

“For freshness of utterance, breadth of comprehension, elevation of thought, and intimacy of heart, there is no prayer like that which forms itself in the words and thoughts of Scripture.” Graham Miller

“Nothing has brought more vigor, satisfaction, and consistency to my own prayers as this single discipline.” T.M. Moore

PROBLEM

- One big reason so many feel incompetent in their prayer is that they *“tend to say the same old things about the same old things.”*
 - Add to this the temptation to be overly repetitive or struggle with a wandering mind.
- Mostly, prayer for so many is simply boring. And when prayer is boring, even five minutes can feel too long. We might wonder, “If this is boring for me, how must this feel to God?”

Matthew 6:7–13: And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

- Prayers without variety or real-life context gradually become words without any meaning.
- We actually deny this teaching by making “The Lord’s Prayer” a repeated empty phrase, which is what Christ leads us away from in this same passage.
- “The problem is not that we pray about the same old things; rather, it’s that we say the same old things about the same old things.”²

SOLUTION

- We read the Bible (even out loud) and stop frequently to re-voice some of the scripture in our own words in the form of a prayer - whatever comes to our mind.
 - Simply pray *through* a passage of Scripture, particularly a Psalm.
 - Even if the prayer that evolves has nothing to do with the text. Trust what the Spirit is doing in that moment.
- This isn’t reading something into a text but using the language of the text and the prompting of the Holy Spirit to speak to God about something that has come to your mind.

“Open the Bible, start reading it, and pause at every verse and turn it into a prayer.” - John Piper

¹Donald Whitney, Praying the Bible (Crossway, 2015) page 11

² Ibid, page 20

- The Psalms have proven to be the easiest book to pray through. “By praying the Psalms back to God, we learn to pray in tune with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” - Ben Patterson.
 - One effective way to do this is to take whatever day of the month it is, and add 30 repeatedly until you get five Psalms to choose from. (ex: the 19th would generate Psalms 19, 49, 79, 109, and 139).

“As you pray a Psalm, think about the pathway from the Psalm to you through the mediation of Christ.” - Graeme Goldsworthy

- The Psalms are also a great start because they contain tremendous theology and have even been called the “small Bible” as they express all of God’s characteristics, the gospel, and vent the full range of human emotion.
- All passages can be prayed, not just the Psalms - but starting and practicing the Psalms have repeatedly shown by many to be the most effective because they were built to be prayed.