

Praise for other books in the Five Things to Pray series:

“Praying God’s word is my number one tip to help people invigorate their prayer life. So read these books and invigorate your prayers.”

Tim Chester, Pastor of Grace Church, Boroughbridge, faculty member of Crosslands Training, and author of *You Can Pray*

“We watch the news, read articles, and hear stories about difficulties in our world. The needs are so massive, the stories so heartbreaking, that often we don’t even know how to pray. Rachel Jones’s excellent book, *5 Things to Pray for Your World*, offers a needed guide to seek God’s help by praying God’s word. We may feel powerless, but we have the ear of an all-powerful God. May we faithfully cry out to him for the world around us.”

Melissa Kruger, author, *The Envy of Eve* and *Walking with God in the Season of Motherhood*

“*5 Things to Pray for Your World* takes an old idea, tested and tried throughout the ages—a prayer list—and turns it into a thought-provoking, vision-expanding, prayer-stimulating tool. It is small enough to fit into your pocket, but big enough to change your life. Simple, but brilliant.”

Dr Sinclair B. Ferguson, Ligonier teaching fellow and Professor of Systematic Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary

"Praying Scripture is liberating and exhilarating. *Five Things to Pray for Your World* helps us to do that carefully, wisely and in a biblically focused way, without being constraining. The prayers I pray as a result are still very much my own. I will be using this superb resource both in my own devotions and in church life."

Adrian Reynolds, Training Director,
Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches

"For those of us who often struggle to know what to pray, these books are brilliant at giving us lots of really helpful, specific things to pray that are straight from God's word. Starting with Scripture ensures that we are not praying merely for changed circumstances, as we can tend to do, but rather for changed hearts that bring honour and glory to God."

Andrea Trevenna, Associate Minister for
Women, St Nicholas Sevenoaks

"*5 Things to Pray for Your World* reminds us of God's good plans and purposes for his creation, and encourages us to turn to him with requests that are in line with his will. This fantastic little book will enrich any prayer life and act as a great spur to mission near and far. A great resource for those who love to pray, and a wonderful guide for those who find prayer hard."

Helen Thorne, Director of Training and
Mentoring, London City Mission



**FOR YOUR
HEART**

RACHEL JONES

SERIES EDITOR: CARL LAFERTON



5 things to pray for your heart

Prayers that change you to be more like Jesus

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Series Editor: Carl Laferton

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Tel (UK): 0333 123 0880

Tel (North America): (1) 866 244 2165

International: +44 (0) 208 942 0880

Email (UK): info@thegoodbook.co.uk

Email (North America): info@thegoodbook.com

Websites

UK & Europe: www.thegoodbook.co.uk

North America: www.thegoodbook.com

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SERIES INTRODUCTION

I wonder if you have ever struggled to believe this famous verse from the Bible?

“The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” (James 5 v 16)

James is telling us that when righteous people pray righteous prayers, things happen. Things change. The prayers of God’s people are powerful. But they are not powerful because we are powerful, or because the words we say are somehow magic, but because the Person we pray to is infinitely, unimaginably powerful. And our prayers are effective—not because we are special, or because there is a special formula to use, but because the God we pray to delights to answer our prayers and change the world because of them.

So what is the secret of effective prayer—how can you pray prayers that really change things? James suggests two questions that we need to ask ourselves.

First, are you righteous? A righteous person is someone who is in right relationship with God—someone who, through faith in Jesus, has been forgiven and accepted as a child of God. Are you someone who,

as you pray, is praying not just to your Maker, not just to your Ruler, but to your heavenly Father, who has completely forgiven you through Jesus?

Second, do your prayers reflect that relationship? If we know God is our Maker, our Ruler and our Father, we will want to pray prayers that please him, that reflect his desires, that line up with his priorities for our lives and for the world. The kind of prayer that truly changes things is the prayer offered by a child of God that reflects God's heart.

That's why, when God's children pray in the Bible, we so often find them using the word of God to guide their prayers. So when Jonah prayed in the belly of a fish to thank God for rescuing him (Jonah 2 v 1-9), he used the words of several psalms strung together. When the first Christians gathered in Jerusalem to pray, they used the themes of Psalm 2 to guide their praise and their requests (Acts 4 v 24-30). And when Paul prayed that his friends would grow in love (Philippians 1 v 9), he was asking the Father to work in them the same thing the Lord Jesus prayed for us (John 17 v 25-26), and which the Holy Spirit is doing for all believers (Romans 5 v 5). They all used God's words to guide their words to God.

How can you pray prayers that are powerful and effective—that change things, that make things happen? First, by being a child of God. Second, by praying Bible prayers, which use God's words to make sure your prayers are pleasing to him and share his priorities.

That's what this little book is here to help you with. It will guide you on how to pray for yourself, in 21

different areas and situations. Praying for yourself may seem a little self-indulgent! But these are not self-centred prayers. As you pray that you would become more and more the person that God created and saved you to be—and as God answers those prayers—he will be more greatly glorified in you, and those around you will be more lovingly served by you. And, yes, you will experience the blessing that it is to live like Jesus.

Each prayer suggestion is based on a passage of the Bible, so you can be certain that they are prayers that God wants you to pray for yourself.

There are five different things to pray for each of the 21 areas. So you can use this book in a variety of ways.

- ▶ *You can pray a set of “five things” each day, over the course of three weeks, and then start again.*
- ▶ *You can take one of the prayer themes and pray a part of it every day from Monday to Friday.*
- ▶ *Or you can dip in and out of it, as and when you want and need to pray for a particular aspect of your life.*
- ▶ *There’s also a space on each page for you to write in the names of specific situations, concerns or people that you intend to remember in prayer.*

This is by no means an exhaustive guide—there are plenty more things that you can be praying for your life as you seek to live God’s way in God’s world!

But you can be confident as you use it that you are praying great prayers—prayers that God wants you to pray. And God promises that “the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective”. That’s a promise that is worth grasping hold of confidently. As we pray trusting this promise, it will change how we pray and what we expect to come from our prayers.

When righteous people pray righteous prayers, things happen. Things change. So as you use this book to guide your prayers, be excited, be expectant, and keep your eyes open for God to do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3 v 20). He’s powerful; and so your prayers are too.

Carl Laferton

Editorial Director | The Good Book Company



LOVE

MARK 12 v 29-31

PRAYER POINTS:

Father in heaven, help me to love...

1 ONE GOD

"The most important [commandment] ... is this: 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one'" (v 29).

God is the only one truly worthy of all our love and affection. All other rivals pale in comparison with his power and glory. But we don't worship him from a distance—he is "the Lord our God", because he has set his love upon us and included us among his people. We love him because he has loved us. So praise him for his complete power and tender care.

2 WITH MY HEART AND SOUL

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (v 30).

Pray that you would love God with all of your affections—that you would relate to him in a way that really affects how you *feel* about him. Confess the ways in which you love other things too much—ask God to make himself your first love.

3 WITH MY MIND

"... with all your mind" (v 30).

When we love someone, we think about them. Pray that God would increasingly fill your mind; that he'd be your first thought in the morning, your last thought at night and your constant companion in the hours between. Thank God for giving you a brain with which to think—pray that everything you learn about God would fuel your love for God.

4 WITH MY STRENGTH

"... with all your strength" (v 30).

When does your love for God tend to feel most feeble? In what area have you grown weary? When is your service of him half-hearted? Ask God to help you to love him with all of your strength—so that every day you would willingly and joyfully spend whatever energy you have for his glory.

5 ... AND MY NEIGHBOUR

"'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these" (v 31).

We don't truly love God if we don't love those around us. Pray that you would pursue the good of others as though their interests were yours. Think through those you will interact with today, and ask God to help you to love each one. And thank him for his love for you—that he loves you with this kind of all-consuming love.



JOY

PSALM 16

PRAYER POINTS:

Father, please give me great joy in...

1 THE GIVER, NOT THE GIFTS

"You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing" (v 2).

God is your Lord and Father through faith in Christ—pray that this truth would be your greatest joy in life. Confess the times when you've chased after happiness in good things, instead of pursuing joy in a good God.

2 BEING PART OF YOUR PEOPLE

"I say of the holy people who are in the land, 'They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight'" (v 3).

Ask God to give you increasing joy in being one of his "holy people". Thank God for your church family, and for some specific Christians who particularly encourage you. Pray that your joy would be fuelled Sunday by Sunday as you meet with God's people. Ask God to open your eyes to see how other people are growing in godliness and using their gifts—pray that these signs of God's grace would cause your heart to rejoice.

3 WHAT YOU HAVE GIVEN ME

"The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance" (v 6).

Give thanks for the things God has given you that you take delight in—big or small. List as many as you can! Pray for greater contentment with what you have.

4 HARD TIMES

"I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I shall not be shaken" (v 8).

Ask God to grow in you a deep-seated, unshakeable joy that no difficulty or disappointment can snatch from you. Pray that when suffering comes, his presence beside you would continue to give you joy.

5 ETERNAL LIFE

"Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices ... You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" (v 9, 11).

Give thanks that Jesus' resurrection, which this psalm points forward to (Acts 2 v 24-28), guarantees your own—he's paved the way to eternal life. Rejoice that one day you will experience a joy deeper than you've ever known, in the presence of your Saviour. Pray that this promise would shape how you feel today.