

# Every Season Prayers

Gospel-Centered Prayers  
*for the Whole of Life*

SCOTTY SMITH



**BakerBooks**

*a division of Baker Publishing Group*  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Scotty Smith, *Every Season Prayers*  
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Published by Baker Books  
a division of Baker Publishing Group  
P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287  
www.bakerbooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Smith, Scotty, 1950– author.

Title: Every season prayers : gospel-centered prayers for the whole of life / Scotty Smith.

Description: Grand Rapids : Baker Books, 2016.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016009036 | ISBN 9780801014031 (pbk.)

Subjects: LCSH: Prayers.

Classification: LCC BV260 .S57 2016 | DDC 242/.8—dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2016009036>

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16 17 18 19 20 21 22      7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Each of the prayers in *Every Season Prayers* was birthed out of relationships—first and foremost, in response to God’s incomparable, inexhaustible love for us in Jesus. But many other treasured relationships also provided the fuel and focus and the longings and hope echoed in this volume. They include:

Darlene, my awesome wife of forty-four years  
Kristin (my daughter) and my grandson Finn  
Scott (my son) and Bayley Smith and my grandson Otis

My local “Gospel Posse”—Carter Crenshaw, Parke  
Brown, Paul Thomas, Buddy Greene, Steven Curtis  
Chapman, Scott Sauls, and David Cassidy

My Orlando Centra Care “Gospel Posse”—  
John Masterfield, Scott Brady, Mark Johnston,  
Jake Mckelvy, and Rob Paswaters

My aunt Cynthia Ward, Noel Agnew, Rose Marie  
Miller, Joe Novenson, Bill Fortney, Mark Dalbey,  
Bob Osborne, Dan and Becky Allender, Kip and  
Elizabeth Turnage, and Phil and Becky Douglas

The Family of West End Community Church,  
where I’m honored to serve as teacher in residence

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# Foreword

Beloved Christian author George MacDonald wrote that prayer is “the thing we need *first* and *most*.” That’s an interesting choice of words coming from a man whose words influenced some of the greatest writers of the twentieth century, including C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, and J. R. R. Tolkien. MacDonald believed that prayer was the most pressing, the most needful activity Christians were called to engage in.

Would you agree? How needful is prayer to you? Is it “first and most” needful? Are those the words that come to mind when you consider it? Perhaps so, but then again, if we were to be brutally honest, those might not be our exact sentiments. For many of us prayer feels more like the obligatory visit to our spinster aunt who demands we sit with her and listen to her criticisms while we stifle yawns and hope our phone will ring so that we can politely excuse ourselves. We all know we should pray; we’ve heard all the reasons for it and have been guilted into resolving to do better at it every

year. And yet . . . it still isn't the "first and most" needful thing in our lives.

I'm just like you. I know that the Lord calls—no, rather, lovingly beckons me to sit and have audience with him at any time, on any day. And I know that when I am in need, I can run freely to the "throne of grace," where I will always find "grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16 ESV). Like you, I know these things . . . and yet I find that more times than not I am saying the same things over and over again, day after day, trying to fulfill my obligation, trying to make this time that I've set aside in the morning come to life. Even so, there are many mornings when I just can't seem to frame my words in a way that sparks anything in my heart deeper than the gratification of checking "prayer" off my to-do list for the day. I would like to think that my conversation with the Lord is driven by an impulse greater than the command to pray or even the selfish hope that my day will be blessed because I started it out right. I would like to believe that I'm praying because I'm desperate for the Lord; desperate for his presence, his Word, his grace, his love. MacDonald wrote that prayer is the "supplying of our great, our endless need," our need for "God himself." He continued, "Communion with God is the one need of the soul beyond all other needs; prayer is the beginning of that communion . . . a talking with God, a coming-to-one with Him, which is the sole end of prayer, yea, of existence itself."

And so the question we have to ask and then honestly answer is simply this: "Am I praying because I am desperate for communion with God?" Only you can answer that question. I admit that most of the time my answer is, "No. Sadly,

no.” I have many motivations for prayer, but being desperate to commune with God usually isn’t at the top of that list.

This is where this wonderful book comes in. Once again my dear friend Scotty Smith has gifted the church with more than a typical book about prayer. I’m so very thankful. This book won’t tell you how to tap into the power of prayer or how to become some sort of prayer Jedi. No, rather, this is a humble, loving revealing of the heart of a brother who has spent decades in prayer and who gently comes alongside us as we struggle to put words to our faith. As I read the prayers in this book, I sensed that they were written by a man who not only has known desperation for God but also has found him filled with grace and mercy.

In the twelve sections you’ll find prayers for every season of your life. Are you in a season of suffering? Use the prayers in the section on lament to shape your language of desperation in this season of trial. Are you having trouble remembering that the gospel really is “Good News” for you? Then pray with Scotty through the section on preaching the gospel to your heart. Are you desperate to hear a word from the Lord? Then listen while Scotty reminds you of God’s promises and love through Scriptures that have been spoken to us by our Lord. We are all in different seasons of life, and if our prayer is a reflection of our heart, then our prayer should reflect those seasons. Scotty knows this, and so here you will find prayers crafted with love and learned in the crucible of intense desperation, whispered in gentleness from the heart of a shepherd.

C. S. Lewis wrote of prayer as being an “unveiling” of the heart. *Every Season Prayers* is indeed an unveiling of the heart of Scotty Smith and will lead, if you let it, to the unveiling of

your heart before a God who longs to love and comfort you more than you'll ever know. You can unveil your heart before him because he has already declared his unending love for you and his generous welcome of you, and surprisingly—no, shockingly—he actually loves to hear your voice.

I know you'll love this book because you'll love our brother Scotty's heart for prayer. But the best thing about *Every Season Prayers* is that it will help you begin to see prayer as “the thing we need *first* and *most*” because it will help you speak to and hear from the God who is the most necessary Person in the universe. Enjoy.

Elyse Fitzpatrick  
Escondido, CA



# Introduction

It would be impossible to overstate the joy I have experienced in writing this sequel to *Everyday Prayers: 365 Days to a Gospel-Centered Faith*. I never could have anticipated the response I've received to my first collection of prayers—prayers that were never originally written for publication. Over the course of the past three years, hardly a day has gone by without a note of thanks for one of my prayers showing up in my email box, on my Facebook page, in the form of a tweet, or at one of the websites where my prayers are shared on a daily basis.

Here's a typical response that comes in many forms, from every time zone: "Scotty, thanks for giving me words for what I was feeling but didn't know how to express to God." Few remarks, in my four decades of vocational ministry, have brought me more encouragement, or a greater sense of honoring Jesus and caring for his lambs. But the lambs haven't only given me thanks; they've also given a lot of invaluable feedback.

Quite literally, credit for the form and content of this new book must be given to a myriad of people who not only asked me to continue writing grace-saturated prayers but also made specific recommendations for this second book. The one unanimous suggestion was for a book of new prayers arranged topically, so readers can find a prayer applicable to a particular need, mood, or issue. Speaking of which, I wrote the majority of these new prayers in response to the welcomed and recurring comments, “Scotty, I’m looking for a prayer for . . .” and “Could you write a prayer about . . . ?” It has been a joy to serve a much larger community than I ever envisioned.

I also received great suggestions for different forms, lengths, and voices for the prayers—including from a surprising number of pastors and worship leaders challenging me to write prayers of confession for congregational and family worship. I have synthesized and integrated as many of these requests as possible. The tremendous diversity and rich tapestry of requests compelled me to land on the title, *Every Season Prayers: Gospel-Centered Prayers for the Whole of Life*—as the range and cry of these prayers requires a very big and glorious gospel. Many, many thanks to friends who will remain anonymous but whose imprint is evident throughout this collection of prayers.

As with my first book, my intent with this volume is to equip God’s people to pray, not do their praying for them. This is why I’ve included exercises in this book that will enable you to develop your own voice in prayer as well as cultivate a listening heart.

There’s nothing special about my words or prayers. I come to the throne of grace covered in the same righteousness of Christ that is given to every Christian.

I'm a highly ordinary guy who was given the great privilege of being disciplined by a remarkable man named Jack Miller, who taught me how to pray the Scriptures back to God through the riches of the gospel in the posture of a humble, joyful, grateful child—beloved of the Father. My goal has been to write and only include prayers “in line with the truth of the gospel” (Gal. 2:14). Where I have succeeded, God be praised! Where I have missed the mark, I rest in Christ’s forgiveness and thank you for yours. With all my heart, I continue to affirm: there’s nothing more than the gospel, just more of the gospel. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

# 1

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## Prayers for All Occasions

### A Prayer for Rejoicing in the Scandalous Goodness of the Gospel

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Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.” (Rom. 4:4–8)

*Dear heavenly Father,* this Scripture contradicts *everything* we assume about the way life is “supposed to work.” We expect to get what’s coming to us. We demand fairness—an honest return for our labor, time, and sweat. But the gospel flies in the face of conventionality, predictability, and normalcy. To which we cry, “Hallelujah!”

Thank you for not being fair with us. Thank you for being outrageously generous, immeasurably kind, and scandalously good. What we could never earn—your perfect righteousness—you have credited to us as a gift. What we fully deserve—to be dealt with according to the wages of our sin—you will never do. What we cannot imagine—that you would justify ungodly people—you have joyfully and legally done.

Because of Jesus' perfect and finished work, our transgressions are forgiven (all of them), our sins are covered (every one of them), and you'll never hold us guilty for them. King David called such people "blessed." Because we are among "such people," we are humbled and grateful, and we are free beyond our wildest imagining.

Thank you for reconciling us to yourself through Jesus, and for placing us in an eternity of your permanent favor. Thank you not only for removing all condemnation for our sins but also for replacing deserved judgment with your exuberant jubilation. Thank you for not just welcoming us but wanting us. Thank you for not just "letting us into heaven one day" but delighting in us fully in this very day!

By the power of the Holy Spirit, drive the gospel, this gospel, deeper and deeper into our hearts, that we might live and love to your glory. We pray in Jesus' trustworthy name. Amen.

## A Prayer for Accepting the Changes That Come with Aging

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Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. (Isa. 46:4)

The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. (Ps. 92:12–15 ESV)

*Dear heavenly Father*, a brief conversation with aging friends yesterday reminded me of the inevitable—we’re all getting older. And with the increase of years comes changes over which we have little or no control. Those changes are either going to drive us to you or to denial, self-absorbing sadness, or foolish ways of medicating our pain and fears. I choose option one.

Thank you for your promise to sustain us when our energy is abating; to carry us when we cannot carry as much as we used to or even carry ourselves; and to rescue us when we get entangled in ways of thinking and choosing that contradict your great love for us in Jesus.

Father, thank you for the promise that age doesn’t preclude flourishing and fruitfulness. By your Spirit and grace, keep us ever full of “sap and green.” You are our Rock and our righteousness—our stability and standing in grace are inviolate.

Though outwardly we are “wasting away,” we will not lose heart—in fact, we will thrive in heart, for you will bring to completion the good work you began in us. As our eyesight grows dimmer, let us see the beauty of Jesus with increasingly clarity. As our hearing gets fainter, let us hear your voice louder than ever, declaring us to be your beloved children of grace—in whom you delight and for whom you’ve prepared an eternity beyond anything we can hope or imagine. We gratefully pray in Jesus’ triumphant and tender name. Amen.

## A Prayer for Worshiping and Trusting the God of Hope

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May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Rom. 15:13 ESV)

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isa. 41:10 ESV)

*Dear heavenly Father*, I begin this day so very thankful for your Word. As I meditate and pray my way through these Scriptures, I'm deeply grateful you chose to reveal yourself to us with words we can understand and trust. Though we don't worship the Bible, we worship you because of the Bible.

Today in particular, I'm thankful to know and worship you as the God of hope. In a world of predictable unpredictabilities; unsettling circumstances; and broken people, places, and things, it is a source of immeasurable joy and peace to know that you love us and are in control of all things. Thank you that you intend for us to abound in hope and not just have enough hope to get by on.

We don't have to be afraid or be dismayed by anything or anyone, for your righteous right hand has a firm hold on us, and your grip is the grip of grace. You are fully with us and you are completely for us. We know this to be true because of your gift of Jesus. You loved us so much you gave your one and only Son, so that instead of perishing, we would have eternal life. Father, thank you that the gospel is true and that you really do love us this much.

Because you have already given us so much grace in Jesus, I choose to obey you and set my hope fully on the grace yet to be given—the even greater grace we receive when Jesus returns. Father, thank you for being so very generous, hope-igniting, and peace-fueling. I pray in Jesus’ holy and loving name. Amen.

## A Prayer for Healing and Health Concerns

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I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, declares the LORD. (Jer. 30:17 ESV)

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. (3 John 2)

We who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. (1 Cor. 15:52–53 NLT)

*Dear heavenly Father*, my stuffed-up head and slightly sore throat are mere irritants compared to the health crises many of us face as this day begins. How we long for the day of no more cancer, no more dementia, no more heart disease, no more respiratory issues, no more Ebola and AIDS, no more disease of *any* kind—the day of perfect health.

Thank you for the promise of a resurrection body that will never get sick, wear out, or die. Thank you that our life in the new heaven and new earth will not include visits to the ER, health insurance, medical bills, hospitals, nursing homes, palliative care, or funeral homes. Hasten that day, Father; hasten it.



Until then, we will pray for healing—thankful that Jesus’ finished work has secured the redemption of our whole being—mind, body, and spirit. Though we’d love for you to answer all of our prayers affirmatively and on our timetable, we will trust and love you when you grant us sufficient grace instead of instant healing (2 Cor. 12:7–10).

Father, we will also seek to take care of these “tents” in which we live (see 2 Cor. 5:1–5). Thank you for good food, opportunities for exercise, the gift of sleep, clean water—gifts you’ve given us by grace, gifts you intend for us to share with others. Indeed, Father, may our suffering make us more sensitive to the sufferings of others. Even as Jesus joyfully fulfilled the law for us, grant us great joy in fulfilling the law of Christ as we bear one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2). In Jesus’ triumphant and tender name we pray. Amen.

## A Prayer for Using Our Words to Bring Healing, Not Harm

---

If you claim to be religious but don’t control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. (James 1:26 NLT)

There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Prov. 12:18 ESV)

The mouth speaks what the heart is full of. (Luke 6:45)

*Dear heavenly Father*, nothing is more daily and revealing than our words—the conversations we carry on in our minds and the communications we share with one another. That is both sobering and encouraging to me as I begin this day.

It's sobering for obvious reasons. I don't want to contradict my love for you by an irresponsible use of my words. I don't want to speak like a man thrusting a sword; I want my words to bring healing and grace.

That's where the encouragement comes in. That which fills my heart will shape my words. So before I have my first interaction with anyone else today, Father, I want to set my mind, heart, and affection on you. Before I speak, I want to listen to what you are constantly saying to us, your beloved children. I want my heart to be so full of your grace that it will be difficult not to speak with grace-seasoned words today.

Father, thank you that it was with everlasting love and tenderness you drew us to yourself. Thank you that it was your kindness that led us to repentance. Thank you for giving Jesus on our behalf and for hiding our lives in him. We are now forgiven and righteous, desired and enjoyed, known and secure. Praise your holy and generous name.

Nothing we can do can separate us from your love, cause you to regret saving us, or put you in a bad mood toward us. Your love is the most dependable and unwavering thing in our lives. Nothing can alter your gospelicious plan for our lives or for the entire cosmos. From the overflow of such amazing grace, we will purpose to speak to others today. We pray in Jesus' great and gracious name. Amen.

## A Prayer for Those of Us with Loved Ones Impacted by Memory Loss

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Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget,

yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me. (Isa. 49:15–16 ESV)

*Dear heavenly Father*, though Isaiah used the image somewhat metaphorically, mothers and fathers *do* forget the children they have brought into the world. I know this quite well, having lived through the journey of watching my dad forgetting my name, then my face, then everything about me. The process was very painful, yet you met us time and again with your mercy and grace.

I am so thankful that the gospel is a living hope, not sentimental hype. I am so thankful that long after Dad forgot you, you never forgot him. I am so thankful that Dad's memory has been healed and that he now knows and remembers perfectly. Above all, I am envious that he now knows you perfectly, while I am bound to the world of knowing in part.

As someone who found you to be the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort in a story of dementia and Alzheimer's, it's an honor to pray for others in that same painful journey. Father, grant spouses and children, family members and friends, a profound sense of your presence and the courage to love well.

Grant them freedom to grieve their mounting sense of loss; the grace to accept the changes in their loved one; and power to stay as present as possible when doing so becomes increasingly difficult. Grant them wisdom for each stage of the journey, trustworthy and compassionate medical care, and the necessary financial and emotional resources.

Lastly, Father, I pray you will help all of us impacted by memory loss to treasure being known and remembered by you. If we should forget you in our journey to life in the new

heaven and new earth, we will never outlive your love and grace for us. The only things you're not going to remember are our sins against you. Hallelujah, many times over! So very gratefully we pray, in Jesus' strong and loving name. Amen.

## A Prayer for Decision-Making Peace

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We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.  
(Prov. 16:9 NLT).

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Prov. 3:5–6 ESV)

*Dear heavenly Father*, some decisions are “no-brainers,” and some require nothing more than sanctified common sense. But there are other decisions in front of us that tie us in knots, rob us of sleep, and keep us second-guessing. Today I'm praying for myself and friends who find themselves in that third category. We need your peace to rule in our hearts as we seek to choose wisely (Col. 3:15).

It's incomparably comforting to know that you are the God who determines our steps, even as we nervously punch an address on the GPS of our hearts. This doesn't mean we are to be passive in our decision making but means we must realize that you are very present—opening doors we cannot shut and shutting doors we cannot open. We praise and bless you for your sovereign, comprehensive, and constant engagement in our lives.

We certainly have every reason to trust you with all of our hearts, Father, because you loved us with all of your heart when

you sent Jesus into the world to be our Savior. Since you've given Jesus to us and for us, we can depend on you to give us everything else we need (Rom. 8:32). So leaning away from our own understanding, we now lean fully upon your heart and hands.

Father, make our ways straight as we seek to honor you with decisions that concern our children; decisions about employment and financial matters; decisions about health care for ourselves and those we love; decisions required in messy and broken relationships; decisions generated by unexpected circumstances and fresh heartache; decisions with a deadline staring us in the eyes.

Father, thank you for teaching us that life is not primarily about making the right decisions but about trusting the right Lord—and that would be you. Your name is Redeemer, and you do all things well. We pray in Jesus' merciful and mighty name. Amen.

## A Prayer for Days When We're Feeling Discontented

---

Godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. (1 Tim. 6:6–8 ESV)

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Heb. 13:5 ESV)

***Dear heavenly Father,*** I assume that until the day you either take me home or send Jesus back to finish making all things

new, I'm going to be both a whiner and a worshiper. Some days, *nothing* feels like it's enough—people, places, or things. Other days, your love, grace, and presence are more real and satisfying than anything else or all things combined.

I want more of those days, Father—more of the days when your love is better than life, your grace is more than sufficient, and your presence is sweeter than honey. But until the day of no more whining, discontent, and grumbling, free me, Father, to more fully delight myself in you. Not to get the desires of my heart, but that you may be the primary delight of my heart. I cannot imagine a freer posture in life.

Help me know the difference between redemptive discontent and destructive ingratitude. To remind us that we're not “home” yet, you've placed a limit on how much satisfaction anything or anyone can give us. Thank you, Father, for doing so. This means our idols will always fail us eventually.

Father, I can claim “godliness” unto contentment only because you have hidden my life in Christ—who is my righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). May this profoundly good news impact the way I enjoy my food, put on my clothes, and relate to other people. In Jesus' wonderful and merciful name I pray. Amen.

## A Prayer for When I Wake Up with a Low-Grade Irritability

---

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if

I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful. (1 Cor. 13:1–5 ESV)

*Dear heavenly Father*, though there's a lot more in this remarkable passage about love, I chose to stop this morning with Paul's couplet about love not being "irritable or resentful," because I woke up with a measure of each vying for my day. I need your grace, even before the sun comes up. So I come to you—I run to you, thankful for your welcome and new mercies.

Father, I don't want this to be a bad-attitude day, and as tempting as it is to blame and make excuses for my low-grade irritability, I'm not gonna do it. I am canceling my plans for a pity party, and I relinquish my elder-brother attitude of condescension, withdrawal, and judgment. Our feelings are to be taken seriously, but our feelings aren't lord—that would be Jesus.

So, Father, by your grace, settle me, center me, and gentle me for the day. I am grateful for your steadfast love, inexhaustible patience, and perpetual kindness. I want to walk in your Spirit today, a whole lot more than I want to "cop an attitude." May I forgive as you've forgiven me; accept as you have accepted me in Christ; and encourage others increasingly as the great day of Jesus' return approaches.

Once again, I trust you for thick skin and a big heart. Free me to love to your glory, all day long. In Jesus' great and grace-full name I pray. Amen.

## A Prayer for Remaining Grateful When Life Is Messy

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Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thess. 5:18 ESV)

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isa. 41:10 ESV)

*Dear heavenly Father*, there are some days when it's good (and important) to remember that you call us to offer thanks *in*, not *for*, all circumstances. The gospel isn't about magical thinking or make-believe living, spiritual anesthesia or circumstantial amnesia. In fact, the gospel is the only place in the universe where we don't have to pretend about anything. That's one of the many reasons we love you and are grateful to be your children.

Father, strengthen, help, and uphold us with your righteous right hand, in stories that are recipes for dismay.

For those of us for whom holidays highlight the brokenness of our family system—grant us grace and freedom to love well in the chaos.

For those of us bearing the weight of health concerns for ourselves or those we love—grant us grace, peace, and the assurance of your nearness.

For those of us weighed down by some combination of the six o'clock news, financial pressures, vocational issues, and relational heartache—grant us grace and a vision of the occupied throne of heaven.

For those of us who hear the condemning whispers of Satan louder than the consoling voice of Jesus, grant us grace



and fresh assurance that nothing can separate us from your love—that Jesus plus nothing is our righteousness, period.

Father, in these and other scenarios of difficult circumstances, reassure us that you are very much at work, for your glory and our good. For you have called us—you have subpoenaed us to an eternal life of intimacy with yourself. You want us, you have us, and you love us. Hallelujah, now and forever we are yours. In Jesus' merciful and mighty name we pray. Amen.

## A Prayer for Reaffirming That God Is in Control of Everything

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Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, "My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please." (Isa. 46:9–10)

*Dear heavenly Father*, though there are days when I, the clay, presume to tell you, the Potter, what to create next; and though there are stories where I, the character, want to dictate to you, the Author, how the plot should change; and though there are circumstances about which I, your subject, want to order you, my King, into action—no, I really don't. Not really. A thousand times over, not really!

I am so thankful that you are God and I am not. I am so thankful that you are the Alpha and the Omega and every other Greek letter in between. I am so thankful you know the beginning and the ending and every other moment as well. I am so thankful that you don't answer all my prayers with a resounding "Yes!" I am so thankful that you don't cater

to my fancies, give in to my whining, or share your throne with me—even for a nanosecond.

I am so thankful that you do as you please, even when your pleasure requires my displeasure. I am so thankful that you're not codependent on me in any way, shape, or form, and that I'm absolutely dependent on you—even when I “kick against the goads” (Acts 26:14), get frustrated with your sense of timing, or, in my moments of temporary insanity, question your goodness.

Father, I am so thankful you are God and the gospel is true, period. In Jesus' triumphant and tender name I pray. Amen.

## A Prayer for the Peace of Jesus to Reign in Our Relationships

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He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. (Eph. 2:17–18 NLT)

*Dear Lord Jesus*, this Scripture is so encouraging and hope-fueling. By your life, death, and resurrection, you have become the ultimate Peacemaker, and now you ever live to preach peace to our hearts through the gospel. We praise you for being the hostility-destroying, enemy-reconciling, relationship-healing Savior.

First and foremost, we bless you for securing us in a perfect relationship with God. Because of your finished work, we no longer live with fear and doubt about what God thinks about us. We now not only enjoy unbroken access to our Father but also are assured of his great delight, perpetual rejoicing,

and constant pursuit of us. Even when he must discipline us, our Father does so with a heart of love, not disgust or aggravation. There is no peace like peace with God.

Though we sometimes offer you resistance, Lord, we're also grateful that you preach peace to us as those who participate in a wide array of broken relationships. You're committed to destroying all kinds of hostilities and reconciling all kinds of people—in the body of Christ, in our families, in our communities, and even with our enemies. Forgive us when we choose resentment over reconciliation, nursing grudges over building bridges, and rehearsing our hurts quicker than we remember the gospel.

Glorious Prince of Peace, one day you will reconcile wolves and lambs, leopards and goats, calves and lions. Until that day, give us the desire, humility, and power to live as a people of peace. For your glory and by your grace, free us to live as agents of your reconciling love. Life is just too short to get and stay mad. Melt our hearts; heal our relationships. We pray in your peerless and peace-full name. Amen.

## A Prayer for Extending the Kindness of God

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But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. (Titus 3:4–6 ESV)

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom. 2:4 NASB)

*Dear heavenly Father*, I praise you for being so kind, gentle, and patient with me. When I consider the difference between how much I know and how well I love, I am compelled to worship you for the truth and riches of the gospel. You don't love me to the degree I love others; you love me to the degree you have hidden my life in Christ, which is completely. This Good News is my peace, hope, and joy.

It's also the basis, and rocket fuel, of my repentance. Even as your kindness continues to lead me to repentance and to more of Jesus, so I repent, Father. I repent of nourishing lingering resentments. I repent of holding on to a few hurts a little tighter than others. I repent of not being as quick to forgive, heal, and move on as you intend.

I acknowledge what you already know to be true: I've enjoyed the role of victim a little more than I've relished the thought of being a peacemaker. Avoidance has been easier than hoping. But, Father, I now crave freedom more than I "need" justice. The only justice I need has been meted out at the cross, where Jesus died for my sin and you reconciled me to yourself.

So, Father, as I reach for the garments of grace—compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience—I trust you for strength to extend to others the same loving-kindness you have poured on me richly in Jesus. Bring glory to yourself. I bring my convicted and grateful heart to you. I pray in Jesus' tender and loving name. Amen.

## A Prayer for Remembering God's Steadfast Love during a Busy Day

This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an

end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.” (Lam. 3:21–24 ESV)

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. (Isa. 26:3 ESV)

*Dear heavenly Father*, I woke up today with all kinds of random thoughts competing for my attention and energy. My “to-do list” has more demands than there are hours in this day. That’s what makes this Scripture so precious and timely. Even before the sun comes up, I want to remember what matters and Who matters. Even before I fix my breakfast, I choose to feast on your new mercies.

So, Father, I bless you for your steadfast, irrepressible, life-defining love. Life isn’t about getting everything done but is about knowing you, walking with you, and enjoying you. I won’t add a day or hour to my life by stress and worry. Far better to do a few things well, as a man of peace and kindness, than to rush through my list and run over people. Help me to remember, all day long, that the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself in love (Gal. 5:6).

Father, you are my “portion”—that is, my joy, peace, and inheritance. So I will hope in you today—not in people’s approval, a demand-free life, or pride of accomplishment. I have a pretty good plan for the day, but I trust you to order my steps (Prov. 16:9). I pray in Jesus’ peace-giving, heart-centering name. Amen.