



**PRAYING WITH
CONFIDENCE**

31 DAYS OF POWERFUL
MOMENTS WITH GOD

JEFF LEAKE



PRAYING WITH CONFIDENCE

31 DAYS OF POWERFUL
MOMENTS WITH GOD

J E F F L E A K E

SALUBRISSM
R E S O U R C E S

PRAYING WITH CONFIDENCE

Copyright © 2015 by Jeff Leake

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Published by Salubris Resources
1445 N. Boonville Ave.
Springfield, Missouri 65802

www.salubrisresources.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or, otherwise—without prior written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations used in connection with reviews in magazines or newspapers.

Cover design by PlainJoe Studios (www.plainjoestudios.com)
Interior design by Tom Shumaker

Produced with the assistance of Livingstone, the Publishing Services Division of Barton-Veerman Company. Project staff includes: Bruce Barton, Ashley Taylor and Tom Shumaker.

Unless otherwise specified, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked *KJV* are from the *King James Version*, and are held in public domain.

Scripture quotations marked *NKJV* are from the *New King James Version of the Bible*®. ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-1-68067-039-4

Printed in the United States of America

19 18 17 16 15 • 1 2 3 4 5

CHAPTER 1



AM I DOING THIS RIGHT?

Prayer is one of the most powerful, mysterious, and vulnerable practices that we ever attempt in life.

Think about it! When you pray effectively and with a raw heart:

- ✧ Needs are met
- ✧ Bodies are healed
- ✧ Finances are provided
- ✧ Peace is released
- ✧ Wisdom is granted
- ✧ Lives are changed
- ✧ Heaven is pleased

It's an awesome moment when you know that your prayers have touched God and that God has responded on your behalf. But what about all the other moments when we feel like absolutely nothing is happening? What about those moments when we pray and we wonder if God is listening? Or maybe we feel like we just don't really understand how to do this "prayer thing" like others are doing.

My First Steps in Prayer

When I was fifteen years old, I made the decision to commit my life to Christ. It was at a youth camp near Indiana, Pennsylvania, when I responded to a challenge to surrender everything to Him. That moment of decision changed me. I knew that God was doing something in my life. I felt clean. I felt renewed. I was ready to take steps toward His plan for my life.

Shortly after that encounter with God, my youth pastor told me that I needed to establish a prayer life that was more developed

than the sporadic times of prayer I was used to. He told me that I should get up early enough every day to spend at least fifteen minutes in prayer.

So I tried it.

My alarm sounded and I bounced out of bed ready for my first experiment in developing a prayer life. Because I had grown up in the church, I had heard about great men and women of God who prayed for an hour a day or more. This was my ambition—to be one of those prayer warriors. I was ready to accept the steps to achieving my plan.

I knelt by my bed, folded my hands, and started to talk to God aloud. “God, I thank you for this day and for what you have done in my life.” I thought that was at least a good start. If only I could keep my momentum up. “I know I am supposed to pray, so here it goes . . .” And I proceeded to provide God with a list of things I needed or wanted in my life. I also gave him my list of people who needed help or intervention in their lives. My prayer became something like a bulleted list. I prayed:

- ✧ Help me do well in my upcoming tests at school.
- ✧ Give me direction about where you want me to go to college and what you want me to do with my life.
- ✧ Heal my sister, who has diabetes.
- ✧ Help my friend, Kevin, as he tries to serve you.
- ✧ Bless my youth group and the upcoming outreach we are holding.

Not only did I pray through a bulleted list, but I actually wrote down what I had on my heart to pray about. The list seemed long when I wrote it, but somehow when I was done saying it aloud to God, I had only prayed about ninety seconds. So I tried to come up with other things to say, searching my mind for things that I could possibly ask for and pray about.

The best I could do was fill seven minutes of actual prayer.

I felt a bit ashamed that my time with God was so short and seemed so much less than what I expected it should be. I didn’t want to think about how I would answer my youth pastor when he asked about my attempt at this new prayer life. I felt I was

obviously either incredibly shallow in my approach to God, or other people understood something about prayer that I didn't.

Good Company

If you've felt this way about prayer, then know you're in good company. In fact, the disciples of Jesus, the people who walked with Him through His ministry, had the same kinds of questions that you and I have about how to approach God in prayer.

In Matthew 6, the disciples basically said to Jesus, "Look we've watched how you talk to your Father in prayer, and we've seen the results of your prayer life. You're obviously doing something different than us. Our prayers lack the impact yours have. Can you teach us how to do this right? Because we feel like we're missing something."

Jesus' response is a famous one!

He taught His disciples what has become known as the Lord's Prayer. A better title for this prayer would probably be the Disciple's Prayer because it was Jesus' recommendation of a pattern that His followers could use in prayer.

Most likely, you know how the prayer goes: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen" (Matthew 6:9–13, KJV).

There's a major misconception concerning these phrases that Jesus used to teach His disciples about prayer. Some have come to believe that Jesus wanted us to repeat these exact words in this exact order, and that by repeating this prayer, we would somehow trigger a response from heaven. So people repeat the prayer, many times, without necessarily thinking about what they are praying.

In reality, this prayer was never intended to be an exercise in memorization and recitation but, rather, a mini-teaching on the various elements involved in effective communication with God. If we take time to slow down and meditate on these words, we discover six main elements involved in prayer.

The Pattern

Worship—“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.” With the first line, Jesus set a tone of intimate worship that leads into the rest of the prayer. First, He addressed God as Father. This was a radical concept because no one had addressed God as their father until this moment in history. You might say, “Jesus is the Son of God, of course He would call Him Father.” But Jesus showed a radical shift in religious practice by extending the same privilege to everyone by starting the prayer with “*Our Father*.”

Jesus then affirmed that our Father rules from heaven and that all things are under His authority. Jesus praised His Father’s name by pairing it with the term *hallowed*. The disciples would

have understood that the name of a person represented his character.

.....
 ✧ We are called to recognize who God is, what authority He possesses, how He can be trusted, and who we are in relation to Him.

So we, too, start our prayer time with worship. We are called to recognize who God is, what authority He possesses, how He can be trusted, and who we are in relation to Him. It’s all about setting the context for our prayers so that we understand the magnitude of the person we are talking to and the ability He has to do whatever is needed in the world.

Agreement—“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” After spending time in worship, we need to recognize that our prayers don’t start the process of God’s action. God is already in motion trying to accomplish good things for us. Instead of just asking for what we think we need, we need to pause and realize that God has a will and purpose for us and for everything going on around us.

We pray for His kingdom to come. So we ask Him to come and rule in our lives and in our world. We invite His leadership. We invite Him to take over in areas where confusion and darkness reign.

We pray for His will to be done. So we ask God to do everything that He wants to do. We agree with God for His will

to be released in every area of our lives. (We will spend some time in future chapters discussing how to pray the will of God with confidence.)

Thanksgiving—“Give us this day our daily bread.” There are two important aspects of this statement. First, we recognize the “bread” that God has already supplied. This is a moment to pause in gratitude for the things God has already given. So we take time to list all the past provisions.

Before we ask for more bread—we thank God for His goodness in providing the many things that sustain our lives.

Specific Requests—“Give us this day our daily bread.” The second application of this statement is to ask God to meet specific needs in our lives. Yes, it’s completely okay to ask Him for what you need. Some people have been taught that it’s selfish to ask God for things for themselves. Nowhere in the Bible does God tell us *not* to ask for what we need. In fact, in this same passage, Jesus said, “ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7 NKJV).

Confession—“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” You can see two applications in this sentence as well. First, we do an inventory of our lives and ask God to forgive us for whatever we might have thought, said, or done that has been offensive to Him.

Second, we choose to forgive those who have offended us in what they have said, done, or attempted to do to us.

Worship—“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” Jesus ended His prayer with a format similar to the beginning of the prayer. After agreeing with God’s will, showing gratitude for His blessings, requesting for needs and desires, and confessing the weight of sin, Jesus once again worshipped God. Jesus again recognized the power of God and stated that He is the Ruler of heaven and has authority over all.

What Does This Have to Do with Me?

This prayer guide is designed to follow Jesus’ advice about how to approach God in prayer. There’s a new pattern every day for you to pray through based on famous prayers in the

Bible. Each day, the various elements from the Lord's Prayer are included in the pattern alongside the outlined format for the day.

Here's how it works.

As you begin your prayer time, the pattern listed for the day will guide you through a strong season of prayer. It will help you know what to say during your time with God and will give you confidence, variety, and effectiveness in your time with Him.

A pattern like this one helped me learn to pray at fifteen years of age. When I told my youth pastor about my frustration regarding prayer, he suggested a simple pattern to pray that was similar to the elements of the Lord's Prayer.

So I knelt down by my bedside. I actually pulled out a watch with a timer and disciplined myself to spend five minutes on each aspect of prayer. Since worship was the first segment, I put a worship song on my tape player (yes I'm old enough to remember cassette tapes), and I sang along. I worshipped God for about five minutes.

I spent the next five minutes agreeing with God for His leadership to come into every area of my life.

Then, I spent five minutes making a list of things I was thankful for. I wrote them down on a sheet of paper in a notebook so I could remember them in future prayer times. After I made the list, I spent another five minutes asking for things that I needed and for the needs of people in my life.

Already, I had spent twenty minutes in prayer.

Finally, I completed the other two aspects. I confessed my sins to God and forgave my offenders. Then I concluded my time with another recorded worship song and songs of praise. It was an awesome time with God. I had spent thirty minutes in prayer and felt great about it.

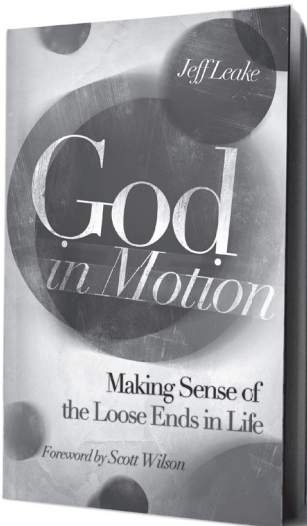
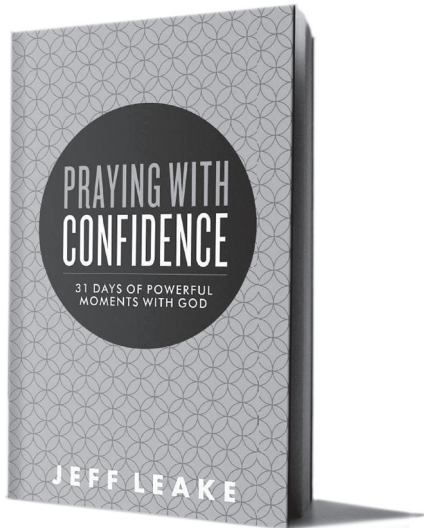
What a fantastic way to start the day!

My conscience was clean. My heart was right. My spirit was full. The atmosphere of my life was filled with peace. I felt connected to God, and I knew He was walking with me throughout the day.

My hope is that this prayer guide will help you start every day with that kind of momentum. I pray that your confidence will increase as you pray, and that the Holy Spirit will be poured out in your life in His great power.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about these and other valuable resources visit www.salubris-resources.com



In *God in Motion*, Jeff reminds us that even when God seems inactive, unaware, or indifferent, He is not. He is always in motion behind the scenes to accomplish His wonderful (if sometimes mysterious) purposes.

God in Motion contains inspiring life principles, compelling stories, specific applications, and questions to stimulate reflection and interaction. If you're puzzled about the loose ends in life . . . this book is for you!



With this practical guidance and wisdom, anyone can experience a deeper understanding of God. You will discover how to grow in your prayer life. I know you'll be inspired!"

— Brian Bolt, president, CityReach Network

Imagine a daily prayer time that's refreshing and actually makes a huge impact on events in your life. That's what Jeff shares in *Praying with Confidence*. Based on a pattern he discovered in the Lord's Prayer, Jeff explores six elements involved in prayer:

WORSHIP AGREEMENT THANKSGIVING REQUESTS CONFESSION WORSHIP

Following Jesus' advice about how to pray, each of the thirty-one days includes a new pattern to pray based on famous prayers in the Bible, combined with elements from the Lord's Prayer.

Here's how it works. As you begin your prayer time, the pattern listed for the day guides you through a devotional time with God. This provides confidence, variety, and effectiveness in your personal worship. As you practice these patterns daily, you'll be amazed at the difference they make in your prayer time and in your life!



For the past twenty-four years, Jeff Leake has served as the lead pastor of Allison Park Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He holds an MA in missiology from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary and is the author of three books: *God in Motion*; *The Question That Changed My Life*; and *Learning to Follow Jesus*. He and his wife, Melodie, have five children and reside in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

SALUBRISSM
RESOURCES

salubrisresources.com

RELIGION / Christian Life / Prayer

USD \$12.99

ISBN 978-1680670394



5 1299

9 781680 670394