

Rueben P. Job

When You Pray

Daily Practices for Prayerful Living

Revised Edition



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Week 1

Looking Forward

Approaching God with Intention

Holy God
of unconditional love
and unlimited presence,
I come to make myself fully available
to you, your will, and your way.



Sit in silence and stillness for a few moments, lengthening the time each day as you are able.

Becoming Aware of God's Presence

Tell me all about your faithful love come morning time,
because I trust you. (Psalm 143:8a)

Inviting God's Intervention

Show me the way I should go,
because I offer my life up to you. (Psalm 143:8b)

Listening for God's Voice

Open yourself to hear what God is saying to you through the Scriptures.

This is what Isaiah, Amoz's son, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In the days to come
the mountain of the LORD's house
will be the highest of the mountains.
It will be lifted above the hills;
peoples will stream to it.
Many nations will go and say,
"Come, let's go up to the LORD's mountain,
to the house of Jacob's God
so that he may teach us his ways
and we may walk in God's paths."
Instruction will come from Zion;
the LORD's word from Jerusalem.
God will judge between the nations,
and settle disputes of mighty nations.
Then they will beat their swords into
iron plows
and their spears into pruning tools.
Nation will not take up sword against nation;
they will no longer learn how to
make war.

Come, house of Jacob,
let's walk by the LORD's light.
(Isaiah 2:1-5)

Alternative Readings

Luke 21:25-36
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Isaiah 1:10-20
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Luke 21:5-19

Practicing Spiritual Reading

As you read the essay and one or more quotations each day, do so with an openness for further contemplation on the week's theme. Ask God, Is there a word or prayer for my life in these words?

Ineffable moments are rare for most of us. The testimony of the saints confirms our own experience. While our hunger for God is universal and has been identified from the time of Adam and Eve to be our own, those peak moments of communion or union with God

are extremely rare. They are there, perhaps to lure us or to reassure us, but they are not there on command or with predictable regularity. For the saints who have gone before and for us, much of life is lived out on the level plains. The plains of daily existence may be marked with deep awareness on the presence of One who is near and who sustains us, or the quiet companionship of One who guides and upholds, but there is awareness of a relationship that is life-giving. (Job, *A Guide to Retreat*, 19.)



Perhaps the most startling thought that can inhabit the human imagination is that a man or a woman, earthbound and stuttering, can speak meaningfully of God. (Ben Campbell Johnson, *GodSpeech: Putting Divine Disclosures into Human Words*, 30.)

Today the heart of God is an open wound of love. He aches over our distance and preoccupation. He mourns that we do not draw near to him. He grieves that we have forgotten him. He weeps over our obsession with muchness and manyness. He longs for our presence. (Richard J. Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, 1.)

In prayer we say who in fact we are—not who we should be, nor who we wish we were, but who we are. All prayer begins with this confession. (Ann and Barry Ulanov, *Primary Speech: A Psychology of Prayer*, 1.)

We are like children being taught a job by a loving parent who teaches by allowing us to help with the job. And what is such guidance to a child by a loving parent worth unless there is an eager, but docile, response on the part of the child? The whole value of an interior life depends on this: that no bit of it ever is done alone because we think we know how, but always in response to the gentle guidance and teaching of God. (Evelyn Underhill, *The Ways of the Spirit*, 179.)

Living in the presence of and in harmony with the living God who is made known to us in Jesus Christ and companions us in the Holy Spirit is to live life from the inside out. It is to find our moral direction, our wisdom, our courage, our strength to live faithfully from the One who authored us. (Rueben P. Job, *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living*, 54.)

Taking Time to Reflect



Pause and recall what you have read and heard, as well as your own life experiences. Take note of anything that particularly catches your attention—perhaps a word, phrase, or image.

Making Our Requests Known

Focus your prayers more specifically on particular things, persons, or circumstances. The following petitions offer guidance:

Prayers for God's Creation and Our World
Prayers for All God's People
Prayers for the Church and All Who Seek God
Prayers for Our Neighbors
Prayers for Our Families and Friends
Prayers for Ourselves

Thanking God for Our Prayers and Life

Loving God,
Remind me often today where I find my identity.
May I never forget that I am your beloved child.
May I listen for and hear your faintest whisper,
Feel your slightest touch,
Respond quickly to your call,
Yield to your word of correction,
Rejoice in your companionship,
And serve you faithfully all the days of my life.

Thank you for hearing my prayers
And accepting my life.
I offer them to you as completely as I can
In the Name and Spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer at the End of the Day

Inviting God's Activity

Tender Shepherd of my soul, make yourself and your way known to me in this evening time of prayer and reflection. By the power of your presence, bring me to the end of the day whole, complete, and at peace with you, my neighbor, and myself. Grant a night of peaceful rest and send me forth tomorrow as a witness to your love and grace.

A Continuing Request

Create a clean heart for me, God;
put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me! (Psalm 51:10)

Gathering the Day

Remembering—Reflect on the day's experiences.

Confessing—Own up to your own weakness, failure, and sin.

Forgiving—Ask for and accept God's forgiveness, and forgive yourself and all who may have injured you or those you love.

Thanksgiving—Give thanks for the gifts that God has granted this day.

Offering

My whole being clings to you;
your strong hand upholds me. (Psalm 63:8)

Blessing

I will lie down and fall asleep in peace
because you alone, LORD, let me live in safety. (Psalm 4:8)

Explore the daily practices of living a prayerful life.

Prayer is a vital part of the Christian's life. Bishop Rueben P. Job's *When You Pray* has helped thousands of people deepen their life of prayer through a daily rhythm of silence, Scripture, spiritual reading, and offering of one's self to God. This new edition includes readings from the original *When You Pray* and Bishop Job's other writings, quotations from some of his favorite authors, and a new evening prayer inviting reflection on the day. Pray daily through the 52 weeks of prayers by theme, or follow the church year using a simple lectionary guide. May these daily practices lead you to a life shaped by prayer.

"Rueben demonstrated in an amazing and convincing way through 86 years among us that we can trust God. We can choose to love God and grow in grace. Rueben is still teaching all of us how to love God and live abundantly."

– **Neil M. Alexander**, President and Publisher Emeritus, The United Methodist Publishing House

Rueben P. Job was a United Methodist pastor and bishop, a best-selling author, and a leader in spiritual formation. His books include the best-selling Guide to Prayer series, *Three Simple Rules*, *A Wesleyan Spiritual Reader*, and many more.

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