored. (Joel 2:25)

“You make it hard for anyone to love you.”

May you feel cords of lovingkindness as the Father bends down to feed you. (Hosea 11:4)

“You are going to spend your life in prison.”

May you know that in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation.

(Romans 8:1)

PRAYERS FOR PEOPLE YOU LOVE

Praying for the people I love—my prodigal, my family, my friends, my co-workers, my church, my neighbors—is a joy and a privilege. When I know specifics to pray, I pray those. Often, though, I find my prayers are more general, using Scripture and the principles from the Word that the Father desires to be increasingly true in our lives.

Here are seven of the kinds of prayers I bring to God.

1. Work of Art

May she know that You were there forming her in her mother's womb. May she believe that she is fearfully and wonderfully made—a beautiful work of art. May she discover and choose the wonderful plans and good works for which You created her. (Psalm 139:13-1; Ephesians 2:10)

2. Image of God

May his life reflect You, Lord, as he is made in Your image. May he be increasingly transformed into the likeness of Christ so that his thoughts, words and actions are those of Jesus. May love, mercy and grace be his trademarks and flow from him each day to everyone he encounters. (Genesis 1:27; 1 John 4:17; Isaiah 60:21)

3. Love of God

May she know that You are so in love with her—that You delight in her. May she comprehend that she is loved and treasured by You, the God who has pursued her and rescued her and forgiven her. May she remember that nothing can ever separate her from Your love. (Jeremiah 31:3; Zephaniah 3:17; Romans 8:38-39)

4. Love for God

May he fall more in love with Jesus every day. May he love God above all else. May that love not grow cold or even lukewarm, but remain fire-hot! And may Your love in him flow through him to everyone in his life. (Mark 12:30; Revelation 2:4; John 15:12-13)

5. Forgiveness

May she know that in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation. That through Him her sins are forgiven, buried in the deepest sea, removed as far as the east is from the west, remembered no more. That the price for her sins was paid on the cross. (Romans 8:1; Psalm 103; Romans 6)

6. Light

May he know that in Christ he has been rescued from darkness and brought into the light of the Son. Protect him from the attacks of the evil one as he wears the full armor of God. May he choose to walk in the light, and to let that shine brightly to all around. (1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 6:10-18; Ephesians 5:8)

7. Holy Spirit

May she consistently walk in the Holy Spirit, drawing on His wisdom and power to live in truth and justice. May she be satisfied by You alone as You fill her with your Spirit. May she never settle for less than Your best. (Ephesians 5:18; Romans 8)

Of course, there is so much more to pray. Paul's prayers in his letters cover many of these requests and others also. These prayers represent many of the truths of Scripture concerning what Christ has accomplished for us and what He continues to work in and through us. For me, these ensure that I am bringing each person before the Lord, for the most important answers I could desire.

You will see that these prayers are written in blessing form, and that's how I like to pray. I love for my words and prayers to always be blessing those I love.