



# “When Prayer Is a Struggle”

by Kevin P. Halloran

Bethlehem Baptist Church  
Adult Vacation Bible School

07/20/2026

Facilitator: Deacon Sidney Locks



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# **Introduction**

The Struggle Is Real . . . and Good

# Baseline Understanding

- What is Prayer? (biblical and personal definition)
  - How do you define a “Struggle”?
  - Can a struggle be perceived as “GOOD”? If so, Why and How?
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# Why Do We Struggle to Pray?

- The struggle to pray is real — every believer experiences ups and downs in pursuing God through prayer
  - The struggle is actually good — we don't struggle to do what we want to avoid; the desire to pray proves God is at work in us
  - Sin separated humanity from God (Genesis 3:8, Isaiah 59:2), yet through Christ we have been given direct access to the Father
  - A life of faithful, fruitful, and joyful prayer is within the grasp of every Christian
  - Halloran uses a head-heart-hands approach: gospel truths (head), heart diagnosis (heart), and practical steps (hands)
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# Chapter 1

I Forget Why Prayer Matters

# Chapter 1: Key Points to Remember

- Through redemption in Christ, we have a direct line to heaven — God never sends His children to voicemail
  - Yet we forget to pray and forget why prayer matters; we look for satisfaction in other places
  - Like William Randolph Hearst searching for art he already owned, we forget the riches of the gospel we already have in Christ
  - When we don't have clarity about why we pray, the what (content) and how (manner) of our prayers will suffer
  - The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13) is a foundational guide for understanding why prayer matters
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# The Lord's Prayer from God's Perspective

- Our Father in Heaven – Relationship and Submission
  - Hallowed be Your Name: Holy and Exaltation
  - Your Kingdom Come: Humbly requesting God's rule on earth
  - Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven: Acknowledge God's will is what's best
  - Give Us this day Our Daily Bread: Ask for what You Need
  - Forgive Us of our debts, as We forgive Our Debtors: Forgiven People, Forgive.....
  - Lead Us not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from evil: Help Me Internally and Externally
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## **Chapter 2**

I Don't Know What to Pray



## Chapter 2: Key Points to Remember

- Many believers don't know what to pray, or they pray the same thing repeatedly and stop due to monotony
  - Some reasons are intellectual — we don't know how to pray in a specific situation; others are volitional — our hearts are distracted
  - The Lord's Prayer gives us a Spirit-inspired path for knowing what to say in prayer
  - General approach: Use its petitions as a template and fill them with specific praises and requests
  - Specific approach: Filter one person or situation through each petition of the Lord's Prayer
  - Martin Luther recommended this technique in his book *A Simple Way to Pray* — take each petition and meditate on it
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# Using the Lord's Prayer as Your Guide

## Glorify

"Hallowed be your  
name"

Praise God for who He is  
— His holiness,  
faithfulness, and love

## Align

"Your kingdom come,  
your will be done"  
Submit your desires  
to God's greater  
purposes

## Ask

"Give us . . . forgive us  
. . . deliver us"  
Bring your needs for  
provision, pardon,  
and protection

- Pray through each petition slowly, personalizing it for your life and circumstances
  - Use the Lord's Prayer to pray for specific people, filtering each person through its petitions
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# Key Takeaways

1

Struggling in prayer is a sign of spiritual life, not spiritual failure — we don't struggle to do what we want to avoid

2

We must remember why we pray to stay motivated — prayer is fellowship with our Father, not a duty to check off

3

The Lord's Prayer is a versatile, Spirit-inspired tool for overcoming common prayer struggles

4

Prayer involves glorifying God, aligning with His will, and asking for provision, pardon, and protection

5

When we don't know what to pray, the Lord's Prayer gives us a clear path — use it as a template or filter

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# **Key Scripture References**

# Key Scripture References

**Matthew 6:9–13**

The Lord's Prayer — Jesus' model for how and why to pray

**Genesis 3:8, 22–24**

Sin severed communion between God and humanity

**Isaiah 59:2**

“Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God”

**Romans 3:10–11**

“None is righteous . . . no one seeks for God”

**1 Peter 4:7**

“Be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers”

**Colossians 4:2**

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it”

**Proverbs 15:8**

“The prayer of the upright is acceptable to Him”

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# Reflection Questions

# Reflection Questions

- Do you ever functionally forget why prayer matters? Do your actions show that you forget about prayer? Why does that happen?
  - Are you ever tempted to view God as a boss, an ATM, or an impersonal force? How should viewing God as Father change your perspective?
  - Which of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer is easiest for you to pray? Which is the hardest? Why?
  - How does it impact you to know that God invites you to pray for provision, pardon, and protection?
  - When you don't know what to pray, what do you typically do? How could the Lord's Prayer help in those moments?
  - What is one practical step you can take this week to use the Lord's Prayer as a guide for your prayer life?
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## A Thought to Remember

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*“I pray because I crave fellowship with my Father. I pray because it shrinks me, my problems, and other people to their proper size. I pray because it’s the best way to get the gospel deep into my heart.”*

— Jack Miller

*The struggle to pray is good — it proves we desire communion with God.*





## Closing Prayer

*Heavenly Father, we come before You acknowledging that we struggle to pray.  
Forgive us for the times we have forgotten why prayer matters and for the  
moments we have not known what to say.*

*Thank You that our struggle is evidence of the desire You've placed within us. Teach  
us to pray as Jesus taught His disciples. Help us to glorify Your name, to align our  
hearts with Your kingdom, and to bring our needs for provision, pardon, and  
protection before Your throne.*

*May the Lord's Prayer be a lamp to our feet when we don't know what to say.  
Deepen our fellowship with You and make us a people who pray with faith,  
persistence, and joy. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

# WHEN PRAYER IS A STRUGGLE

*"I Feel Too Guilty to Pray" & "I'm Not Sure God Hears Me"*

Based on Chapters 3 & 4



# THE CALL TO LEARN

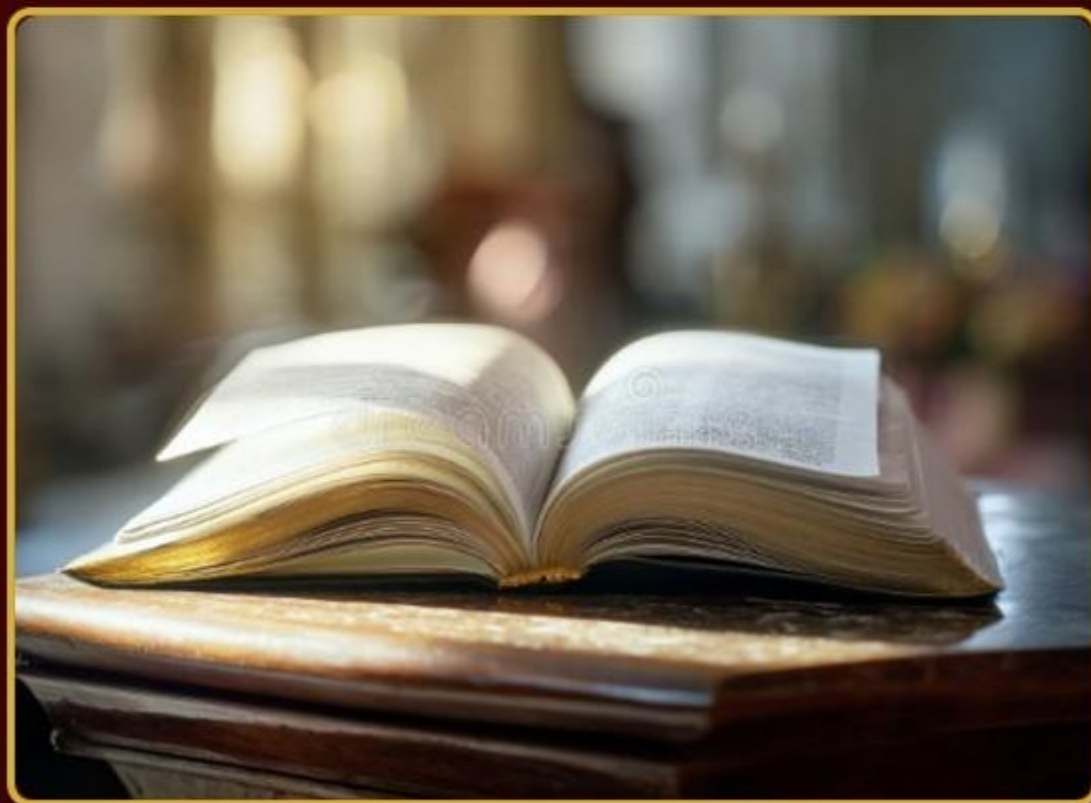
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## Luke 11:1-4

*"Lord, teach us to pray... When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come..."*

The disciples weren't feeling guilty; they recognized a need. They wanted to do better.

Even in your messy state, God wants you to honor Him.



# WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE?

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## SEEK PRAYER

God isn't looking for a perfect performance. He wants a heart that seeks to reach Him.



## PERSEVERE

Keep reaching out. Chat with Him. It's not about the "right thing," it's about what's on your soul.



## BE HONEST

He already knows what's in your spirit. Speak your truth and sit elbow to elbow with the Father.

# THE GOSPEL CURE FOR GUILT

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## CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST

Jesus removes our guilt! It's not just in our heads; it's about what He has placed in our hearts.

### Overcoming Weakness:

- ✓ Recognize moments of weakness without fear.
- ✓ Come to Him with newfound confidence.
- ✓ Shared Testimony: How have you overcome?



# FIGHTING THE ENEMY

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The devil whispers lies and accusations,  
shouting to drown out the righteousness within.

**Ephesians 6:17**

"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword  
of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Preach God's Word to yourself to cut down the  
enemy's lies.



# CULTIVATING THE HABITS

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Anchor yourself in the finished work of Christ:

- ✝ Keep the Resurrection Always Before You
- 👐 Confess and Mourn Over Sin
- 🛡 Believe and Pray with Confidence

**King David:** A man after God's own heart because he brought his frustration, joy, and hope directly to the Lord.





# FREE IN CHRIST TO PRAY

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## 1 John 2: 1-2

**"But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."**

God hears our prayers not because of our eloquence, but because He is our perfect Redeemer. We don't have to pretend everything is fine.



# WHY HE MAY NOT LISTEN

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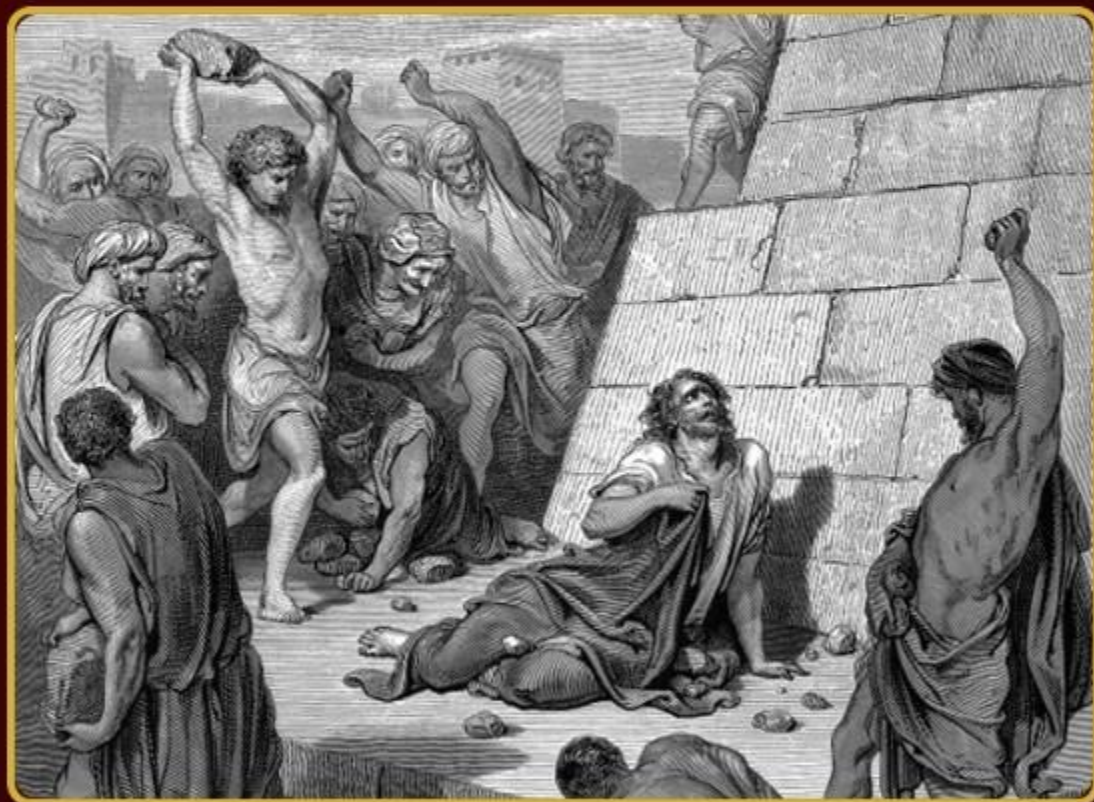
## Possible Barriers

Lack of Faith or Turning from God

Treating Others Wrongly

Pride and Embracing Sin

Experiencing God's Discipline





# GOD'S DIVINE ANSWERS

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**YES**

His goodness revealed in  
blessings.



**NO**

His protection from what we can't  
see.



**WAIT**

His training for a faithful heart.

# TRUSTING HIS PURPOSE

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"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so  
are my ways higher than your ways..."

— *Isaiah 55:9*

Suffering through silence makes us dependent on our Savior. It grows our relationship with the Living God.

**2 CORINTHIANS 12:9**

**"My Grace is Sufficient"**

"For my power is made perfect in weakness." God has never abandoned you—not through physical trials, spiritual battles, or emotional pains.



# KEEP AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

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God works on the perspective of eternity, not just the temporary moment.



**2 TIMOTHY 4:18**

"The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom."



**ROMANS 8:38-39**

"Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ." A bond that lasts forever.



**PSALM 16:11**

"Death is the end of suffering and the beginning of pleasures forevermore in God's presence."



# THY WILL BE DONE

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## Matthew 26:39

"My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

### Reflection Question:

*What if God answered every one of your prayers—but not in this lifetime? How would that change your prayer life today?*



# **When Prayer is a Struggle**

## **By Kevin P. Halloran**

### **Chapter 5**

#### **I Have Mixed Motives**

Wednesday, July 22, 2026

**Facilitator:** Deaconess Marjorie Dennerly

## ► Chapter 5~ I Have Mixed Motives

- Our Prayers revealed sin within us and the struggles we may have:
- According to the author Kevin P. Halloran, he points out two of the struggles that we may have: **Prayerlessness and praying with impure motives.**
- Our goal behind evaluating our motives should also be to have a pure heart before God. Our prayers sometimes reveal the condition of our hearts. Selfish Prayers centers on personal comfort, control, and advantage. Christlike prayers center on surrender, obedience, love, and alignment with God's will.
- In Psalms 139: 2-4 (NKJ) (Paraphrasing), it states God knows our uprising and our down sitting. He knows our thoughts afar off. He knows what we are going to say, even before we say it. Nothing is hidden from our all-knowing, all-seeing God.
- **Let's be Honest, at some point and time, we have all prayed a selfish prayer. When have you prayed a selfish prayer:**
- Dating
- Wanting your own way
- Blaming others
- Angry with someone
- Wanting to be someone you are not
- Refusing to acknowledge when you are at fault



- ▶ So were those prayers really answered, or did the answer you received turn out the way you expected, and just how did you feel?
- ▶ Sometimes we struggle with prayer because of myths we have heard about prayer. What are some of those Myths?
- ▶ If I pray with enough faith, I will get what I want.
- ▶ Maybe my prayer was not long enough.
- ▶ God is punishing me by ignoring my prayer.
- ▶ If God doesn't answer, He wouldn't answer at all.
- ▶ You need to tell God exactly what you want him to do; be more specific
- ▶ We must realize that our prayers were and may still be out of bounds and need to check our hearts.
- ▶ We need to ask ourselves: are we praying just thinking about ourselves, how we feel or think, or what we want God to do for us, or are we praying for God's glory to be revealed through us? When we pray selfishly, we are really telling God how to align HIMSELF with our will for our lives.
- ▶ Praying for God's glory means letting his sovereign wisdom decide what to do with your prayers and your life. It means keeping our focus on Him and on His glory rather than on our own.
- ▶ Remember prayer is not a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or for bending His will to ours, but the prescribed way of subordinating our will to his. When we can't pray and mean "Your will be done", we are essentially telling God, "My (Our) will be done".

- ▶ **Here are some questions to help us evaluate whether you are praying for God's glory:**
- ▶ Would the desired answer to your prayer cause God's name to be praised?
- ▶ Would your desired answer to prayer bring you closer to God or push you farther away from Him?
- ▶ How would your desired answer to your prayer impact others? Would it help you to love them more?
- ▶ Would Jesus pray this prayer in the same situation?
- ▶ In checking our motives on how and why we pray, is our prayer in line with scripture?
- ▶ Have you ever prayed for something that is forbidden in Scripture?
- ▶ Maybe you prayed for that man to be your husband, knowing the man is already committed.
- ▶ Or asking God to be like your friend who gets all the attention.
- ▶ And really having the nerve to boast to your best friend, Girl, I prayed about this or that, and God has given me peace about it! REALLY. Bad Motives never bring true peace.
- ▶ We know that these kinds of Prayers are outside the will of God, and we should not expect to receive the answer we are hoping to get. The best thing to do is go to God and talk to Him and confess your way of thinking and repent, so God can help you see your hidden motives and repent. When we repent, God will truly give us the peace that passes all understanding, the peace that the spirit is pleased to grant to those who love God and love his law.

► **POINT:**

- Peace isn't from God, if it's a "peace" we are feeling when our actions are flying in the face of spiritual truth.
- We should weigh every prayer and motive against God's Word.
- When we are clearly at odds with the Word, we need to repent.
- When we aren't sure we need to ask God to reveal the sin in us and to consider what negative desires and powerful emotions may be warping our prayers.

► **We need to ask ourselves are we praying with humility and Holiness**

- Being humble before God is a key part of testing our motives, because it recognizes that our motives may be out of whack and recognizes that God knows our sinful motives and is able to reveal them to us. **Proverbs 3:34??** God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. James 4: 7-9 Submit yourself therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands you sinner and purify your hearts, you double minded, be wretched and mourn and weep, let your laughter be turn to mourning and your joy to gloom.



- **Question: Does sin have a grip on your heart?** Those who love Jesus keeps His commandments (John 14:15) so in humility repent of any double mindedness in your life and pursue God as your greatest love. **A healthy life of prayer must never be divorced from a faithful life of Christian Obedience.**

- ▶ When we can't discern the motives of our heart we should pray: Psalms 19:14 which states "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O lord, my rock and my redeemer," Also remember the glorious promise in James 1:5 which states "Wisdom from God is always available in abundance if you ask for it."
- ▶ When we say to our self "I think I praying rightly, but I don't know for sure." In such times we have to humbly walk the road of holiness and prudence and trust that God will lead us.
- ▶ We must realize that God is always near, to guides our minds and hearts to him. Sometimes we have to take that leap of faith and trust God to reveals to us when our motives seem unclear.
- ▶ Remember God is our good shepherd and He will lead us in the paths of righteousness. If we stay on the path of God's will by living righteously for Him and be very careful how we engage with Him in prayer, He will lead us in what is right. He will do for our sakes because He loves us as His Children, and He will do so for His name sake, because guiding a wandering child away from danger brings glory to Him.
- ▶ We must not let FEAR stop us from praying to God. We may not always know how to pray or even recognize our motives at times. If we follow the Good Shepherd, living in the light of His word and humbly examining ourselves as we pray, we would be led on path that is well lit. Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, our great intercessor helps us to align our prayers when we pray according to God's will.
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- ▶ We must seek God's guidance through prayer and reading His word, so that our prayers and thoughts will line up with His will for our lives.
- ▶ **When** our sinful hearts tricks us into Praying with bad motives. Ask God to rid us of these bad motives and teach us what it means to pray-and to live-for HIS glory and with the right motives. God's word is like a compass that shows us the direction our hearts needs to go. Thank God for protecting us from getting far off track when we pray,
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► **Other Short Scripture References for Christlike Prayers:**

- Matthew 6:9-13 — Jesus teaches the Lord's Prayer
- Luke 22:42 — "Not my will, but Yours be done." Philippians 4:6-7 — Prayer with thanksgiving
- James 4:3 — Asking with wrong motives Psalm 139:23-24 — "Search me, O God..."
- 1 John 5:14 — Confidence when we ask according to His will

► **Reflection Questions to ponder:**

- In what ways have you been tempted to pray selfish prayers?
- What are some of the sins behind the sin of praying with bad motives?
- How can scripture be a remedy for praying with bad motives?
- Why should the fear of bad motives keep us from praying?
- What do my prayers reveal about what I value most?
- Where do I ask God for comfort instead of transformation?
- Do I pray more for my desires or God's desires?
- How often to you pray for others compared to myself?
- What part of my life am I still trying to control?
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- ▶ **Selfish vs Christlike prayers**

- ▶ **1. What Makes a Prayer Selfish?**

- ▶ Driven by personal gain rather than God's purposes

- ▶ Focused on comfort instead of growth

- ▶ Seeks control rather than surrender

- ▶ Ignores the needs of others

- ▶ Avoids repentance, responsibility, or obedience

- ▶ Treats God as a resource instead of a Father

- ▶ **Selfish Prayer Posture**

- ▶ Entitlement, comparison, fear of surrender, desire for control, resistance to growth, and self-protection

## ▶ 2. What Makes a Prayer Christlike?

- ▶ Aligns with God's will rather than personal agendas
- ▶ Seeks transformation, not convenience
- ▶ Prioritizes love, mercy, and humility
- ▶ Welcomes correction and growth
- ▶ Intercedes for others
- ▶ Trusts God's timing and wisdom

### ▶ Christlike Prayer Posture

- ▶ Humility, Trust, surrender, compassion, obedience and Gratitude

▶ Sources: When Prayer is a struggle by Kevin P. Halloran; Bible (NKJV) & Co-pilot

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Revised July 15, 2026



# When Prayer is a Struggle

## By Kevin P. Halloran

### **Chapter 6**

### **I Can't Focus**

Learning to Focus on God

**Wednesday, July 22, 2026**

**Facilitator:** Deaconess Vernisa McCormick



Psalm 46:10 –  
"Be still, and  
know that I  
am God"



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# Distractions – Q&A

**Chapter 6 addresses one of the most common obstacles to prayer:  
Distractions.**

- "How many of you have ever started praying and, within a minute, found yourself thinking about your grocery list, work, or something else?"
- How do you typically refocus your mind when you find yourself distracted in prayer?
- What tactics have you found effective in decreasing distractions during your prayer time?
- Today's lesson is not about praying perfectly. It's about learning to return our attention to God when our minds wander."

# **FYI - The Distractions We Do not Recognize**

- The average person checks their phone 96 times a day
- The average human attention span is 8 seconds, because of our constant digital focus, we have developed a habit of distraction
- Neglecting Listening: Focusing solely on speaking during prayer and not taking time to listen for guidance can limit spiritual growth
- Inconsistency: Failing to maintain a regular prayer schedule can lead to a weakened connection with God.

# Overcoming Distractions

Maintaining focus during prayer is essential for spiritual growth. When we're distracted, prayer can feel empty or disconnected. But when we're truly present in prayer, we invite God's presence into our hearts, minds, and lives. A focused prayer life enables us to hear God's voice more clearly, experience peace, and develop a deeper relationship with Him.

Overcoming distractions means opening ourselves to greater spiritual intimacy and understanding. It's not about perfection; it's about our consistency and being deliberate with our time spent in God's presence.



# Key Truths

## **We can grow in focused prayer by:**

- Praying with an open Bible.
- Write requests in a journal.
- Pray through Scripture.
- Find a quiet place when possible.
- Keep prayers simple and sincere to overcome obstacles in prayer.

# Seven Habits to Refocus Your Mind:

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1. Set a Specific Time and Place
2. Use a Prayer Plan
3. Practice Shorter Sessions
4. Remove Distractions
5. Include Breathing Techniques
6. Picture Your Intent
7. Keep a Prayer Journal

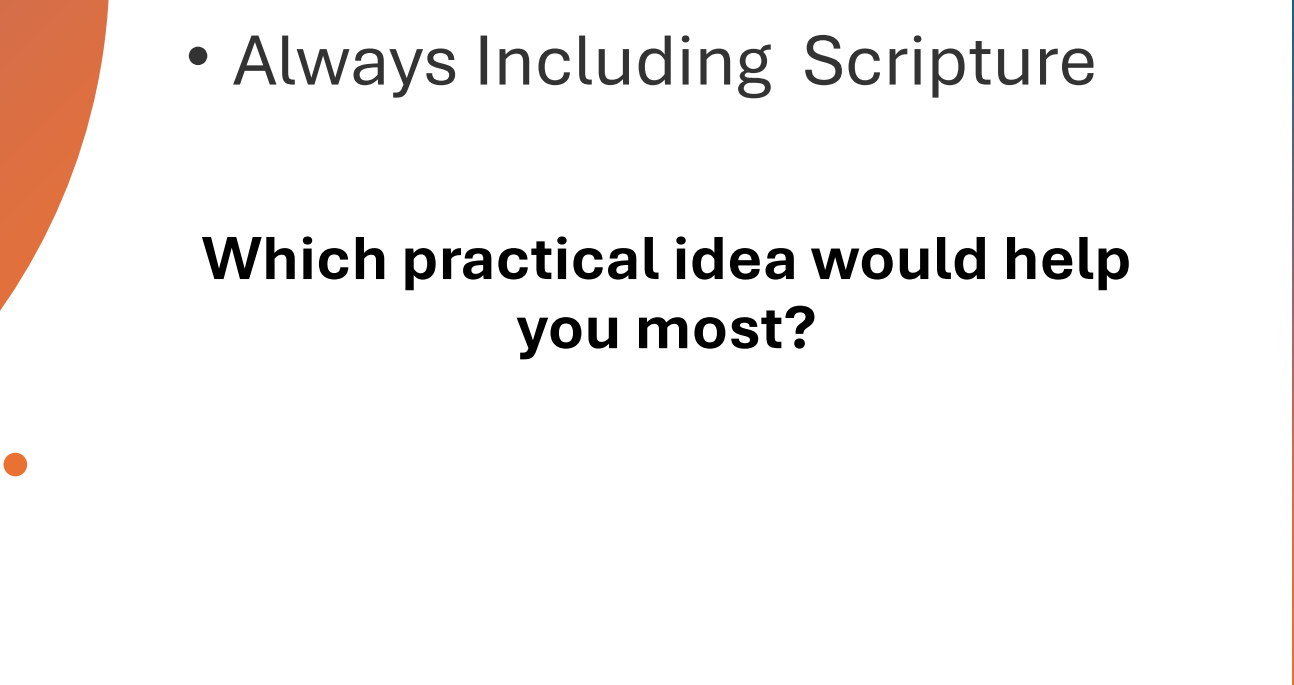
**You are the  
greatest  
project you'll  
ever work on.  
Restart. Reset.  
Refocus. As  
many times as  
you need. Just  
don't give up.**



# Refocus Your Prayers By:

- Establishing a Routine
- Limiting Distractions
- Practicing Deep Breathing
- Creating a Peaceful Environment
- Always Including Scripture

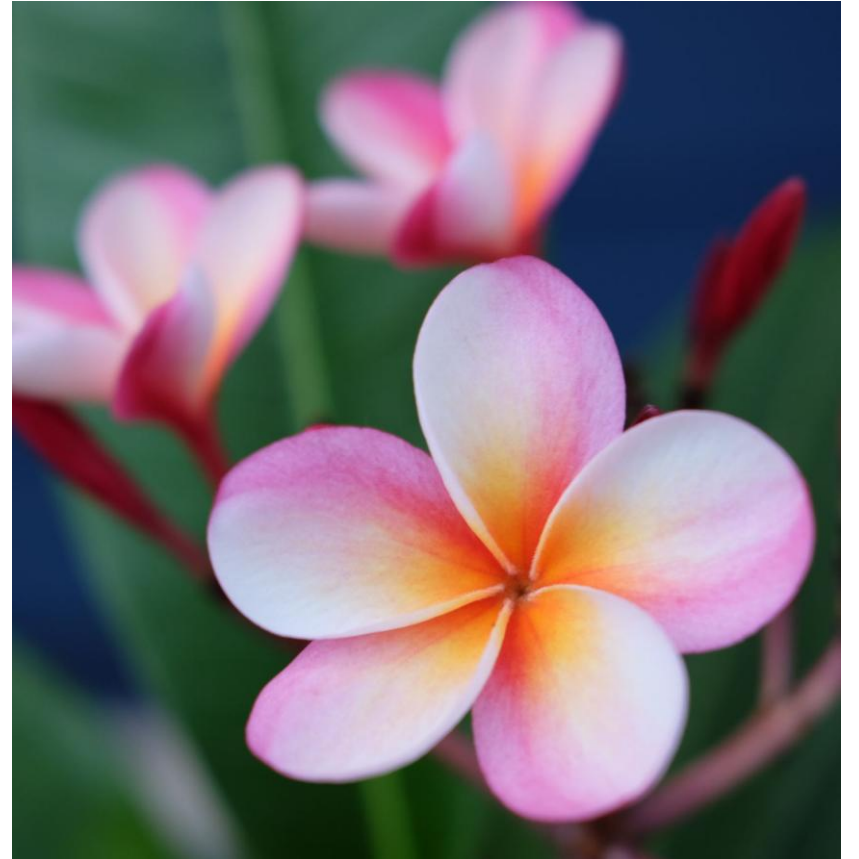
**Which practical idea would help you most?**



# Reset and Redirect

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- Start by setting aside time for a mental "**reset**." Whether it's through short meditative breathing, listening to worship music, or reading Scripture, preparing spiritually before you pray will help you approach prayer with a clearer heart and mind.
- When distractions arise, gently **redirect** your thoughts back to God. You can use a simple phrase like "Lord, help me focus" or say a scripture. Recognize that distractions will happen, don't let them discourage you from continuing your conversation with God.



# Six way to focus your prayer life!

- Create a Dedicated Space
- Establish a Routine
- Use Focus Techniques
- Limit Distractions
- Set Realistic Goals
- Reflect and Adjust

## Challenge

**This week, spend five uninterrupted minutes each day talking with God. When your mind wanders, don't quit just come back to God.**



# Closing Prayer

# **“When Prayer is a Struggle”**

by Kevin P. Halloran

Chapters 7 & 8

BBC Associate Ministers

Bethlehem Baptist Church  
Adult Vacation Bible School

07/23/2026

**Facilitator:** Minister LT Carson





## **Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized Introduction**

“Our nonchalant attitude reveals that we have an anemic view of prayer and of the God we pray to.”

**--Kevin Halloran**



## Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized”

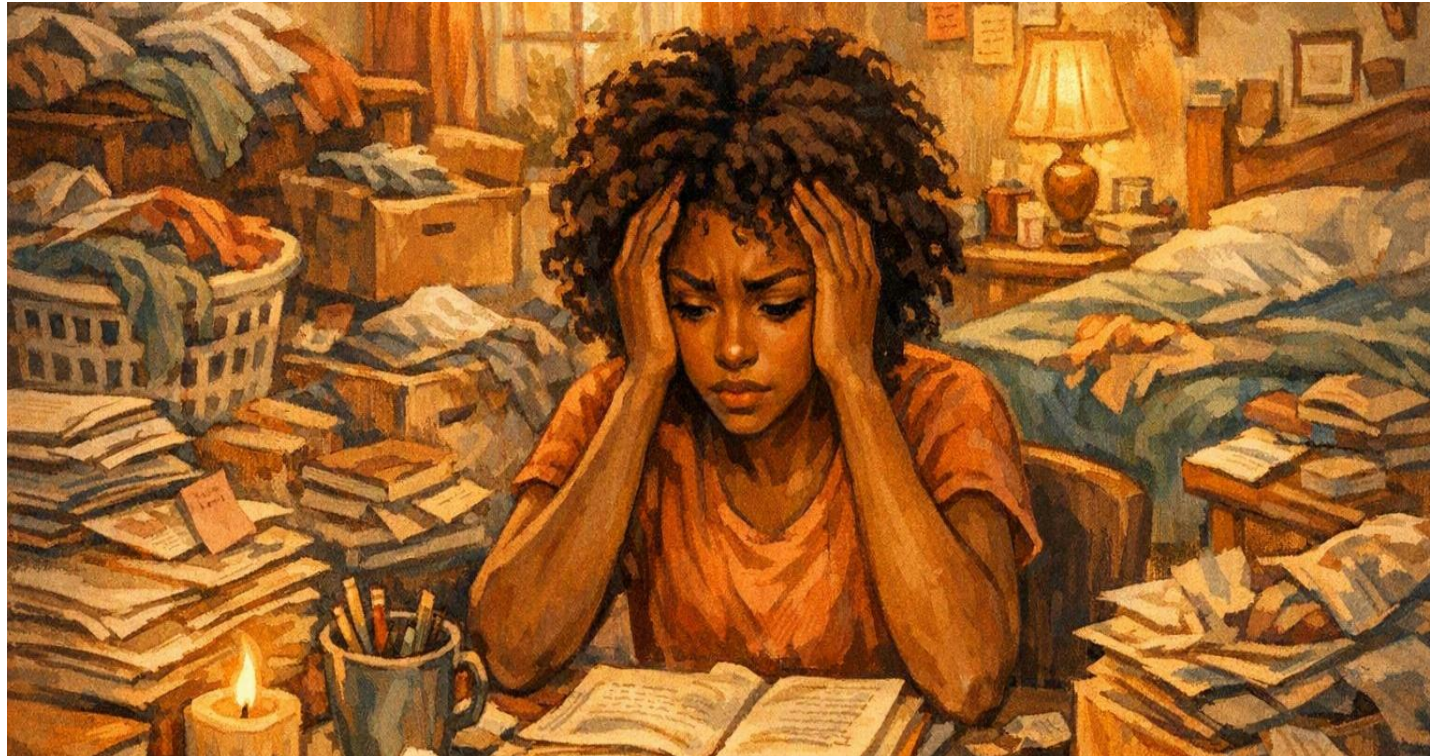
### How Do We Intentionally Take Advantage of the Gift of Prayer?

- *"Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere" (Ephesians 6:18 NLT )*
- As we organize our prayers and petitions and faithfully bring them to God over the long term, He answers them, and the fruit that is borne from these answers to prayer can multiply.
- The goal of organizing our prayers is to take the commands God gives us in Scripture as seriously as possible by obeying them as intentionally as possible.

# Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized”

## Why is Unorganized Prayer a Struggle?

*"I'll admit I was tempted not to include this chapter in the book, .... I have since changed my mind. I now think that this may be the chapter that will bear the most eternal fruit."*



*When life feels scattered and overwhelmed, prayer gets crowded out—rushed, fragmented, and easily forgotten.*



# Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized”

## Disorganized vs. Unorganized

*Definitions according to Grammar.com*

### Disorganized

Was organized once — but is not anymore.

**Example:** *I used to keep my room clean, but since I’ve been so busy lately it’s so disorganized!*

### Unorganized

Currently not organized — and never has been.

**Example:** *Her bedroom is so unorganized, as she has no plans to clean it up.*

## Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized”

“You reap what you sow, later than you sow, greater than you sow,”

--Dr. Charles Stanley (see 2 Corinthians 9:6).

- An unorganized prayer life leads to **spiritual stagnation**—like uninvested savings, sporadic prayer forfeits the compounding returns that build spiritual strength.
- It also brings the **neglect of spiritual and eternal needs**—crowding out the salvation and growth that should come first.
- And it **cannot address the topics and needs that matter most to God**.
- Halloran offers a list of people to pray for and simple methods to organize prayer.

# Chapter 7

## “I’m So Unorganized”

### *Who Should We Pray For?*

- Ourselves
- Friends and Family
- Government Officials
- Your Enemies
- All People
- The Local Church
- The Global Church

### *How Should We Pray*

- Pray for spiritual growth
- Pray for their salvation
- Pray for the gospel to advance
- Pray for opposers to the gospel
- Pray for those God brings to mind
- Pray for those on the Prayer List
- Pray for persecuted Christians

## Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized”

### Potential Dangers of Using the Recommended Methods

- **Legalism**
  - **Mechanical prayers**
  - **Shallow prayers.**
- A method can easily turn into a routine that we follow in order to earn God’s approval.
  - Done wrongly, a method for prayer becomes hoops for us to jump through.
  - If we try to pray for too many petitions at once, our prayers merely skip across the surface like a rock on a lake.

# Chapter 7: “I’m So Disorganized”

## *A Few Recommended Methods for Organizing Prayers*

### **Method 1: Keep a Prayer List**

Regularly write down a list of prayer requests as well as Scriptures to pray.

### **Method 3: Pray in Concentric Circles**

Each circle represents a category of people. After praying for yourself (the first circle), you move outward—praying for your family, then your church, then your work, then your community, and so on until you reach a global circle.

### **Method 2: Use Index Cards**

*Focus on one card at a time.*

- 4–10 cards for individual family members
- 1–3 cards for people who are suffering
- 1 card for friends
- 1 card for non-Christians
- 1 card for church leadership
- 1 card for his small group
- 1 card for missionaries or ministries
- 1–3 cards for world or cultural issues
- 3 cards for work-related issues
- 1 card for coworkers
- 3–5 cards for things he needs to repent of
- 3–5 cards for hopes or big dreams



| Method 4:                          | Designate Categories for Every Day of the Week                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday                             | Pray for the week ahead                                                                                                             |
| Monday                             | Pray for their immediate and extended family                                                                                        |
| Tuesday                            | Pray for their nation and world (churches, government leaders, current events, etc.)                                                |
| Wednesday                          | Pray for their friends, neighbors, and local church                                                                                 |
| Thursday                           | Pray for their marriage                                                                                                             |
| Friday                             | Offer specific praise and thanksgiving                                                                                              |
| Saturday                           | Pray for the gathering of God’s people on Sunday to be unified in the gospel, global church expansion, and for God to be glorified. |
| Method 5: Create Your Own Approach | Make it work for you; adopt one approach or combine all four elements.                                                              |

# Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized”

## Key Points to Remember

- The goal of organizing our prayers is to take the commands God gives us in Scripture as seriously as possible (see Eph. 6:18).
- Pray for spiritual growth, spiritual strength, and God’s wisdom to help us love others well (see 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- Pray with scriptural priorities (see 1 John 5:14).
- “The richness of the Word of God ought to determine our prayer, not the poverty of our heart,” --Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

# Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized”

## Key Takeaways

### PROS

- God invites us to pray
- Maximize the opportunity to pray
- Allow the Holy Spirit to help
- Meditate on the Scripture you wish to pray
- Plan what day you should pray for a specific thing/person

### CONS

- Do not be anemic towards God in prayer
- Do not waste an opportunity to pray
- Do not pray alone
- Do not pray from your own mind.
- Do not skip days without praying

# Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized”

## Key Scripture References

- |                        |                                                                                        |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ephesians 6:18</b>  | God calls us to pray for all kinds of people.                                          |
| <b>Matthew 9:37-38</b> | Pray for the Lord to send more laborers into His harvest .                             |
| <b>Matthew 5:44</b>    | Love your enemies ...pray for those who persecute you.                                 |
| <b>Psalms 2:10-12</b>  | Worship the King of kings with a joyful heart.                                         |
| <b>1 Timothy 2:1-6</b> | Pray for government officials to be saved.                                             |
| <b>1 John 5:14</b>     | “If we ask anything according to His will He hears us.”                                |
| <b>2 Peter 1:20-21</b> | All Scripture is useful for growing in prayer...all of which the Holy Spirit inspired. |

# Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized”

## Reflection Questions

- Have you ever used a system or a method for organizing your prayer requests? If so, how has it helped you?
- After reading this chapter, were you moved to dedicate more energy to praying for certain people or things that God commands? If so, what?
- Which of this chapter’s five organizational methods do you think will work best for you?
- What change do you think could happen in the world if you took praying for others more seriously? Describe what the future might look like if you took this chapter to heart.



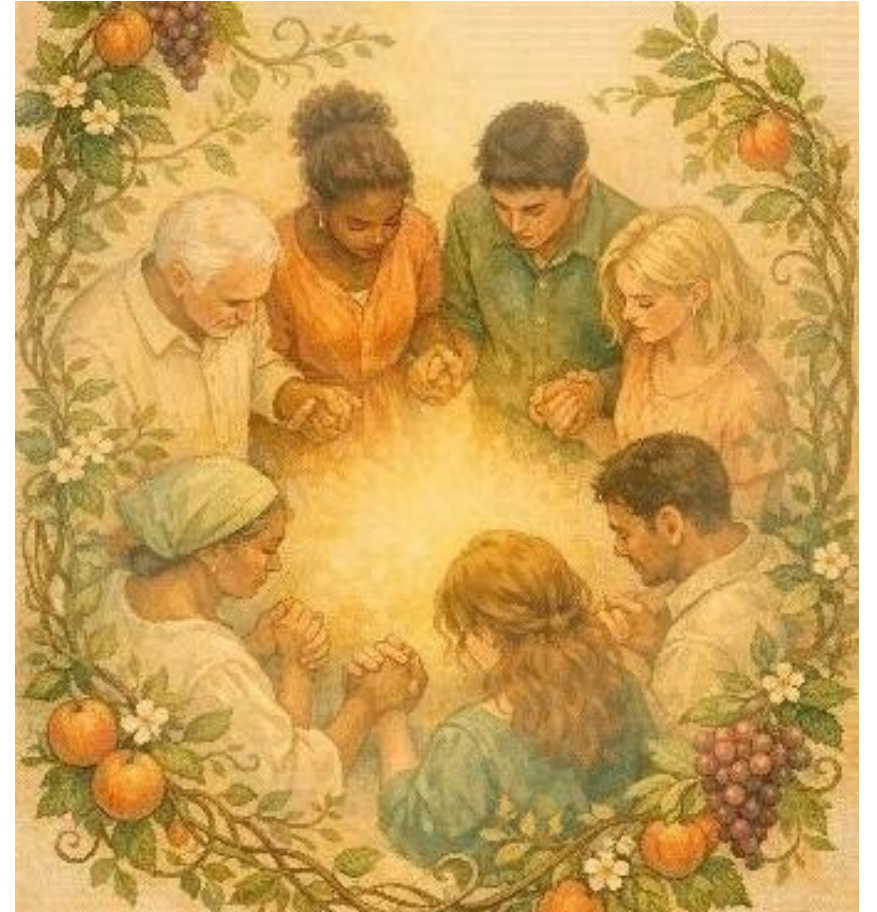
# Chapter 7: “I’m So Unorganized”

## A Thought to Remember

*“As we organize our prayers and petitions and faithfully bring them to God over the long term, He answers them, and the fruit that is borne from these answers to prayer can multiply.”*

*---Kevin P. Halloran*

*“Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion” (Ephesians 6:18 NLT).*



# Imagine the Future



*When our lives are ordered, our hearts are free to pray—quiet, unhurried, and fully present with God.*

*Heavenly Father, it is astounding to see the breadth of areas that You want us to pray about—and more astounding to realize that You want to effect change in these areas through us.*

*Please help me to craft the right system that will allow me to take the gift of prayer and intercession as seriously as possible.*

*And please deepen my desire to invest in eternity through the prayers I offer today. In Jesus's name, Amen.*

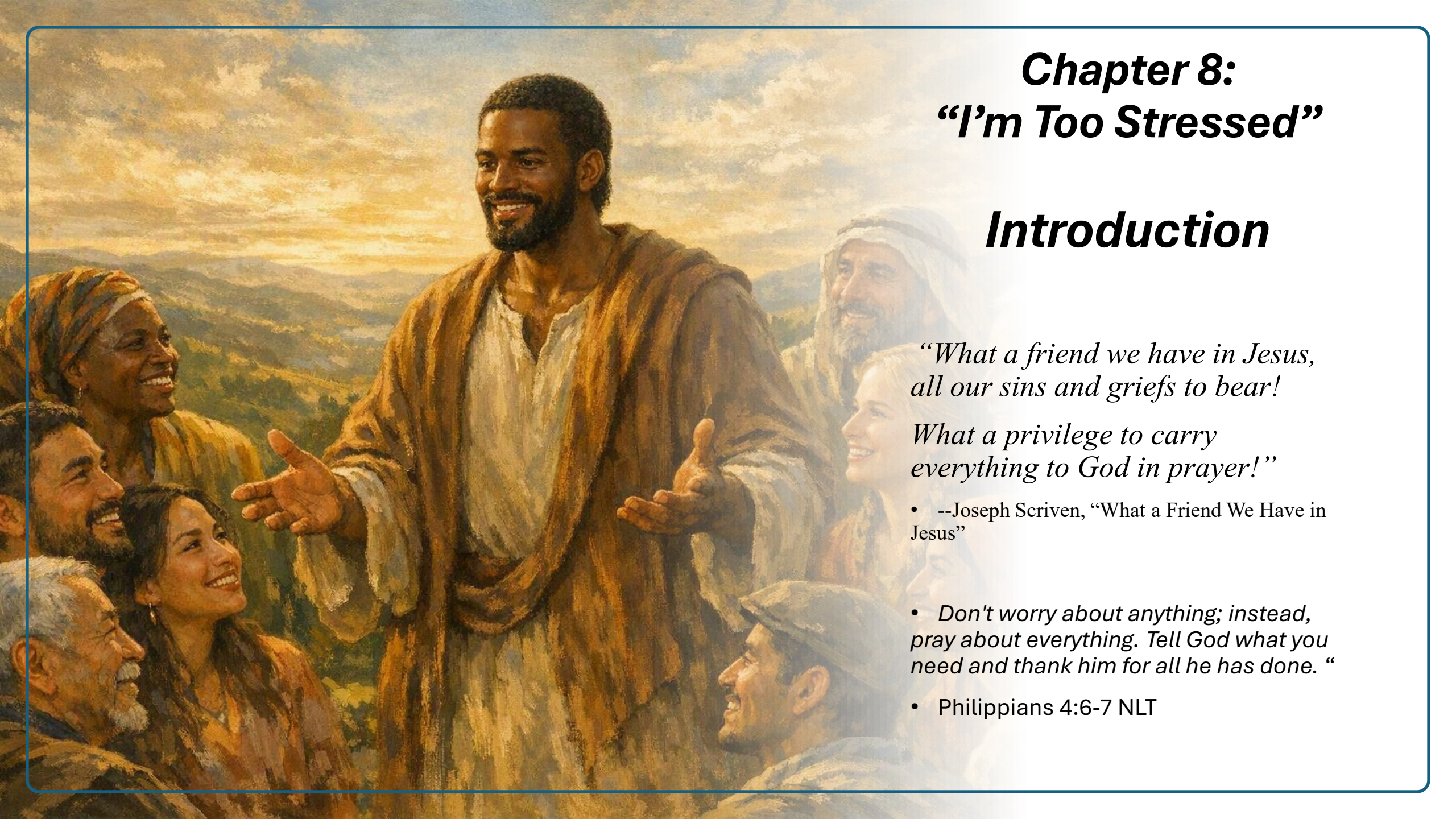




**“When Prayer is a Struggle”  
by Kevin P. Halloran  
Chapter 8**

**Bethlehem Baptist Church  
Adult Bible School  
07/23/2026  
Minister LT Carson**



A religious painting depicting Jesus, a Black man with a beard, wearing a brown robe over a white tunic. He stands in the center, gesturing with his hands towards a group of diverse people, including men and women of various ages and ethnicities, who are all smiling and looking at him. The background shows a hazy, mountainous landscape under a cloudy sky.

## Chapter 8: “I’m Too Stressed”

### *Introduction*

*“What a friend we have in Jesus,  
all our sins and griefs to bear!”*

*What a privilege to carry  
everything to God in prayer!”*

- --Joseph Scriven, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”
- *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. “*
- *Philippians 4:6-7 NLT*

●

## Chapter 8: “I’m Too Stressed”

### **How Do We Think and Pray During Anxious Times?**

#### Philippians 4:6-7

*“We treat this precious passage as a lucky charm and miss its true meaning and the path to peace that it lays out.”* —Kevin P. Halloran

- The author tells how he got Philippians 4 wrong and how he eventually got it right.
- Our hearts are easily distracted when we are seeking a solution to stress and anxiety
- Anxiety should drive you to humbly pray to your loving Father
- Fix your mind on what is true and good when anxious
- Know that God is with you
- Accept God’s promises of peace
- Set your heart on the One who transcends all your problems



# Chapter 8: “I’m Too Stressed”

## How Do We Battle Sinful Anxiety in Prayer?

“As I reflected on this troubling episode, I realized that the problem wasn’t with God’s promise—it was with me.” –Kevin P. Halloran

- Its causes range from everyday stressors to traumatic events to biological imbalances.
- “There may even be spiritual forces behind your anxiety, since the Enemy of our souls loves to see God’s children stress.”
- No one, no matter the circumstances, can shortcut his or her spiritual duty of fighting a sinful response to anxiety through prayer.
- Stressful seasons can leave you drained of physical and emotional energy and apathetic about important people and responsibilities in your life.



# Chapter 8: “I’m Too Stressed”

## Peace vs. Anxiety

### **ANXIETY of HUMANITY**

- “Anxiety refers to “painful or apprehensive uneasiness of mind usu[ally] over an impending or anticipated ill” or a “fearful concern or interest.”
- Anxiety can tie us in knots
- Anxiety can be a gift from God—an alarm bell telling us that something’s not right.

### **PEACE of GOD**

- Surpasses all understanding
- Supernatural
- Sustaining
- Salvific
- Faithful
- Fulfilling
- Freeing

# Chapter 8: “I’m Too Stressed”

## HOW (NOT) TO PRAY WHEN YOU’RE REALLY STRESSED OUT

### HOW (NOT) TO PRAY

- Anxiety ties us in knots
- Pursuing quick fixes often tightens these knots
- The challenges of life can push us further into despair
- prayers may be masking a sinful and struggling heart.

### HOW TO PRAY

- Slow down
- Analyze your thoughts
- Go deep into your heart to untangle underlying issues of your anxiety.
- channel these challenges into humility and joyful dependence on the Lord.
- Align your prayers with scriptural truth.
- Check the motives of your heart.

## Chapter 8: I'm Too Stressed

**Six God-given mind-shifts to fight anxiety through prayer.**

- Don't Pray to a Magic Genie; Pray to Your Father in Heaven
- Don't Be Prideful and Self-Centered; Be Humble and God-Centered
- Don't Be Indifferent or Angry; Be Thankful
- Don't Meditate on Your Anxieties; Meditate on the Good
- Don't Pray Alone; Pray alongside Believers, Past and Present
- Don't Believe That God Has Abandoned You; Realize That He Is with You

# Chapter 8: I'm Too Stressed"

## Key Takeaways

- Rest in His sovereign hand
- Use your trials to be transformed into Christ's image.
- Draw near to God
- Encounter His peace as you pray
- Don't wrestle in your simple mind when you pray
- Use your trials not your troubles when you pray
- Don't run from God when you pray
- Confess your sins when you pray, not your problems



# Chapter 8: “I’m Too Stressed”

## Key Points to Remember

- The path to peace is a direct result of Prayer
- The path to peace is supernatural
- The path to peace surpasses understanding
- The path to peace is supplication and thanksgiving
- The peace of God prays about everything
- The peace of God is not anxious about anything
- The peace of God is not about calm nerves
- The peace of God is Incomprehensible
- The peace of God is not prideful
- The peace of God is not ungrateful

## Chapter 8: “I’m Too Stressed”

### Key Scripture References

- Philippians 4:6-13
- Colossians 1:16
- 1 Peter 5:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- Romans 8:28
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Psalm 119:71
- Psalm 19:7-11
- Hebrews 4:12
- Galatians 6:2
- Matthew 26:36-46
- Shows us God’s proven path from anxiety to peace
- All things were created by Jesus and for Jesus
- “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God..., casting all your anxieties on him.”
- A thankful heart isn’t only a remedy for anxiety; it’s part of a healthy spiritual diet for every circumstance
- God will work all things for the good of those who love Him
- Lean not on our own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path.
- “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.”
- His Word is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, more desirable than gold, and sweeter than honey.
- When anxious thoughts flood your mind, dam them up by reciting Scripture.
- “Bear one another’s burdens.”
- Look to the Savior who agonized over the suffering that awaited Him on the cross where he would die for our sin.

## Chapter 8: I'm Too Stressed

### Reflection Questions

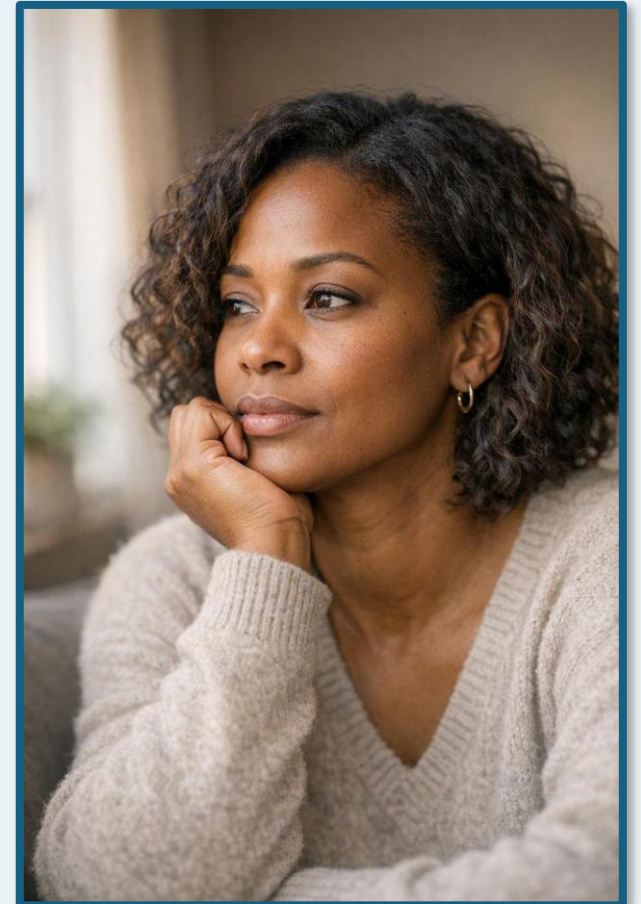
- When has anxiety impeded your prayer life? What did it look like? How did you overcome these challenges?
- What are some wrong views we may have about God that may increase our anxiety? How might remembering that God is our heavenly Father help us to fight anxiety?
- Which of the six mind-shifts do you need to incorporate into your life the most? Why?
- Christ is the ultimate example we can look to of someone who honored God in his life—and his prayer—even during challenging situations. (See Matt. 26:36–46.) Who else can you look to for a reminder of God's faithfulness?

# Chapter 8: “I’m Too Stressed”

## A Thought to Remember

*“Anxiety no longer dominates my life and prayers; instead, it drives me to humbly pray to my loving Father, fix my mind on what is true and good, and remember that He is with me.”*

---Kevin P. Halloran



## *Chapter 8: “I’m Too Stressed”* **AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY**

Dear heavenly Father, my heart grows anxious easily. And I make my anxiety worse by trying to control my life instead of living for You and Your kingdom.

If You knew my problems and didn’t care, You would be cold and unloving. If You cared but didn’t have the power to work in me, You would be unhelpful.

Thank You for being almighty God as well as my loving heavenly Father who knows me, cares for me, and works in me.

Help me to trust in You more, grow in humility, and abound in thanksgiving. In Jesus’s name, Amen.





# **When Prayer is a Struggle**

## **By Kevin P. Halloran**

### **Chapter 9**

### **I'm Too Busy**

Friday, July 24, 2026

**Facilitator:** Rev. Dr. Dylon T. Young