

WHAT TO PRAY FOR THOSE WE

**LOVE**

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For the sake of clarity, all Scripture quotations and parenthesized Scripture references have been placed in italics.

## *Dedication*

This booklet is dedicated to our loved ones. May we pray for them more faithfully, more passionately, and more specifically.

## *Introduction*

If I were giving myself a letter grade for how effectively I've prayed for people through the years, I'm afraid I wouldn't get an A or even a B. Don't get me wrong. I've prayed for people all of my life. As a child and as a teenager, I prayed for unsaved neighbors and friends to get saved. When I was in college, I used a prayer guide that helped me to regularly pray for a lot of different people. That said, I must confess that I've not prayed as faithfully for others as I should have. Much of my praying has been focused on myself.

All of that changed for me in the spring of 2019 when my mom was diagnosed with lymphoma. I felt so helpless, so sad, so limited in what I could do for her. She was in a situation that no one in our family could fix. We couldn't make the cancer go away. As she began her chemotherapy treatments, it became obvious to me that the only thing I could do for her (other than being there and helping in any practical way possible) was to pray for her.

It was like a thought popped into my mind: "Set aside thirty minutes a day for the sole purpose of praying for your mom's healing." And so I did. I set aside thirty minutes of time, six days a week, to pray for her healing. I felt

like God had said to me, “Your Sundays are full. Don’t add anything extra to Sunday. But pray for her healing six days a week.”

I certainly wasn’t the only person who prayed for my mom. Many others prayed for her, too. And just because we prayed, that doesn’t mean she didn’t have to go through medical treatments. She received six rounds of chemotherapy at MD Anderson Hospital in Houston. Prayer is not an exemption from medical intervention. God used the chemotherapy to heal my mom, but I also firmly believe He honored our prayers.

That doesn’t mean that everyone we pray for will be healed in this lifetime. We have prayed for others who have died. Our ultimate healing will be experienced in heaven. Whether God provides an earthly healing or not is His business, not ours. We have to trust Him either way the situation goes. Our business, though, is to ask God to do what we can’t do...to provide a healing touch. Our job is to pray. Our job is to trust God with the outcome. And our job is to keep on loving Him and serving Him regardless of what happens.

After my mom was healed of lymphoma, I wondered what I should do with those thirty minutes I had devoted to praying for her six

days a week. For the first few months after she was healed, I used that time to thank God for His healing touch and also to pray for her to stay healthy. Her immune system was so weak that we had been told by doctors that an infection of any kind could be disastrous. So for me to continue praying for her to remain healthy was certainly an appropriate course of action.

As her immune system strengthened, I felt led in my spirit to continue to set aside thirty minutes a day, six days a week, for targeted and specific praying. At this point, though, I felt led to expand my prayers and to include all of my family. But how would I do this? Would I use this time to only pray for our physical health?

It seemed wise to me to broaden the scope of my prayers beyond just the realm of physical health. I certainly wanted to continue praying for that, but I also wanted to pray for other things, too. It was like God said to me: “Pray for *wholeness*. That’s what you need. And that’s what your family needs, too.” *Wholeness*. That word is the theme of my prayer time for my family, and I encourage you to make it a part of your prayers, too.

## *Praying for “Wholeness” for Our Loved Ones*

The fact that you’re reading this booklet makes it pretty clear that you want to pray more effectively for your loved ones. Sometimes, though, we don’t know exactly what to pray. In a general sense, we ask God to bless them, watch over them, protect them, lead them, guide them, and help them. These are good prayers, and we should certainly pray for these things.

In addition to these requests, though, how wonderful it would be if we asked God to make our family members *whole*...to meet the deepest and most practical needs in their lives. Many times in life we are *broken* and *needy*. We need to be made *whole*.

In John 5, we read about a man who had been crippled for thirty-eight years. Jesus healed the man. Before He did, though, He asked him an interesting question. One translation records Jesus’ words this way: “*Wilt thou be made whole?*” (*John 5:6, KJV*). Jesus was saying to this man: “Do you want to be made well? Do you want to be made whole?” That’s an unusual question to ask a man who couldn’t walk.

On one of our trips to Israel, our guide gave his interpretation of Jesus' question as we stood by the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem where this miracle took place. He said to us, "Keep in mind that for thirty-eight years this man had been dependent on others for everything. Since he couldn't *walk*, he couldn't *work*. But if Jesus healed him, he would be *able* to walk, and he would be *expected* to work. He would have responsibilities he had not had before. So Jesus was asking him if he really wanted all of that."

I never have known what I thought about what our guide said, but it is nonetheless interesting. There was some reason Jesus asked the man if he wanted to be made whole. Whatever it was that prompted the question, it doesn't change the emphasis of it. Jesus was offering this man wholeness. The word "whole" has with it the idea of being "healthy, well, true, sound."<sup>1</sup> Jesus was offering to make this man completely well, completely whole.

One of the greatest things about heaven is that when we get there we will be perfectly whole in every area of our lives. There will be no sick bodies, no diminished minds, no anxious thoughts, no lingering guilt, no broken relationships, no lonely moments. We will be whole in every way.



Obviously, we're not in heaven yet. We live in a world where we're not as whole as we will one day be. We're broken. And yet, God's desire is for us to be whole. He will complete our wholeness in heaven, but He's working on it now.

So, as I began focusing on this idea of wholeness, I started thinking about all the ways we need to be whole. I came up with seven categories. We need to be whole spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, vocationally, financially, and relationally. Then I created several bullet points under each category that more fully develop the category. When I finished that, I began using it as a guide that helps me to pray for the members of my family. I have prayed it for so many years now that it's ingrained in my mind. I've basically memorized it. My prayers for my family members vary some from day to day depending on what's going on in their lives, but the majority of what I pray stays the same. I pray for their wholeness. And as I pray for *their* wholeness, I pray for *my* wholeness, too.

At the beginning of my prayer time, I ask God to forgive me of my sins. The psalmist said, "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear*" (Psalm 66:18). I recognize that

what I need first and foremost is the daily forgiveness of my sins. So I begin there.

Then, after requesting and receiving God's forgiveness, I mention every member of my family by name. I ask God to bring them to a place of wholeness in every area of their lives. I include myself with them. I don't try to go through these seven categories for each person individually. I pray for us as a group, and I pray more specifically for different family members as needed.

Let's walk through this prayer together. I have written it out for you somewhat close to the way I actually pray it to God. Hopefully, you will be able to turn what I have written into your actual prayer. Perhaps the bullet points could become a prayer guide for you.

**1. Father, make us spiritually whole.**

- God, the most important part of our lives is the spiritual part. As I begin this prayer, I ask You to bring every member of my family (call them by name), including myself, to a place of spiritual wholeness.
- I pray there will be no sin in our lives. Sin messes everything up. It drives a wedge

between us and You. Keep us far from sin and help us to live clean lives.

- I pray there will be no doubt in our lives. Doubt clouds our thinking and depresses our spirit. Help us to trust You completely and not to doubt Your presence, Your promises, Your provision, or Your plan.
- I pray there will be no worry in our lives. Help us not to worry about anything, Father, but to trust You with everything. Worry takes the joy out of life. Help us not to be worriers. Help us to trust You instead. After all, *believers* are supposed to *believe*!
- Father, help us not to have any bitterness, grudges, or bad feelings towards anyone. Those things grieve Your Spirit. Help us to walk in love, forgiveness, and sweetness of spirit.
- Father, help us not to have any jealousy or envy in our hearts towards anyone else. Help us to rejoice over other people's blessings, even if they have things that we don't have.
- Please, God, make us spiritually whole.

## 2. Father, make us mentally whole.

- Lord, the battle is in the mind. If we *think* right, we'll *be* right. But if our thinking is messed up, we're in trouble. Please give us clear minds and help us to think true, positive, faith-filled thoughts.
- Help us, Father, to focus on You. You have promised to keep us "*in perfect peace*" if we will keep our thoughts on You (*Isaiah 26:3*). As we go through this day, help us to stay focused on You instead of on circumstances, people, or how we feel. Give us a "Christ-awareness."
- Help us to take every thought captive (*see 2 Corinthians 10:5*). When a sinful, fearful, anxious, or wrong thought comes into our minds, help us to stop that thought immediately. Help us to take control over that thought. Help us to eject that thought from our minds. Help us to replace that *wrong* thought with a *right* thought.
- Help us to respond to the devil's lies with truth. Satan is a liar. When he puts a thought in our minds, help us to respond with the truth of Your Word. Give us enough wisdom not to argue with the devil.

He can trip us up if we get into a conversation with him. Help us to quote the appropriate Scripture or to proclaim the appropriate truth and then to leave it there.

- Give us wisdom to make good decisions. Help us not to be *impulsive* on the one hand or *too slow to act* on the other hand. Give us discernment to make good decisions in a timely manner.
- Help us not to second-guess our decisions. Help us to pray and go through whatever process we need to go through to make a decision, but once the decision is made, help us not to look back and second-guess it. Make us decisive. After we make a decision, help us to move on to the next thing.
- Help us not to spend any time rationalizing when the devil puts a “what if” thought in our minds. Help us instead to focus on “what is.” Your *presence* is. Your *plan* is. Your *goodness* is. Your *promises* are. We don’t need to have hypothetical, gloomy, or worst-case-scenario types of thinking. We need to *think biblically*. Help us to do that.
- Please, God, make us mentally whole.

### **3. Father, make us emotionally whole.**

- God, You gave us our emotions. We didn't create them ourselves. But help us to control our emotions so they don't control us.
- Help us not to be lonely in any way. Why should we be lonely? We're never alone. Help us to focus on You and to enjoy Your unending presence with us. The Bible tells us that "*in Your presence is fullness of joy*" (*Psalms 16:11*).
- Help us not to be needy people. Why should we be needy? You have promised to meet *all* of our needs. Help us to be complete in You, and don't let us feel like we need anybody or anything else to make us complete. There's nothing worse than an emotionally needy person. Don't ever let us be like that.
- Help us not to be overwhelmed or stressed out in any way. Your grace is sufficient. Help us not to do too much. Help us not to accept too many invitations. Help our lives to be orderly and help our schedules to be reasonable. Give us an *inner ease* in our lives. Make life *easy* for us in our spirit.

- Help us not to have any fear about anything. Fear is not from You (*see 2 Timothy 1:7*). When we sense fear sneaking in on us, give us the wisdom to activate our faith.
- Free us from all anxiety. You don't want us to be anxious about anything. As we trust You, fill our hearts with *calmness*, *restfulness*, and *poise*. Help us not to have any panicky or claustrophobic feelings. Just make us *calm* and help us to stay that way no matter what happens.
- Please, God, make us emotionally whole.

#### **4. Father, make us physically whole.**

- God, our bodies are Your temple (*see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20*). I pray that our temples will be healthy, strong, and free from all disease.
- I pray that our bodies will be free of cancer, tumors, and all diseases. Keep our bodies “at ease” and free from all “dis-ease.”
- Give us healthy minds, healthy hearts, healthy cells, healthy organs, healthy lymph

nodes, healthy lungs, healthy eyes, healthy ears, and healthy vocal cords.

- Give us healthy blood. The life is in the blood (*see Leviticus 17:11*).
- Give us healthy veins and healthy arteries with no blockages.
- I pray for no accidents, no falls, and no illnesses.
- And Father, if one of us should get sick, I pray for a healing touch from heaven.
- Please, God, make us physically whole.

Let me add here that we live in a fallen world. Unless Jesus comes first, all of us will eventually die. These bodies won't live forever. Our ultimate healing comes when we get to heaven.

When we, as Christians, die, we will be *immediately healed* and *perfectly whole*. Sometimes God heals illnesses in this life; sometimes He doesn't. It takes *faith* to be healed, and sometimes it takes *more faith* when God chooses *not* to perform a healing miracle.



Our times are in God's hands (*see Psalm 31:15*). Our health and the outcomes of physical setbacks are up to God. We are to do our part by eating healthy, getting the proper amount of sleep and exercise, and living as balanced of a life as possible. But that's all we can do. We cannot guarantee our own good health nor can we heal ourselves if we get sick. God is our Healer (*see Exodus 15:26 and Jeremiah 30:17*). We pray for health and healing, and we trust God with the outcome.

The apostle John prayed for the health of his loved ones. He wrote these interesting words to them: "*Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers*" (3 John 2).

There is much about health and healing that I don't understand. But one thing I *do* know is this: I would rather "over-pray" than "under-pray." The Bible says, "*You do not have because you do not ask*" (James 4:2). Our job is to pray and then to trust God with the outcome. We can't control everything about our health, but we can do our part...and that includes praying. So I encourage you to pray for the physical wholeness of your loved ones and of yourself. One way or the other, God will honor that prayer.

### **5. Father, make us vocationally whole.**

In the Book of Genesis, we read that Adam worked in the garden of Eden (*see Genesis 2:15*). God wants us to work, too. The Bible says, “*If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat*” (*2 Thessalonians 3:10*).

God created work, and so we should ask Him to open the right doors for us to work. Work is a *good* thing, not a *bad* thing. Adam worked *before* sin entered the world. Work wasn’t his punishment. Work was for his own well-being. The same is true for us.

- God, thank You for the work opportunities that we have, and I ask You to always give us good jobs, good salaries, and good benefits.
- Help us to view our jobs as opportunities to serve You and help us to do our work “*heartily*” as unto You (*Colossians 3:23*).
- Plant us, Father, in our callings, in our careers, in our churches, and in our communities. Protect us from anyone or anything that would threaten what You intend for us to do with our lives.

- If it could be Your will, Father, I pray that we would be gainfully employed all the days of our lives.
- Help us to honor You in our work.
- Please, God, make us vocationally whole.

## **6. Father, make us financially whole.**

- Everything we have comes from You, Lord.
- I thank You for our financial and material possessions. Thank You for the money You have given us. Thank You for the houses we live in and for the cars we drive. Thank You for the clothes we have to wear and for the food we have to eat.
- As I look to the future, I ask that You would always give us what we need. You are our Father. I ask You, and I trust You, to always provide for us. I know that You will.
- Please always give us the money we need. Give us houses to live in and cars to drive. Give us clothes to wear and food to eat. Give us all the material blessings that we need and that You want us to have. I pray,

Father, that all of these things will always be paid for.

- Help us to honor You with our finances. Help us to always tithe and to give above the tithe.
- Help us to be good stewards of our blessings and help us to be generous towards others.
- Please, God, make us financially whole.

**7. *Father, make us relationally whole.***

- God, life is all about relationships. Help us to experience wholeness in all of our relationships.
- Relational wholeness begins with our relationship with You. I pray that You would be more real to us than anybody in our lives.
- I pray that Your presence in our lives in the precious Person of the Holy Spirit would be more real to us than if we had You with us in the flesh (*see John 16:7*).

- I pray that we will always experience unbroken fellowship with You and with each other as a family. I pray for no family strife.
- Thank You for all the friends You have placed in our lives through the years, and I ask You to always fill our lives with good friends. Help us to be good friends to them as well.
- As far as the future goes, may Your will be done in every aspect of our relationships. Bring the right people *into* our lives and keep the wrong people *out* of our lives.
- May our relationships with others always honor You.
- Please, God, make us relationally whole.

### *Father, Make Us Whole Because of Your Character*

As we pray for wholeness, we need to remember that we are praying for wholeness not because we deserve it, but because of who God is.

- Father, as I pray for wholeness for each of us, I ask You to bring us to a place of wholeness in all of these areas based on who You are.
- You are our Healer. That's who You are. You tell us in the Scriptures, "*For I am the LORD who heals you*" (*Exodus 15:26*). As our Healer, it is Your desire that we be whole.
- You are also the Completer. You don't do anything halfway. You didn't heal the blind man halfway, and You won't heal us halfway either. Bring us to a place of wholeness, even when we require a second touch (*see Mark 8:22-26*).
- You are the Restorer. You tell us in Your Word that You "*restore...the years that the swarming locust has eaten*" (*Joel 2:25*). Father, please restore the things we have lost along the way of life and restore the years we have lost, too...in both *quality* and *quantity*.
- Please, God, make us whole in every area of our lives because of Your character as *Healer, Completer, and Restorer*.

## *Father, Make Us Whole Because of Jesus' Righteousness and His Blood*

- Our righteousness is like “*filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6), and our “*goodness is nothing apart from You*” (Psalm 16:2).
- I’m asking You to bring us to a place of wholeness because of the *perfect righteousness* and the *precious blood* of Your Son, Jesus. It is on the basis of *His worthiness*, *His righteousness*, and *His blood* that I make these requests.
- From Your perspective, we are already *healed* and *whole* because of Jesus. Your Word tells us that “*by His stripes we are healed*” (Isaiah 53:5). You are able to see what we will one day be, not just what we are right now.
- We know that on the cross Jesus not only bore our sins but also that “*He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses*” (Matthew 8:17).
- He has made it possible, through His blood, for us to be *completely healed* and *perfectly whole* in every area of our lives.

- I pray for a sprinkling of the blood of Jesus to be on every aspect of our lives...spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, vocationally, financially, and relationally.
- I pray especially for His blood to be upon our minds, our bodies, our homes, and our cars.
- May His blood literally flow through our veins.
- Please, God, make us whole for Your honor and glory.

Let me say here that there is something about praying on the basis of the *righteousness* and the *blood* of Jesus that gives us confidence as we pray. We know we are approaching God in the right way (through the blood of Jesus) and for the right reason (for His honor and glory).

The blood of Jesus is precious to God, and it should be precious to us as well. It's certainly precious to me.

The blood of Jesus is the only thing that gives us access into the very *presence* and



*power of God. The Bible says, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh” (Hebrews 10:19-20).*

When we pray on the authority of the blood of Jesus, we are praying the way God intends for us to pray. There is *power* in the blood. Through the blood of Jesus, we overcome Satan himself (*see Revelation 12:11*). Satan trembles when a child of God approaches heaven’s throne on the authority of the precious blood of Jesus.

Christ’s blood is the key to our wholeness. He died so that we could be whole in every way.

## *Praying for Our Nation*

As important as it is to pray for our family members and other loved ones, it’s also important that we pray for our nation. America is at a crossroads. There are forces at work that seek to lead us away from God and the Bible and into a darkness that would destroy our nation.

The Bible says, “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD*” (Psalm 33:12). So what would that imply about a nation who has chosen to reject God? It seems pretty obvious to me. It would imply that the nation that rejects God isn’t blessed. Instead, it would be cursed. We don’t want to live in a *cursed* nation; we want to live in a *blessed* nation. But the only way for that to happen is if we seek to follow and honor the Lord and His teachings as revealed in the Bible. That statement may not be *politically correct*, but it is *biblically true*.

So what are Christians supposed to do when we see things happening in the nation that dishonor the Lord? Well, it seems to me that we should do the same thing we do when we dishonor the Lord in our own lives. We should pray and ask for forgiveness. We should plead with God for mercy and grace.

There’s an interesting passage in the Old Testament that lets us know how important it is to God for us to pray for our nation. Consider these words from God Himself: “*So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one*” (Ezekiel 22:30). God was looking for an intercessor. He was looking for a prayer warrior. He was looking for someone who

would pray for the people of the land. Sadly, though, He found no one.

As I think about the condition of our country today, I wonder how many intercessors God sees on a daily basis calling out to Him for forgiveness, mercy, and grace. As Bible-believing Christians, we're often quick to point out all the sins in America, but is anyone really praying for forgiveness and for revival? Is anyone asking God to restrain His hand of *judgment* and *wrath* and to extend His hand of *mercy* and *grace*?

And, as we ask God to forgive the sins of our country, is anyone beginning that prayer by asking God to forgive them of their own sins? Let's face it. It's easier to confess the sins of the nation than it is to confess our own sins. To me, though, that seems to be part of the problem. We're asking God to forgive *national sins* without first asking Him to forgive *personal sins*. To be totally honest, it seems hypocritical to me. Jesus Himself said: "*Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye*" (Matthew 7:5). Certainly we should ask God to forgive us for all the ways we have ignored Him, disobeyed Him, and drifted from Him as a nation. But before we do that, we should ask Him to forgive us for

all the ways we have ignored Him, disobeyed Him, and drifted from Him in our own lives. That's why the Bible says: "*For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God*" (1 Peter 4:17). We must begin by asking God for mercy in our own lives. We can then ask God to be merciful to our nation.

Without such prayer for mercy being offered in Israel, judgment fell on the nation. Since God found no prayer warrior, no intercessor, no one to stand in the gap for His people, listen to these somber words from God: "*Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads*" (Ezekiel 22:31). In the absence of a prayer warrior, the judgment of God fell on Israel. I fear the same thing could happen in America. We may be getting dangerously close to that.

God is looking for someone to get on their knees and pray for our country today. But He's looking for someone genuine, someone humble, someone honest. He's looking for someone who has an awareness of their own sins.

The classic biblical passage on the subject of revival is found in the book of 2 Chronicles.

Listen to what God said: “*If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land*” (2 *Chronicles* 7:14).

Notice that God has promised to heal our land if *we*, as *His people*, will humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways. What is God saying? He’s saying that revival is not dependent upon the next election. It’s not dependent upon what’s happening in the *country*; it’s dependent upon what’s happening in the *church*. It’s dependent upon what’s happening with His people. Hallelujah! This is something we can control.

Even in the days when God was going to destroy the wicked city of Sodom in Old Testament times, He told Abraham that if He found as few as *ten righteous people* in Sodom that He would spare the city (*see Genesis 18:32*). Think about that. If God could only have found ten righteous people in Sodom, the city would have been saved. Sadly, though, there weren’t ten righteous people in Sodom, and as a result of that, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (*see Genesis 19:24-25*). Those cities were destroyed, though, not just because of the *presence* of so much *sin*, but

also because of the *absence* of a few *righteous people*.

Many Christians today are in a state of total despair over our country. Some have even gone so far as to say that we're living in a "post-Christian America." How hopeless and sad is that? I would be the first to say that our country is swiftly moving in the wrong direction. We're drifting away from God, the Bible, and the church. But to say that America is a "post-Christian nation" is to say that it's all over here in the states. And to say that is a mistake. It doesn't have to be over. There's always the possibility of *repentance* and *revival*. I would say we're currently living in a "backslidden America." But when a person is backslidden, he can always "come back" to God. That's what needs to happen in America, and it needs to begin in those of us who already know the Lord. We need to come back to God in renewed devotion, commitment, and passion for Him, for His Word, and for His church.

So what should Christians do today to help our land? Well, in addition to praying for forgiveness, mercy, and grace, we should thank God for His blessings on America. He has been merciful, patient, and gracious to our nation, even in times when we have been most undeserving. Just like God loves thankful

Christians, Dr. R.T. Kendall has reminded us that “God loves a grateful nation,” too.<sup>2</sup>

One of the greatest needs we have as a nation is for faithful Christian preachers and lay people to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and to teach the Word of God. How can people be expected to live according to God’s Word if they don’t know what it says? We must preach, though, as we pray...with humility, honesty, and love. We are *forgiven sinners* (who sometimes still sin) telling *other sinners* how to find forgiveness in Jesus Christ. We must preach “*the truth in love*” (*Ephesians 4:15*). Our message should be *bold* and *authoritative* because of the reliability of God’s Word, but it should also come from *grateful hearts* that still can’t get over the fact that God has *forgiven* and *saved* us.

Another thing we should do is to vote for candidates whose *lives* and *policies* best reflect the teachings found in the Bible. No one’s life or policies will be perfect. But we should vote for leaders who are at least *trying* to honor the Lord both *personally* and *politically*. How can we support anyone who habitually goes against the clear teachings of Scripture with no regret, no remorse, and no repentance? Again, no one’s life or policies will be perfect, but we need leaders who are *trying* to honor God.

Some people who are reading these words may need to actually run for political office themselves. Perhaps God is leading you to do just that. We need godly, honest, reasonable people in office who seek to live lives of integrity. We need lawmakers who will put laws into place that honor God and that honor His timeless *moral laws* as recorded in Scripture. We *need* that, and perhaps God is leading you to *do* that.

One of my closest friends called me recently to say he's running for State Representative. I couldn't have been happier. I hope he wins. If I lived in his district, I would vote for him. I've known him since our middle school days. He loves God. He's a man of integrity. He's just the kind of person who could be a beacon of light in a dark world.

I must offer a word of caution here, though. I think we sometimes get the idea that the answers to our national problems will be found by getting the right candidates elected who can get the right laws passed. While we certainly need lawmakers and laws that honor God, let me say this as plainly as I know how: *Revival will not come to this nation just because we have the right laws on the books; revival will come to this nation when we have right hearts before the Lord.*



I can prove that to you. Which nation in the history of the world had the best laws on the books? It wasn't America. It was Israel. The nation of Israel had 613 laws on their books (recorded in the first five books of the Bible) that were given to them by God Himself. Think about that for a moment. They had laws that God had *personally* given to them. These were the best laws imaginable for the nation of Israel at that time. And yet, the people's hearts weren't right. As a result, they came under the judgment of God. Their country was ravaged by other nations, and they were carried away into captivity. Their *laws* were *right*, but their *hearts* were *wrong*.

So what am I saying? I'm saying we need good leaders. We need good laws. But we don't need to put all of our eggs in the basket of our leaders and laws. We need to put our eggs in *God's basket* and make sure we're living our lives in a way that honors Him.

What does the Lord require of us? The Old Testament prophet, Micah, asked and answered that question. Listen to his words: "*He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?*" (Micah 6:8).

Part of doing the right thing, part of being merciful to people, and part of walking humbly with God involves praying for our nation, for our leaders, and for our fellow citizens. We are commanded in Scripture to do just that. Consider these words: *“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior” (1 Timothy 2:1-3).*

I have a mental list of national, state, and local political leaders whom I try to pray for by name six days a week. Some of them I voted for; some of them I didn't. Some of them I agree with; some of them I don't. But, when it comes to prayer, that's not even the issue. They are in positions of authority, and God tells us to pray for them.

Below is a suggested guide to pray for our nation, our leaders, and our fellow Americans. Remember, we begin by praying for ourselves. We have to be *humble* before the Lord.

- Father, forgive me of my sins and help me to live a life that honors You.

- Father, forgive us as a nation for disregarding Your laws and drifting away from You. I pray for a fresh moving of Your Spirit that would draw us back to You. Send a great revival.
- Father, create an awareness of Yourself in our country. Give us a “God-consciousness.”
- Father, thank You for Your blessings on America for all these years. Your hand has obviously been on our nation. Please don’t give up on us, God.
- Father, give our political leaders the *wisdom* to know right and the *courage* to do it. Give us leaders who know You personally and who desire to honor You.
- Father, raise up faithful Christian preachers and lay people who will communicate the truth of Your Word with *boldness* and *courage* and yet with *tenderness* and *love*.
- Father, help our nation to be united around the Person of Jesus Christ instead of being divided by other things. Give us a new perspective and a new focus.

- Father, I pray for a fresh outpouring of Your Spirit upon our country.
- Father, fill the churches of America up again. Fill the churches with people. And fill the people with the Holy Spirit.
- Father, do something so amazing in our country that everyone will know it is a fresh touch from heaven.
- Father, please save millions of people.
- Father, minimize human personalities so that You will get all the glory.

Will our nation experience the revival we so desperately need, or will we be destroyed from within? Only God knows the answer to that question. But He has called us to pray, to be salt and light in the places where we live (*see Matthew 5:13-16*), and to obey Him with all of our hearts.

We should live with *faith*, *hope*, and *optimism*, not with *gloom*, *hopelessness*, and *despair*. God is still on His throne, and because of that, no situation on earth is ever truly hopeless. Revival is *always* possible!

Our nation is, in many ways, broken. We pray, though, for God to do for America what we are asking Him to do in our own lives. We pray for God to make our nation *whole* in every way...spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, vocationally, financially, and relationally.

### *Sitting Quietly Before the Lord*

There are times when we've said to God all that we know to say. We're out of words. We don't know what else to pray. We've prayed for ourselves, our loved ones, and our nation, and yet our hearts are still burdened. In times like that, I find it helpful to just sit before the Lord in total silence.

The Bible says that "*King David went in and sat before the Lord*" (2 Samuel 7:18). I love that verse. When David sat before the Lord on this occasion, he said some things. He offered some prayers. Sometimes, though, we just need to sit before the Lord and say nothing.

The Bible says, "*The LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him*" (Habakkuk 2:20). When was the last time you just sat in God's presence for thirty

minutes or so and said absolutely nothing? You just sat there and focused on His presence.

I've done that before. Several years ago, I got so overwhelmed with my work and ministry responsibilities that I couldn't relax. I couldn't slow my mind down. I had over-extended myself, and I was paying the price for it. I tried everything I could think of to relax and just "feel like myself." I would watch a funny show on television or a ballgame I was interested in. I went to the gym a lot and had some good workouts. Those things helped some. We need diversions. But it wasn't until I began to spend thirty minutes a day just sitting silently in God's presence that I began to really relax. I did that on and off for several months. There is peace in the presence of the Lord. Sit quietly before Him if you need to relax.

You might also want to sit before the Lord if you need a word from Him. So much of our praying is filled with our own words. There's a place for that, but there's also a place for just listening. God said, "*Oh, that My people would listen to Me*" (*Psalm 81:13*). We listen to God, of course, by reading His Word, the Bible. But we also listen by just being silent in His presence to see if He has anything He wants to say. I have noticed that if I will take the time to *listen* that God will indeed *speak*. He might not

Speak during that exact time, but He will honor the fact that I took the time to listen, and He will eventually speak.

And, as I mentioned, you might also want to consider sitting silently before the Lord if you have prayed all you know to pray about a person, a problem, or a situation. Just sit before the Lord and say, “Father, I don’t know what else to say. I just give You this situation, and I completely put it into Your hands. I trust You with it.” After saying that, just sit in the Lord’s presence in total silence for several minutes. In those moments, as you sit silently before the Lord, you are on holy ground. Jesus is praying for you. The Scripture tells us that “*He always lives to make intercession*” for us (*Hebrews 7:25*). Additionally, the Holy Spirit is taking that prayer and offering it up to the Father on your behalf. The Bible says, “*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*” (*Romans 8:26*). In those silent moments, all three members of the Holy Trinity are involved in your situation. You are literally praying to the Father, *through* the Son, *in the power* of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes the wisest thing you can do is to just sit before the Lord and say nothing. Just be quiet in His presence. Your spirit will become peaceful. Your mind will slow down. You will relax. Your burden will be lifted. And your Heavenly Father will speak to your heart in the most personal of ways.

### *Where Wholeness Begins*

There is something about *wholeness* that is encouraging to me. The thought of being *complete* and *whole* in every area of life is indeed a comforting and uplifting thought.

While the process of experiencing wholeness takes time, the first step to becoming whole is to be in a right relationship with God the Father. One of my favorite pastors, Charles Stanley, said it this way: “Wholeness comes only by way of a restored relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

You can’t be truly whole without first being right with God. And you can’t be right with God without first accepting His Son, Jesus Christ, as your personal Savior and Lord.

Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins. He shed His blood to wash your sins



away. The Bible says that “*the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Romans 6:23).

Jesus died. He was buried. But praise God, He rose from the dead three days later. Forty days after the resurrection, He returned to heaven. That’s where He is right now. But one day, He’s coming back to earth. He will rule and reign on earth. He will bring *peace* and *wholeness* to a place that is currently *broken* and *searching desperately* for peace.

Peace, though, *true peace*, can only be found in Jesus Christ, the “*Prince of Peace*” (Isaiah 9:6). The Bible says that “*He Himself is our peace*” (Ephesians 2:14). We will never experience genuine, lasting peace apart from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

So how can we begin a relationship with Jesus thus allowing us to experience this peace? First, we must repent of our sins. That means we have to confess our sins to God and ask Him to forgive and cleanse us. Then, we have to go in a different direction. The Bible says, “*He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy*” (Proverbs 28:13). To repent is to turn around and go in a different direction.

The second thing we must do in order to receive Christ is to trust Him and Him alone to save us. We invite Him to come into our lives and then we trust Him to save us.

The only way to experience *genuine salvation* and to enjoy *lasting peace* is through *repentance* and *faith*. This is the message of Jesus. He said it this way: “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel*” (Mark 1:15).

If you would be willing to confess your sins, turn away from your sins, and receive Jesus by faith, I would love to help you do that. Below is a prayer. We call it, “The Sinner’s Prayer.” God has promised to answer the prayer of every repentant and faith-filled heart. The Bible says, “*For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved’*” (Romans 10:13). Just pray this prayer now, from your heart to the heart of God:

“*Dear Jesus,*

*I’m broken, and I need to be made whole. I’ve tried to mend myself, but it hasn’t worked. I need You to make me whole.*

*I believe You died on the cross to pay for my sins and that You rose from*

*the dead three days later. I ask You to forgive me, save me, and change me. Come into my heart and make me a true Christian. I ask You to save me, and I trust You to do it.*

*Welcome to my heart, Jesus. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be.*

*In Your Name I Pray,  
Amen.”*

Friend, if you prayed that prayer, welcome to the family of God! God just saved you, and you can never lose your salvation. Jesus described salvation as “*everlasting life*” (John 3:16). You can’t lose something that’s everlasting! By definition, “*everlasting life*” never ends.

Now, you need to *grow* as a Christian. You are a part of God’s family, you have been born again, but there is still much spiritual growth that needs to take place. Just like babies have to grow, so do “baby Christians.” In fact, we will be growing spiritually for the rest of our lives. We are *all* works in progress. There are still areas in your life (and mine) that need some work.

Your next step is to get connected to a good Bible-believing church. Make your decision for Christ public. Follow the Lord in baptism. Begin to read your Bible and pray each day. And let God make you *whole* in every area of your life...spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, vocationally, financially, and relationally. That is my prayer for you.

The Christian life is a wonderful adventure. There are *ups* and *downs* to be sure. But God has promised to be with you every moment of every day. And with Him *by your side* and *in your heart*, the best is yet to be. Wholeness awaits you!

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- <sup>1</sup> *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible-Key Insights Into God's Word*, Spiros Zodhiates-Executive Editor, King James Version, AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, 2008, p. 2262.
- <sup>2</sup> R.T. Kendall, *By Love Transformed*, Charisma House, Lake Mary, FL, 2006, p. 220.
- <sup>3</sup> Charles F. Stanley, "In Search of Wholeness," *In Touch Magazine*, vol. 6 no. 1, January /February 2020, p. 2.

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## *Booklets by Jon Redmond*

- \*How to be a Happy Christian*
- \*Riding Out the Storms of Life*
- \*Finding Freedom Through Forgiveness*
- \*Never Alone*
- \*How to Make Heaven Your Home*
- \*How to Make Heaven Your Home (Spanish)*
- \*When God Says, "Wait"*
- \*How to Have a Peaceful Heart*
- \*In the Twinkling of an Eye*
- \*Angels Among Us*
- \*What Happens at the Moment of Death?*
- \*Discovering God's Will*
- \*The Lord Is My Shepherd*
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- \*On Eagles' Wings*
- \*Living on the Edge of Eternity*
- \*The Problem With Procrastination*
- \*The Lord's Prayer*
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- \*When Life Gets Interrupted*
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  - \*Understanding the Bible (Its Message, Manuscripts, Composition, and Greatest Translations)*
  - \*Hiding His Word in Our Hearts (A 31 Day Devotional of Bible Verses)*
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