

Study Guide for *Praying Backwards* by Bryan Chapell

Introduction: Praying for Change

Think before you read

1. Do you normally end your prayers with the words “in Jesus name”? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. What are some personal questions and frustrations you have about prayer?

Think after you read

3. What sorts of things or situations usually prompt you to pray?
4. What are to be the motivations or ultimate objectives of our prayers (see p. 13)?
5. From personal experience, why are you glad that God is not “obligated to do what we think should happen” (p. 14)? Give examples from your life.

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**Chapter 1
Praying in Jesus' Name: *In Jesus' Name, Amen Begin***

Think before you read

1. How have you usually interpreted Jesus' words, "my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name"? (John 16:23-24; see also John 14:13-14 and 15:16)
2. What sometimes hinders you from coming to God with your daily concerns?

Think after you read

3. What was encouraging to you on pp. 18-19 concerning your own questions and hesitations about prayer?
4. What has to happen before we are eligible to pray "in Jesus' name" (pp. 21-22)?
5. What benefits do we receive from Christ's intercession on our behalf (pp. 22-23)? How do they affect your attitude toward prayer?

- 6.** How is the Holy Spirit involved when we pray in Jesus' name (p. 24)?

- 7.** How would you summarize, from pp. 24-25, what it means to pray in Jesus' name?

- 8.** In which of the ways that children pray (see examples on pp. 26-27) did you identify the way you sometimes pray?

- 9.** What instructed and inspired you in Eric's story (pp. 27-28)?

- 10.** How is praying in Jesus' name dependent upon knowledge and trust in the character of God (p. 29-30)?

- 11.** When you prayed using the prayer at the end of the chapter, how did it alter your petitions?

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Chapter 2
Praying in Jesus' Way: Not My Will but Yours

Think before you read

1. Do you know “The Lord’s Prayer” from memory? Can you say it to yourself right now, without the accompaniment of your congregation, while thinking about the meaning of its words? (How did you do?)
2. What do you consider the basic necessities of life?

Think after you read

3. Using a theological or regular dictionary, give the definitions of “holy” and “hallow.”
4. How might your day have been different yesterday had you approached everything with the prayer, “Hallowed be your name” (pp. 35-36)?
5. Since God is sovereign, why should we pray, “Your Kingdom come” (pp. 36-37)?

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Chapter 3
Praying without Doubting: *Trusting Our Father, the King*

Think before you read

1. Read Mark 11:11-26 and Matthew 21:21-22. What questions about prayer do these verses prompt in your own mind?
2. What are basic answers that God gives to prayer? List as many as you can think of.

Think after you read

3. Read Luke 11:2-4, 9-10 and Matthew 6:31-33. What are the conditions under which we truly pray in Jesus' name (p. 52)?
4. What does it mean to include in our prayers, "Yet, Lord, not my will but your will be done" (pp. 52-54)?
5. How can we offer "faithful prayer that heaven delights to answer" (pp. 54-55)?

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Chapter 4
Praying in the Spirit: Power beyond Our Power

Think before you read

1. Why do you think God wants us to pray, even though He knows what we need before we ask?
2. How have you understood the role of the Holy Spirit in your prayer life, if at all?

Think after you read

3. How did the explanation of Romans 8:28 in the context of 8:26-29 increase your understanding of how that verse relates to prayer (pp. 69-75)?
4. How is the meaning of Romans 8:28 augmented by 8:29, and how does that affect the way you think about it (p.75)?
5. If you are a Christian, in what ways have you noticed that your “black-and-white” world has been replaced by one of living color since you came to faith in Christ (pp. 76-77)?

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**Chapter 5
*Praying Boldly: As a Child of God***

Think before you read

1. What sometimes inhibits you from going to God in prayer with your concerns, both great and small?
2. When you do go to God in prayer, what prevents you from praying boldly?

Think after you read

3. What part does our union with Christ have in our praying boldly (pp. 86-89)?
4. How can your identity as a child of God embolden your prayers (pp. 89-91)?
5. What is your normal pattern of prayer—occasional or frequent, by a set pattern (such as A-C-T-S) or conversational, etc.? How do pp. 91-94 encourage you to pray constantly as “the reflexes of your spirit affirm the most basic requests”?

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Chapter 6
Praying Expectantly: *For All Things Always*

Think before you read

1. Why is it sometimes difficult for you to pray expectantly?
2. What benefits have you witnessed and experienced through corporate prayer?

Think after you read

3. What did George Mueller expect in answer to his prayers that we also may expect (pp. 105-108)?
4. Have you ever kept a prayer journal or record of answers to specific prayers? What did you learn from that practice? How do pp. 107-108 encourage you in that way?
5. How is specific prayer an act of worship (pp. 108-109)?

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Chapter 7
Praying Persistently: Never, Never Give Up

Think before you read

1. For what have you been praying for a long time with seemingly no answer? What has made you persist in it, or caused you to give up?
2. Why do you think that God, who knows and controls all things, wants us to persist in prayer?

Think after you read

3. Why do we sometimes lose heart and fail to persist in prayer (pp. 122-124)?
4. Why is it both presumptuous and faithless to pray once and then forget about a request that requires the passing of time to answer (pp. 126-127)?
5. How do pp. 125-129 encourage you to persist in prayer “through apparent futility”?

6. According to pp. 130-134, why does God require persistent prayer?

7. What would be the dangers in being able to “snap our fingers and get God to perform on cue” (p. 132)?

8. What are the three greatest concerns about which you are praying today? Carefully examine them. Are they truly for Christ’s glory? If not, how could you think and pray about them in that way (pp. 134-135)?

9. What are some of the benefits we receive when God delays His answers and we persist in praying (pp. 135-138)?

10. When you prayed using the prayer on pp. 138-139, what was different from how you usually pray?

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Chapter 8
Praying in God's Will: *Within the Fence of Righteousness*

Think before you read

1. Read 1 John 5:14-15. What does it mean to you to pray “according to God’s will”?
2. When have you sought God’s will in a difficult decision? What helped you make that decision?

Think after you read

3. What things determine whether or not a prayer request is wrong and outside of God’s will (pp. 143-144)?
4. What difference does it make in our prayers when our assessments and feelings determine our priorities (pp. 144-145)?
5. What part does obedience play in praying for God’s will (pp. 145-146)?

- 6.** Why is it scary to pray that our loved ones—or we—become more Christlike? Yet what are the benefits of praying that way (pp. 146-147)?

- 7.** What practical help do you receive from pp. 147-150 for deciding between multiple righteous options?

- 8.** How can we respond with faithful prayer when God answers with difficulties or a “no” answer (pp. 150-155)?

- 9.** In what ways are you building the Bible—its truth and teaching—into your thoughts and life?

- 10.** When you prayed using the prayer on pp. 155-156, what helpful guidance did it give for praying in God’s will?

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Chapter 9
Praying in God's Wisdom: *Within the Fence of Prudence*

Think before you read

1. What priorities or principles does our current society offer us to influence the choices that we make?
2. When did you make a decision based on society's values—contrary to God's—and what were the consequences?

Think after you read

3. What is involved when our decisions are guided by Christian prudence (p. 160)?
4. What are some principles that determine whether or not our prayers are loving (pp. 160-162)?
5. What are some principles that determine whether or not our prayers are legitimate and responsible (pp. 162-165)?

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**Chapter 10
Praying Forward: *Paddle and Pray***

Think before you read

1. When you pray, what difference does it make to know that biblical prayer transforms our world?
2. When you pray, what difference does it make to know that God is really listening?

Think after you read

3. From pp. 175-181, how is prayer more than conversation with God?
4. How does prayer change us (pp. 176-179)?
5. After prayerfully reviewing the specific causes of weakened prayer on pp. 181-182, which ones may currently be limiting your own prayers?

6. What is wrong with thinking that the duration, eloquence, or multiplication of our words in prayer will obligate God to act as we wish (pp. 183-185)?

7. According to pp. 185-186, what is the essence of humility in prayer?

8. What are some habits that you have found helpful in the past to focus your prayers and aid you in maintaining Biblical priorities (pp. 186-189)?

9. Which of the habits or patterns on pp. 186-189 would you like to begin to incorporate into your personal prayer life?

10. When you prayed using the prayer on pp. 191-192, and also read the Conclusion, how were you encouraged to continue “praying backwards” in Jesus’ name?