


**DR. DERWIN L. GRAY**

Bestselling author of *The Good Life*



**God,  
do you  
hear  
me?**

**Discover the prayer God always answers**

*Foreword by Lysa TerKeurst*

Derwin Gray gives readers a fresh word on prayer. He illuminates, illustrates, and communicates the hope we all need to find strength in divine communion. There is much we can do after we pray. There is nothing we should do before we pray. Pastor Gray's words will help you bend your knees and then stand in faith.

**Max Lucado**, pastor and author

Everyone at one point in their lives finds themselves asking big questions about God. One of them being, "Do my prayers matter?", and thankfully we have a resource from Dr. Gray helping us see the ways our prayers change us, connect us to God, and lead us to worship Him.

**Jamie Ivey**, bestselling author and  
host of *The Happy Hour with Jamie Ivey* podcast

This is the book on the power of prayer that this generation needs. In these eye-opening pages, my friend Derwin Gray graciously reveals what God's Word actually says about the life that's available to us when we live a life of prayer. *God, Do You Hear Me?* will reignite a fire within you to know God for real, and to experience the full life he has for you. These words will transform how you see God, how you talk to God, and how you live.

**Hosanna Wong**, international speaker, spoken word  
artist, and author of *How (Not) to Save the World*

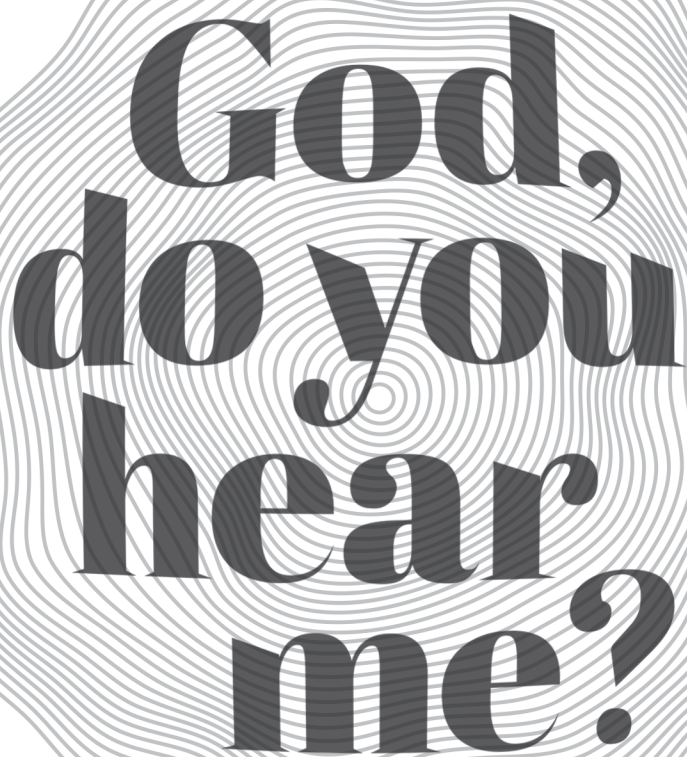
It's impossible to grow in the spiritual life without a commitment to prayer. Yet, where do we begin? This was the question Jesus' first disciples asked, and it gets repeated in every generation. This is why I'm so thankful for Derwin Gray and this book. With winsome storytelling, fresh perspectives, and rich theology, Derwin guides us

through the most important prayer Jesus taught us. I'll be recommending this to many!

**Rich Villodas**, lead pastor of New Life Fellowship  
and author of *The Deeply Formed Life*

Simply put, Dr. Derwin Gray has done it again. His words have taken me on a theological journey that has reminded me of who my Father is and who I am to my Father. Do your soul a favor, read this book.

**Albert Tate**, lead pastor of Fellowship Church

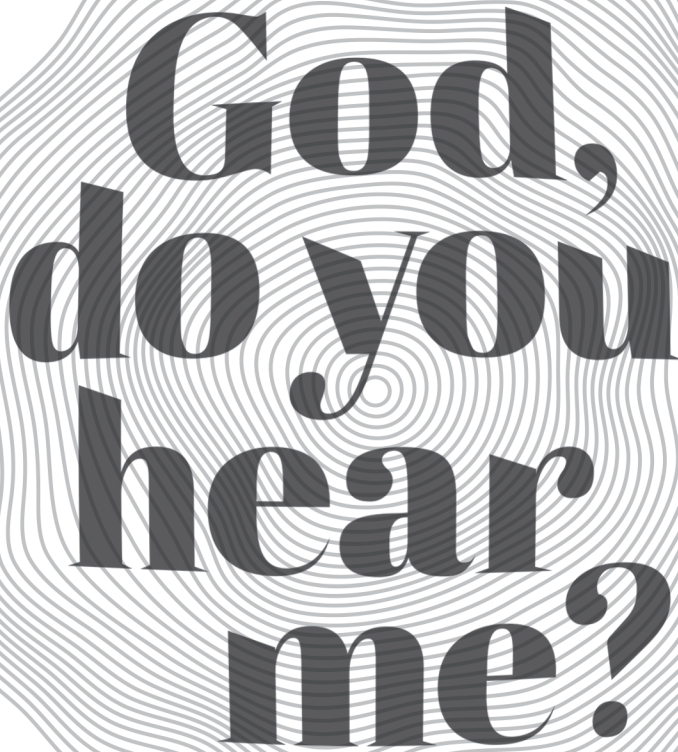


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To Vicki:

I dedicate *God, Do You Hear Me?* to you.

You are the love of my life,  
my best friend.

You have inspired me in more ways than I can count.

Your love for Jesus and our children makes me want  
to be a better man.

You serve Transformation Church with deep gospel convictions  
and an elegance in leadership that is infectious and powerful.





## Acknowledgments

Writing a book is a team sport. I have a fabulous team. Chris, Alex, and Kristel, thank you. Your contributions are priceless, your friendship is invaluable, and your support is immeasurable. Bravo Team PD! Well done!

Presley and Jeremiah, thanks for believing in your dad. Your support and encouragement mean the world to me. You inspire me to be the best I can be.

To the B&H team, thank you. You make writing books fun! And thank you for believing in me as an author.

I want to thank my agent, Alexander Field, for his encouragement and support.

And finally, to the Transformation Church Family, thank you! As I pray for you, as I serve you, God the Holy Spirit is growing me as a disciple of King Jesus. May *God, Do You Hear Me?* teach us to pray.



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## Foreword



There's something different about a person who prays. I mean, a person who really prays. My friend Derwin is this kind of person. I'm not sure I've ever met someone more committed to bringing everything back to Jesus. The way he thinks is a direct reflection of the way he prays. The way he speaks is a reflection of the way he prays. And the way he doesn't seem to freak out about things is a reflection of the way he prays.

And what makes those around him want to lean in to his wisdom on prayer is that he's not annoying about the effectiveness of his prayer life. He owns it. But he doesn't flaunt it. He is settled and secure without being condescending or cocky.

But I think the most important thing you should know is that his life isn't void of truly crappy and chaotic hardships. He's like me. He's like you. His life gets hard sometimes. It doesn't all tie up in a nice, neat bow. He gets hurt, confused, and caught off guard. He is sometimes overlooked and underappreciated. He has questions, unresolved issues, and things he wishes were different about both his private world and the world at large. And that's why he's so very qualified to write a book to help the rest of us confidently pray while constantly wrestling through stuff.

He is highly educated in theology but also acutely aware of the realities of humanity.

That's precisely the reason I can trust the words penned on these pages. I can't handle being preached at about how I need to

## God, do you hear me?

do better in my prayer life. I already know that. And honestly, I feel kind of blah and want to roll my eyes when people with much more tidy lives than mine try to attribute my hardships to something I'm lacking in my prayer life. Nothing like having a little salt poured into a gaping wound, right?!

Derwin's life doesn't smell as stuffy as a library or as sterile as a laboratory. Its aroma is authenticity with a healthy splash of hardship.

This is what I need in a book on prayer. It's not that I need my prayers to be longer or more official sounding or more consistent. And it's definitely not that my prayers need to be organized or impressive. No, they need to be more connected to the heart of Jesus. The compassion of Jesus. The gentle grace and unwavering truth of Jesus. The strength and stamina of Jesus. And the reality of Jesus.

I often stress about my issues. Fret about my fears. Talk about my turmoil. Process my problems. Seek help and wisdom and counsel from smart people. And all of that can be healthy and good.

But, have I really prayed about it all? Too many times I've only thought about it and stressed over it. And therein lies the problem. I'm missing out on tapping into the power of the One who knows all, carries all, and covers all with a peace that passes understanding. Those other activities can be a resource but they can't ever be "the source" from where my real help comes.

I think the only regret you'll have in diving into this book is that you didn't have it sooner. But for such a time as this, let's together open it now and prepare to be understood and overwhelmed by what's really possible with prayer.

Lysa TerKeurst

## CHAPTER 1

# Sandcastles



I have never been much of a swimmer. Actually, the real story is, I can't swim.

Once on vacation in Grenada, I was splashing around in the beautiful turquoise water, attempting to swim. I suspect my attempt must have looked like a comedy routine because some local boys said to me in an epic accent, "Look at you, man! You can't even swim with all those big muscles!" I looked at them and said in what I was hoping to be a Grenadian accent, "No man! I can't swim! I never learned how!" Even now, all these years later, it brings a smile to my face.

I am not really a beach or ocean kind of guy either, but my wife and children love being on the sand. My daughter, Presley, loves it so much that she chose to go to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, a beach community not too far from Oak Island. Oak Island is a place my daughter and I treasure. It is our own Narnia, a mystical, mysterious meeting place where our hearts bonded. From ages seven to eighteen, Presley would accompany me as my "wing-woman" to Oak Island where I would preach at a summer youth camp. I watched her grow from an elementary student, through the awkward middle school years, into a beautiful senior in high school, on these weeklong summer adventures. We made so many beautiful memories over the years, from chasing each other through the old military forts to eating sushi every night for dinner, and having



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lunch at Provisions, where we would order the famous “1 Pound Shrimp Special.”

God uses places and spaces to connect us to his heart and to each other. The beach is one of those places for the House of Gray. My family loves the beach and ocean, but, me, not so much. It’s not where I would choose to go by myself, but out of love for my people and the smiles it brings to their faces, I go and go often.

Here is my beach routine: I marinate on the beach, chillaxing in a beach chair under a canopy that blocks the sun. Then I cover myself with a large beach towel that blocks the sunrays that escaped the canopy. I get my Bible, a good theology book, a cold, fruity drink, and I enjoy myself in the shade.

Why, you ask? First, as I already said, I can’t swim. Second, there are creatures in the ocean that can eat me. In my mind, I believe a tiger shark would find me appealing to eat. At 5’11”, 260 pounds of pure dark muscularity, I’d be like a gourmet meal. No thanks! Derwin is not getting in the water. Third, the Lord has blessed me with an incredible tan, so there is no need for me to cook myself like a rotisserie chicken in the sun.

## **Rising Tides, Roaring Wind, and Crashing Waves**

Do you ever watch kids build sandcastles on the beach? When I’m sitting under my umbrella, I enjoy watching them, because they are so patient and meticulous about building something that they know will be soon wiped away by the rising tide and crashing waves. As I marinate on this thought, it reminds me that we do the same thing with our lives. We fervently work with meticulous

## Sandcastles

skill, intentionally trying to build *The Good Life*,<sup>1</sup> which typically means amassing wealth, power, and status through our jobs. Often, we find ourselves racked with anxiety, exhaustion, bitterness, and frustration because the sandcastles we have worked so hard to build are wiped away by the rising tides and cruel waves that crash on our lives.



**WE FIND OURSELVES RACKED  
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THAT CRASH ON OUR LIVES.**



Two thousand years ago, a poor traveling Jewish preacher from the trailer park town of Nazareth dropped some timeless wisdom on humanity about just this topic. It's timely for you and me:

“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew

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<sup>1</sup> See my book, *The Good Life: What Jesus Teaches about Finding True Happiness* (Nashville, B&H Publishing, 2020).

## God, do you hear me?

and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash.”

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, because he was teaching them like one who had authority, and not like their scribes. (Matt. 7:24–29)

If we will allow the Spirit of God to speak afresh to us, his life-giving words can transform us. We, too, can be “astonished” at Jesus’ teaching. When we build our lives on sand, we will not have the ability to overcome the rising tides and crashing waves. Jesus wants to give us a collapse-proof life.

Paul, one of Jesus’ earliest and most loyal Jewish followers, wrote these hope-intoxicated words:

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:37–39)

### *Hypernikōmen*

The word *conqueror* in Greek is *hypernikōmen*. It means to “keep on winning a glorious victory.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus resoundingly won the battle against humanity’s great enemy, the dark powers of sin and

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<sup>2</sup> J. A. Witmer, *Romans*, in J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 475.

## Sandcastles

death. Sin and death are invasive species that do not belong in God's good creation. Messiah Jesus triumphed over and disarmed these dark powers with his death and resurrection.

But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:57 NLT)

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross. (Col. 2:13–15 NLT)

The One who is “grace upon grace” fights our battles (John 1:16). His weapon of victory was his sinless life, his sacrificial atoning death on the cross, his glorious resurrection, his sending of the Spirit, and his future glorious return. King Jesus' victorious life, which we participate in, makes us overcomers. We are strengthened by the sound of the stone being rolled away from his tomb. Jesus' tomb is empty, and because his tomb is empty, we can be filled by the “Spirit of Jesus Christ” himself (Phil. 1:19; Gal. 5:22–24). The One who walked out of the tomb now wants to walk into our lives and live in and through us. We are coheirs of a kingdom that is unshakable, irreplaceable, and eternally durable. When the rising tides and crashing waves come:

We may be afflicted, but in Christ, we are not crushed.

## **God, do you hear me?**

We may be perplexed, but in Jesus, we will not lose hope.

We may be persecuted, but in Immanuel, the God who is with us, we will never be abandoned.

We may be struck down, but in Christ Jesus, the King of kings, we will never be destroyed.

What the enemy means for evil, Jesus transforms for our good.

Our lives in Christ are not built on a temporary foundation like sand. In Jesus, our lives are built on the Eternal Rock: “He alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I will never be shaken” (Ps. 62:2). We can never be shaken loose from the grip of his grace. In Christ, we are not a sandcastle-kind-of-people because Jesus is our firm foundation.

## 2020 Was Like an Episode of *The Twilight Zone*

I cannot remember the first time I watched an episode of *The Twilight Zone*, but I have been a fan of the TV show for years. I resonate with it because its creator, Rod Serling, took science fiction, cultural issues, suspense, horror, and psychology and created a show that was thought-provoking. The year 2020 was like an episode of *The Twilight Zone*, and each of us had a starring role.

In 2020, the rising tides, accompanied by hurricane-force winds, earthquakes, and a tsunami-sized wave crashed against

## Sandcastles

humanity. The events of the year revealed that our lives are built on sand.

The novel coronavirus, which leads to the COVID-19 disease, descended on us. People got sick. Loved ones died. Unemployment skyrocketed. The American economy, along with the world's economy, raced toward recession.<sup>3</sup> Uncertainty became a blinding fog. Anxiety was around every corner. Some people were not sure where their next meal was coming from. At Transformation Church,<sup>4</sup> where I serve as cofounder and lead elder pastor, we fed more than four hundred families per week who had been impacted by the recession. We started Transformation Church during a recession and found ourselves in another one.

In addition to these economic waves, many white Americans also awoke to issues of systemic racism and racial injustice that have haunted our country since her inception after several high-profile incidents, like the killing of George Floyd, shook us from our slumber. The Band-Aid that has unsuccessfully covered up the racial trauma in America was removed, exposing the unhealed wound for what it is. We clearly saw that as Americans we stand divided, unsure of what tomorrow may bring. The borders that divide Americans are growing wider by the day.

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<sup>3</sup> Scott Horsley, "It's Official: U.S. Economy Is in a Recession," NPR, June 8, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/06/08/872336272/its-official-scorekeepers-say-u-s-economy-is-in-a-recession> (accessed June 30, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> To learn more about Transformation Church, go to [transformationchurch.tc](http://transformationchurch.tc).

## God, do you hear me?

### I Do What I Do Not Want to Do

As we have realized the world around us is in desperate need of redemption, our behavior reminds us that the interior part of our lives is also in need of redemption. What is in us is, by far, worse than what is outside of us. Jesus said, “For from within, out of people’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, self-indulgence, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a person” (Mark 7:21–23). No wonder the apostle Paul said, “For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate” (Rom. 7:15).

We do not love our neighbors as we are called to love.

We do not forgive people as we are called to forgive.

We do not serve people as we are called to serve.

We do not give generously as we are called to give.

Instead, we live in the prison of our past hurts, thus hurting people in the present. We are tormented by addictions. We are the problem that plagues our world.

What hope is there for us?

As you will discover throughout this book, we have a deliverer, a redeemer, a sin-defeater, a death-killer, who out of a heart of endless love, gave his life *for* us, to give his life *to* us, so he can live his overcoming life *through* us! With Paul, we cry out, “Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom. 7:25 NIV).

### Building Our Lives on the Rock

Life is hard. There is so much to overcome. Many of us, perhaps instinctively, turn to God in these moments. We cry out in prayer.

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And in the crucible when we are pressed from side-to-side and top-to-bottom, we ask,

“God, when I pray, do you hear me?”

“Jesus, are my prayers hitting the ceiling and crashing back to the floor?”

“Father, am I praying wrong?”

“I would pray more if I knew how to pray.”

“Are my prayers just empty words going into empty space?”

“Is anybody even there . . . ?”

Through the pages of this book, I am going to hold your hand and journey with you, not as an expert, but as a fellow traveler, in learning and living the prayer that God always answers.

The prayer that God always answers is what is commonly called the Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6:9–13). The Lord’s Prayer is the firm foundation that God builds our lives on the Rock.

Prayer is the secret place where we find God waiting for us.

Prayer is the door we enter to discover God’s heart of unending grace.

Prayer is the home we have always wanted, where we can crawl into our Father’s lap.

Prayer is a priceless gift. Sadly, many of us rarely spend time enjoying the gift. Thus, we miss enjoying Jesus.



## God, do you hear me?

In the fourth century, St. Augustine, the renowned North African pastor, wrote, “True, whole prayer is nothing but love.”<sup>5</sup> Jesus longs to teach us how to pray so we can be lost in his love. Nearly a thousand years later, Julian of Norwich, prayed,

For we are so preciously loved by God that we cannot even comprehend it. No Created being can ever know how much and how sweetly and tenderly God loves them. It is only with the help of his grace that we’re able to persevere in spiritual contemplation with endless wonder at his high, surpassing, immeasurable love which our Lord in his goodness has for us.<sup>6</sup>

Prayer is more than just talking to God. Nineteenth-century Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard wrote, “A man prayed, and at first he thought that prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet until in the end he realized that prayer was listening.”<sup>7</sup> The more we immerse ourselves in the sacred Scriptures—the Bible—the better our ears attune to the voice of God, who speaks love over us.

Prayer is more than just asking God for stuff. Jesus said, God “already knows what we need” (Matt. 6:25–32). So, what then is prayer? Prayer is a holy longing to be with God, to experience his love that surpasses understanding, to be embraced by his merciful

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Foster and James Bryan Smith, *Devotional Classics* (San Francisco: Harper One, 1990), 60.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. Dr. Ken Orth, “Seasons of the Spirit: Prayer as Listening,” <https://fcc-winchester.com/latest-news/seasons-of-the-spirit-prayer-as-listening/> (accessed February 8, 2021).

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presence, to lose ourselves in his redeeming purposes so we can find ourselves. Prayer is a sacred journey that guides us into becoming the people we were meant to become. As Jesus said, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40). Jesus wants to fully train us so we can become like him. God the Son graciously became human, so that, by grace, we become human again. Our humanity was marred in the garden when the first humans sinned, and our humanity was restored in another garden, where Jesus walked out of an empty tomb. Becoming truly human is the grace-guided process of God uniting us to the life of the resurrected Messiah, by the Holy Spirit’s power, as we trust Jesus as our Savior. And little by little, day by day, year by year, we grow in reflecting the character, ministry, and mission of Jesus. All of life becomes God’s playground to express the love of Jesus through us. Our lives become a praise song giving God the glory due his name.



**PRAYER IS A HOLY LONGING TO  
BE WITH GOD, TO EXPERIENCE  
HIS LOVE THAT SURPASSES  
UNDERSTANDING, TO BE  
EMBRACED BY HIS MERCIFUL  
PRESENCE, TO LOSE OURSELVES  
IN HIS REDEEMING PURPOSES  
SO WE CAN FIND OURSELVES.**



Prayer ushers us into greater depths of intimacy with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Intimacy means “into me you see.” Prayer opens our eyes so we can behold the God of glory in the face of Jesus, “For God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). God wants us to see him,

## **God, do you hear me?**

to be with him, and for him to be with us. He is Immanuel, the God who is with us (Matt. 1:23). He will be our God, and we will be his people.

### Lord, Teach Us to Pray

We are going to learn and inhabit a life of prayer. Jesus mastered the art of prayer because he is the Master. Now, he wants to enroll us in his school of prayer.

Don't worry about passing or failing his class. Jesus already scored 100 percent for us through his sinless life, sacrificial death on the cross, and resurrection. He is patient. He is kind. He is tender with us. And he knows that there is no final exam that we must study to get our score that we must achieve. The aim of prayer is sweet fellowship with our Father God, who is an endless well of beauty, glory, grace, and love. This school lasts for more than a semester; prayer is an eternal gift of intimacy with God.

When we wonder if God is really listening to us or if he really hears us, we can find confidence in learning from this prayer that God always answers. One day Jesus was praying, and his disciples asked him to teach them to pray. He said:

“Therefore you should pray like this:

‘Our Father in heaven  
your name be honored as holy.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,

## Sandcastles

as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not bring us into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.”  
(Matt. 6:9–13)

In AD 250, Cyprian, a North African pastor, is credited with coming up with the phrase, “The Lord’s Prayer.”<sup>8</sup> Like a diamond, which has multifaceted beauty, depending on the angle you see it, the Lord’s Prayer also teaches us a multifaceted kingdom-of-God reality.

First, the Lord’s Prayer is a mini catechism that teaches you about the Person and work of Christ Jesus.<sup>9</sup> Each line of this ancient prayer details an aspect of Jesus’ life.

Second, you will discover that the Lord’s Prayer is not about getting stuff from God, but about becoming who you were created to be. Your purpose, your passion, and your participation in God’s kingdom will be ignited.

Third, you will approach God’s throne of grace and mercy with boldness and confidence because you will pray the prayer that Jesus told you his Papa would hear and answer. When you pray the Lord’s Prayer, you are praying God’s will for your life.

Fourth, you will learn that God answers the Lord’s Prayer in unexpected ways and at unexpected times. Sometimes the prayers we have prayed in silence with tears streaming down our face take years to be fulfilled. When a farmer plants seeds, he does not expect

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<sup>8</sup> R. J. Utley, *The First Christian Primer: Matthew*, vol. 9 (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 53.

<sup>9</sup> A catechism is a summary of Christian doctrine with questions and answers. It is used as a means of teaching the Christian faith.

## **God, do you hear me?**

them to grow overnight. He knows that harvest time is coming. This book that I am writing is a seed that was planted in 2000.

The book is written in five sections:

### *Section I: Discovering Who Our Father Is*

“Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy” (Matt. 6:9). We will spend time mining the rich treasure chest of Scripture, exploring who our Father in heaven is. As we discover our Father’s love, faithfulness, redemptive purpose, and glory, we will experience our trust in him increasing.

### *Section II: Discovering God’s Kingdom and Your Priestly Role in It*

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (v. 10). *The better we know and understand Abba’s kingdom and our priestly role in it, the more purposeful and fulfilling our life of prayer will be.* As we walk through this section, we will discover what it means to:

- Participate in the kingdom
- Proclaim the kingdom
- Personify the kingdom
- Pursue the kingdom

Prayer is not making stuff up as we go along. Prayer is us reminding ourselves of what Abba has already accomplished in and through Jesus. The kingdom of God is what Jesus looks like in bodily form, and our priestly role in God’s kingdom is to be formed into the image of Jesus. Prayer is rehearsing God’s story and how we fit into it, for his glory.



**PRAYER IS REHEARSING GOD'S  
STORY AND HOW WE FIT  
INTO IT, FOR HIS GLORY.**



*Section III: Depending on the Bread of Life*

“Give us today our daily bread” (v. 11). As the Bread of Life, we will come to embrace Jesus as our provider. He is our breadwinner. He alone sustains us with the sustenance of his being. Jesus cares about the whole of our lives, not just souls. He graciously meets our every need we have at every level of our being.

*Section IV: Diving into God's Forgiveness*

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (v. 12). Section IV is going to be bloody. We are going to explore two of ancient Israel's holiest days, Passover and Yom Kippur. We learn that Jesus is the new Passover Lamb and our eternal Yom Kippur. Jesus frees us from the power of sin and death and forgives us so we can become forgivers. Unresolved forgiveness often dissolves our potential.

*Section V: Developing a Wartime Mindset*

“And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (v. 13). As this section unfolds, we will discover that Jesus holds us in his vast strength. No temptation is too great because we will learn how to put on Christ and resist temptation (Rom. 13:14). We will put on our battle armor because we are in a war. And in this war, God has given us special armor to wear so we can be effective in our already promised victory (Eph. 6:10–20).

**God, do you hear me?**

There is no one holy like the LORD.

There is no one besides you!

And there is no rock like our God.

(1 Sam. 2:2)

## Sandcastles

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### Marinate on This

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#### *Prayer*

Heavenly Father,

Teach me to pray.

I long to learn.

I confess that most of the time I pray just to get things.

Rarely do I pray to get you.

Rarely do I pray simply to be with you.

Today, I choose to enroll in your school of prayer.

Teach me, O God, how to pray.

In Jesus' name, who is the Lord of Life,

And the One who gives me access to your ear,

Thank you for hearing me.

Amen.

#### *Questions for Reflection*

1. In what way do our lives look like the children building sandcastles on the beach?



## **God, do you hear me?**

2. What promise does Jesus make to those who build their lives on his teaching?
3. What is the goal of prayer? How is that different than what often motivates us to pray?
4. What are you most looking forward to about the rest of this book?

### *Things to Remember*

1. We often find ourselves racked with anxiety, exhaustion, bitterness, and frustration because the sandcastles we have worked so hard to build are wiped away by the rising tides and cruel waves that crash on our lives.
2. As we have realized the world around us is in desperate need of redemption, our behavior reminds us that the interior part of our lives is also in need of redemption. What is in us is, by far, worse than what is outside of us.
3. Prayer is a sacred journey that guides us into becoming the people we were meant to become.
4. Like a diamond, which has multifaceted beauty, depending on the angle you see it, the Lord's Prayer also teaches us a multifaceted kingdom-of-God reality.