

COMPANION GUIDE

# PRAYING IN COLOR

 24-7 PRAYER USA

# Introduction

Welcome to the *Praying in Color Companion Guide*. Over the next nine weeks, we will deepen our understanding of rich prayer practices handed down throughout church history.

It is 24-7 Prayer USA's mission to inspire and equip the church to an awakened prayer life. We hope you are encouraged to utilize the *full color palette of prayer* in your discipleship to Jesus, finding deeper intimacy and peace in his presence in the coming weeks.

We pray you embrace the next nine weeks with openness and curiosity as you meet with God in new ways. You may find some of these rhythms and prayer practices challenging at first, but take heart, God promises he will *always* draw near to us as we pray (Deuteronomy 4:7 NIV).



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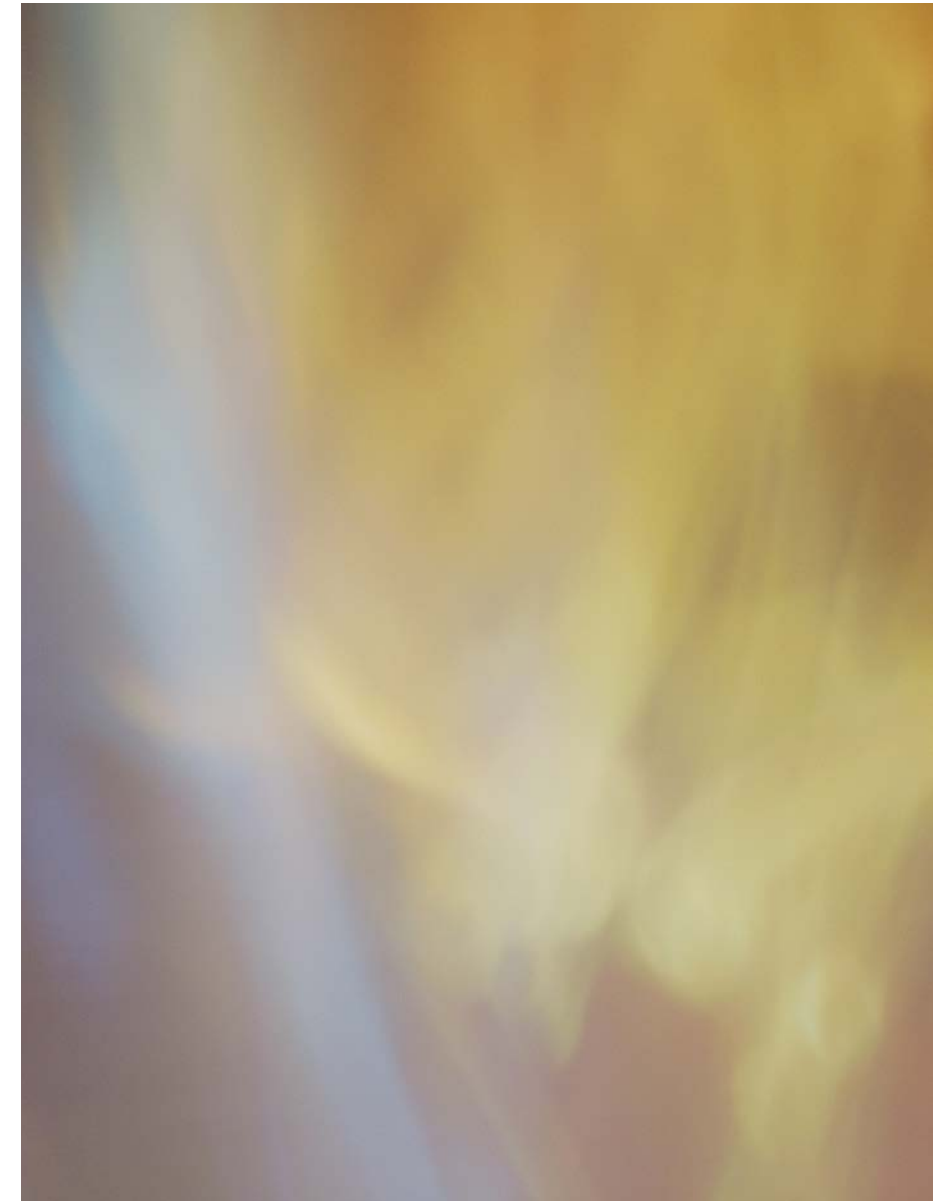
# Tips

We encourage you to set aside a small, intentional block of time to listen to or watch the corresponding podcast episode for the week. Pray and be still with God. If you're new to daily prayer, tools like the [Lectio 365 app](#) can be beneficial. Lectio 365 is a free daily devotional app by 24-7 Prayer that helps you pray with guided prompts for the morning, midday, and evening.

Work through the week's guide; then, conclude with prayer, asking God, "What stood out from this episode? What might God be inviting me into?"

Exploring new practices and rhythms in community is essential. We encourage you to consider embarking on these nine weeks with a trusted friend or small group. As Proverbs 27:17 NIV says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." When we unify in prayer, we can encourage, keep one another accountable, and support one another as we feel challenged or stretched by new rhythms.

At the end of this nine-week journey, we invite you to go even deeper in your understanding and exploration of these prayer practices. We've included a list of resources in the guide to use as you reflect on what prayer practices God may be calling you to explore more.



WEEK 01



# Asking Prayer

WITH PETE GREIG

## Overview

In week one of the *Praying in Color Podcast*, we explore the prayer practice called **Asking Prayer**, or **Petition**, where we simply ask God for what we need each day. Jesus modeled this way of prayer for his disciples when he taught them to pray, "Give us today our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11 NIV).

Often, two questions come to mind when thinking about Asking Prayer: "Is anything too small to pray for?" and "Does it truly work?". Pete Greig reminds us that the more we pray the small prayers, the more opportunities we have for gratitude. Even the smallest prayers draw us into a deeper relationship with God, our Father.

And, God really *does* answer our prayers! He cares about our needs and desires more than we often realize.

# Reflect

Take some time to reflect on the following passages and notice how God reveals himself as a Father who wants to answer our prayers.

## Mark 10:46-52 NIV

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

## Matthew 7:7-11 NIV

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

With these verses and the character of God in mind, reflect on the following questions to continue your exploration of Asking Prayer:

1. What part of the podcast episode stood out to you the most? Why?
2. Have you ever thought a need was too small to pray about? What would it look like to bring that to God today?
3. Can you think of a time when the needs in your life made you feel vulnerable? What would it look like for this kind of vulnerability to create intimacy between you and God?
4. How can you intentionally practice Asking Prayer this week?

# Practice:

## Journal Prayer

**To grow in these prayer practices, we find new ways to weave them into our daily lives. This week, we will structure our prayer lives around Asking Prayer.**

Below, you will find one way to engage with this relational, vulnerable, and intentional prayer practice. This is merely an idea! We encourage you to incorporate Asking Prayer in the form that best suits your daily rhythms.

### Write it down

Journaling our prayers is a simple yet powerful way to pray with intention and vulnerability. Writing down our prayers helps us bring them into the world in a tangible way. It also allows us to look back and see how God worked, noting our prayers and how he answered.

There's no right or wrong way to journal your prayers; find a method that works for you! One helpful practice is to make a note when God answers a prayer. This helps cultivate gratitude and reminds us of his daily presence. If you struggle with the language of gratitude, use the psalm below as a guide for your own prayer to God.

#### Psalm 9:1-2 NIV

"I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart;  
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.  
I will be glad and rejoice in you;  
I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High."

## NOTES

## NOTES



# Suggested Resources

We suggest a few key resources with each *Praying in Color Podcast* episode to help you further develop your prayer practice. These resources have been helpful to many seeking to deepen their relationship with God in prayer. May they also encourage you!

**BOOK:**

*How to Pray* by Pete Greig

*Your Powerful Prayers* by Susie Larson

**APP:**

You can download the Lectio 365 app at

[www.24-7prayerusa.com/resources/lectio-365](http://www.24-7prayerusa.com/resources/lectio-365).

**SERMON:**

[Hallowed Be Your Name](#) | Tyler Staton, Bridgetown Church



WEEK 02

# Listening Prayer

WITH DR. KATIA ADAMS



## Overview

In week two of the *Praying in Color Podcast*, we explore the prayer practice of **Listening Prayer**. Tyler Staton and Dr. Katia Adams spoke about how Listening Prayer is found in all of prayer as it is the “listening side” of our conversation with God. Like ordinary conversations, prayer is not one-way. Talking *with* God instead of talking *at* Him lets us engage with Him as the God who wants to speak to us, just like a good father who wants to talk with his children. Listening Prayer is about stopping and hearing God speak to us.

# Reflect

Listening Prayer often shows us how we view God and ourselves. Take some time to reflect on the passages below, allowing Scripture to shape your perceptions about God and yourself.

## Ephesians 1:15-23 NIV

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

## Psalms 46:8-10 NIV

Come and see what the LORD has done,  
the desolations he has brought on the earth.  
He makes wars cease  
to the ends of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.  
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."

**Now that you have read these scriptures, take some time to reflect on the following:**

1. What part of the podcast episode stood out to you the most? Why?
2. Reflect on your current prayer life. How much time do you spend intentionally *listening* to God? What does your current prayer life say about how you view God and how you view yourself?
3. How can you become more aware of God's voice every day?
4. Reflect on the idea of God speaking to you through your imagination. How does that make you feel? Where do you feel resistance? What is the invitation from God to you? How might you grow in using your imagination to hear from God?

# Practice:

## Journal and Examen

Katia and Tyler noted two ways we can grow in listening to God's voice: **Journaling and the Prayer of Examen.**

### 1. Listen and journal

This week, set aside 5–10 minutes each day to listen to God. Try to find a quiet space where you can be alone — maybe a corner of your home, a peaceful walking route, or even a closet.

If you find it helpful, set a timer for 5 minutes. Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and ask God to speak to you. Pay attention to the thoughts, images, or feelings that come to mind. As they do, write them down in your journal.

When your time is up, thank God for speaking, and continue with your day. At the end of the week — or even each day — take a moment to look over what you've written. Notice any patterns or ways you sense God has been speaking to you.

If you want to continue this practice, you can gradually increase your time in silence over the coming weeks. Remember, it's not about how long you pray but about showing up with intention and openness.

### 2. The Prayer of Examen

Another prayer practice we explored is the Prayer of Examen. Tyler encouraged us to spend time each evening reflecting on where we felt our hearts *burn* — or, in other words, when we sensed the voice of God.

Consider building a consistent rhythm of praying the Examen with the [Lectio 365 app](#). This free app introduces us to the ancient prayer rhythms of Jesus and his earliest disciples by guiding us through short prayers in the morning, midday, and evening.

The nighttime prayer is specifically designed around the Prayer of Examen, helping us look back on the day to notice where God was present and where we might have missed Him.

## NOTES

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# Suggested Resources

We suggest a few key resources with each *Praying in Color Podcast* episode to help you further develop your prayer practice. These resources have been helpful to many seeking to deepen their relationship with God in prayer. May they also encourage you!

## BOOKS:

*Hearing God* by Dallas Willard

*How to Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People* by Pete Greig

*The Deeply Formed Life* by Rich Villodas

## APP:

You can download the Lectio 365 app at

[www.24-7prayerusa.com/resources/lectio-365](http://www.24-7prayerusa.com/resources/lectio-365).

WEEK 03

# Adoration



# & Lament

WITH MARK SAYERS

## Overview

In week three of the *Praying in Color Podcast*, we explore the prayer practices of **Adoration and Lament**. Though they seem like opposites, they are two inseparable aspects of our lives. In life, we will experience both joy and brokenness. In this tension, Adoration and Lament teach us to find God in a world that is still being redeemed.

Adoration comes from the word “adore”. It is a prayer of outpouring, where we simply tell God how much we love him. Lament is broken-hearted prayer. It is the type of prayer that flows naturally from our experiences of life’s difficulties and all that is out of alignment with what God intended for His world. Lament is like a groaning for what breaks the heart of God.

# Reflection

Take some time to reflect on the psalms below. Each of these is a prayer of either Adoration or Lament. Reflect on how the prayers invite God into the life of the author.

## Psalm 13 NIV

How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?  
How long must I wrestle with my thoughts  
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?  
How long will my enemy triumph over me?  
Look on me and answer, LORD my God.  
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,  
and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"  
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.  
But I trust in your unfailing love;  
my heart rejoices in your salvation.  
I will sing the LORD's praise,  
for he has been good to me.

## Psalm 145:1-8 NIV

I will exalt you, my God the King;  
I will praise your name for ever and ever.  
Every day I will praise you  
and extol your name for ever and ever.  
Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;  
his greatness no one can fathom.  
One generation commends your works to another;  
they tell of your mighty acts.  
They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty —  
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.  
They tell of the power of your awesome works —  
and I will proclaim your great deeds.  
They celebrate your abundant goodness  
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.  
The LORD is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and rich in love.

**With these prayers in mind, take some time to reflect on the following:**

1. What part of the podcast episode stood out to you the most? Why?
2. How do Adoration and Lament help us see the Kingdom of God in everyday life? In what way does Adoration shape the way we understand God?
3. Mark spoke about how Western culture chases a life of pleasure without pain. How does Lament keep us from this temptation and show us how to live in a broken world?
4. Are you more drawn to Lament or Adoration? Why?

# Practice:

## Praying the Psalms

To grow in these prayer practices, we find new ways to weave them into our daily lives. This week, we will structure our prayer lives around Adoration and Lament. Remember, these are merely ideas! Feel free to make these prayer practices personal to your own life.

For thousands of years, the book of Psalms has taught God's people how to pray with honesty and intimacy through Adoration and Lament. One of the best ways to grow in these practices is by praying the Psalms, letting these ancient prayers become the foundation for your own.

### How to pray the Psalms

#### 1. Prepare your heart

Find a quiet place and take a few moments to sit in stillness. Bring to mind the joys and difficulties of life, from your own experience or the lives of others.

#### 2. Read slowly and reflectively

Choose a psalm and read it slowly, paying attention to words or phrases that stand out to you. Notice if anything stirs joy or resistance in your heart.

#### 3. Pray the psalm as your own

Read the psalm again, but this time personalize it as a prayer for your life. Resist the urge to rush through the words. Let them shape your prayer of Adoration or Lament. Sometimes, you'll come across a psalm that doesn't feel relevant to your situation. Don't skip it. Instead, pray it on behalf of others, whether by lamenting the brokenness in the world or praising God even in the middle of your own pain.

#### 4. Where to start?

You can begin with Psalm 1 and move forward from there. Within just a few days, you'll encounter both prayers of Adoration and Lament. Or, if you'd like more guidance, use the seven-day schedule we've provided below, which highlights some of the most well-known psalms of Adoration and Lament:

Day 1: Psalm 16

Day 2: Psalm 22

Day 3: Psalm 146

Day 4: Psalm 77

Day 5: Psalm 150

Day 6: Psalm 42

Day 7: Psalm 37

## NOTES

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# Suggested Resources

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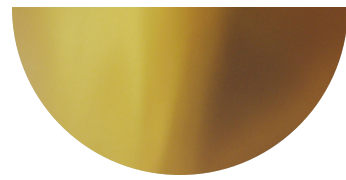
## BOOKS:

*Answering God* by Eugene Peterson

*Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times* by Soong-Chan Rah

WEEK 04



# Becoming Our Prayers

WITH PETE GREIG, MARK SAYERS, AND DR. KATIA ADAMS

## Overview

In week four of the *Praying in Color Podcast*, we explore the idea of **Becoming our Prayers**. Prayer is about practicing the presence of God in our everyday lives. As disciples of Jesus, we aim to live in awareness of his presence at all times, becoming increasingly aware of his voice and connected to him relationally. The prayer practices we explore in the *Praying in Color Podcast* are meant to help us experience God more deeply and become people filled with his divine love; they are not meant to be a checklist of disciplines to work through.

This week's question is, "How do we become our prayers and experience God in our everyday, ordinary lives?" As we reflect on this idea alongside Scripture, think about how you might find God's transformative presence in "the wilderness of prayer" — the ups and downs of the day-to-day.

# Reflection

## Matthew 26:1-13 NIV

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, "As you know, the Passover is two days away — and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. "But not during the festival," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people." While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table. When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor." Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

Now that you have carefully read these scriptures, take some time to reflect on the following:

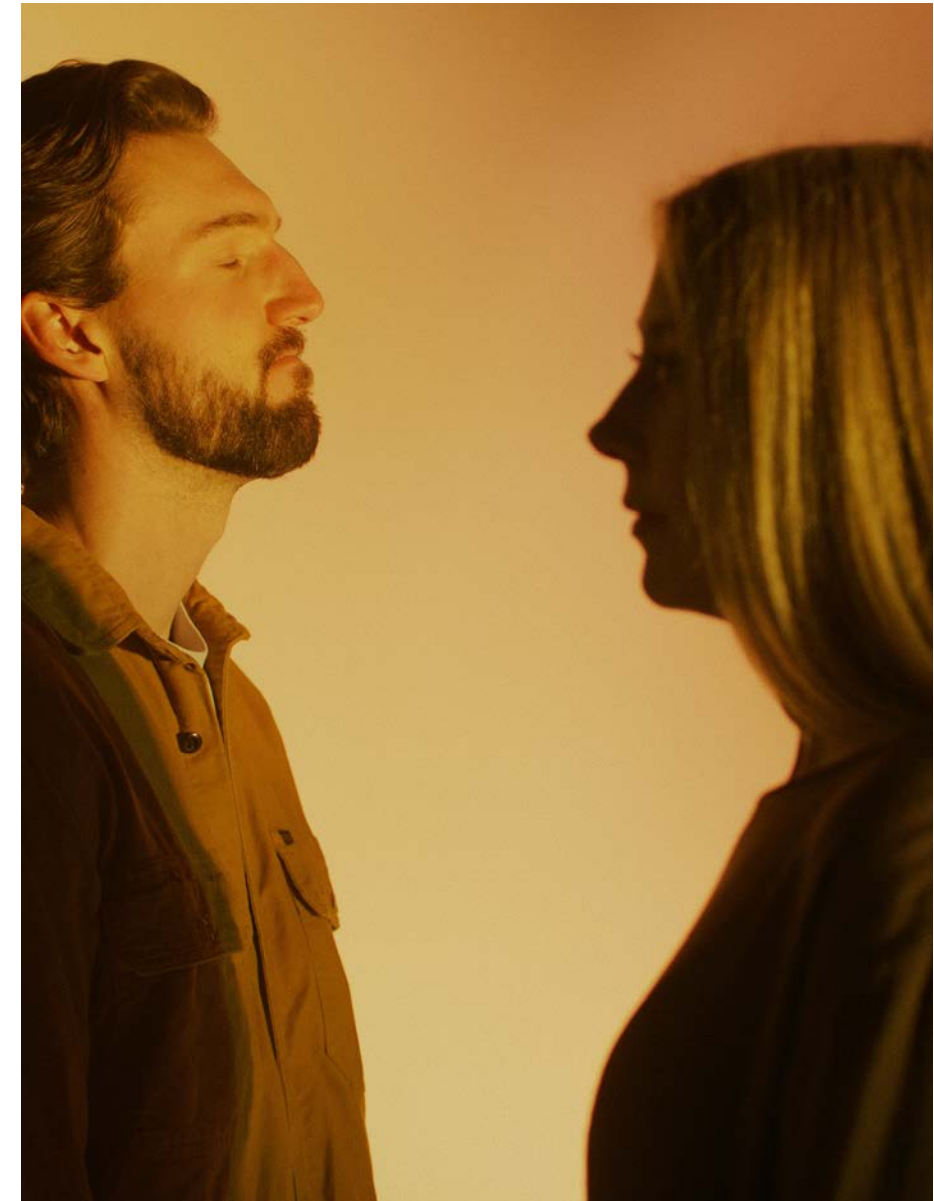
1. How has a season of "wilderness" or struggle shaped your prayer life?
2. Where do you notice God in your daily life? Are there habits or common interruptions in your day that you could approach with more intentionality? Where can you recognize God's presence in them?
3. Do you sense the Spirit inviting you to try any prayer practices highlighted in the podcast series? How can you add them to your daily routine?

# Practice:

## Daily Prayer Rhythm

To grow in these prayer practices, we find new ways to weave them into our daily lives. This week, we want to engage with Lectio 365, an app that introduces us to the ancient prayer rhythms of Jesus and his earliest disciples by guiding us through short prayers in the morning, midday, and evening.

You can download the app at [www.24-7prayerusa.com/resources/lectio-365](http://www.24-7prayerusa.com/resources/lectio-365).



## NOTES

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# Suggested Resources

We suggest a few key resources with each *Praying in Color Podcast* episode to help you further develop your prayer practice. These resources have been helpful to many seeking to deepen their relationship with God in prayer. May they also encourage you!

## BOOKS:

*Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools* by Tyler Staton

*Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ* by Jeanne Guyon

*Praying with the Church: Following Jesus Daily, Hourly, Today* by Scot McKnight

*Red Moon Rising* by Pete Greig

WEEK 05



# Intercession

WITH JON TYSON

## Overview

In week five of the *Praying in Color Podcast*, we explore the practice of **Intercession**. Intercession is a prayer of love for others. Richard Foster said, “If we truly love people, we will desire for them far more than it is within our power to give them, and this will lead us to prayer.”<sup>1</sup> In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus models this prayer by saying, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10 NIV).

Why does God want us to pray for others? Because he loves to work with us and through us! As Jon Tyson explained, this shows his love, partnership, patience, and how seriously he takes us.

<sup>1</sup>Foster, Richard J. (1992). *Prayer: Finding the heart's true home*. (10th ed.) HarperSanFrancisco.

# Reflect

**Take some time to reflect on this example of Intercession recorded in the Bible. Pay special attention to the burdens that drove Moses to pray great prayers of love for the Israelites.**

## **Exodus 33:1-3 NIV**

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way."

## **Exodus 33:12-23 NIV**

Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people." The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name." Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." And the

LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

**After you have thought about these passages, take some time to reflect on the following:**

1. What can the prayers of Moses teach us about prayers of Intercession?
2. In a world that trains us to focus only on ourselves, how can we develop a habit of praying for others?
3. Is there a burden on your heart that you've stopped praying for? Why did you stop, and how might you begin praying for it again?

# Practice:

## Wait, Receive, Contend

To grow in these prayer practices, we need a way to weave them into our daily lives. Each week, we've created a simple practice to help you grow more comfortable with this way of praying. This week, Jon Tyson gave us a helpful practice of Intercession under the headings "Wait," "Receive," and "Contend."

### 1. Wait

Intercession begins with a burden. Spend some time in daily prayer asking God to give you a burden for a particular person or group of people. It might be helpful to have a journal near you as you wait for God to bring you a burden to intercede for.

### 2. Receive

Once God has given you a specific burden to pray for, make an intentional plan to pray. Remember, start small, be consistent, and continue to ask God to reveal his promises.

### 3. Contend

Lastly, pray! Pray continually and ask God to increase your burden so that as you pray, you desire to see God move more and more.

## NOTES

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# Suggested Resources

We suggest a few key resources with each *Praying in Color Podcast* episode to help you further develop your prayer practice. These resources have been helpful to many seeking to deepen their relationship with God in prayer. May they also encourage you!

## BOOK:

*Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* by Richard Foster

*The Ministry of Intercession* by Andrew Murray

*World Christians: Living on the Wavelength of the Great Commission*  
by Sunder Krishnan

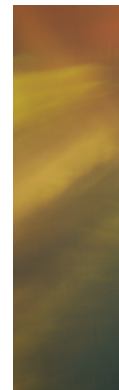
## APP:

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WEEK 06



# Creativity in Prayer

WITH JONATHAN AND MELISSA HELSER

## Overview

In week six of the *Praying in Color Podcast*, Jonathan and Melissa Helser discuss bringing the full range of our human emotions to our prayers to experience deeper **Creativity in Prayer**. In Western culture, it is common to compartmentalize our body, mind, and soul. A side effect of this is prayer becoming formulaic, routine, and even boring. David and the Psalms teach us that this is not to be so.

In this week's practice, we remind ourselves of who we are through the creative act of praying with our whole selves.

# Reflect

After listening to the *Praying in Color Podcast* episode “Creativity in Prayer with Jonathan and Melissa Helser,” take some time to reflect on the following passage of Scripture. Refer back to it throughout the week, allowing the Spirit to highlight different or repeated elements as you do.

## Psalm 23 NIV

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
He leads me beside quiet waters,  
he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever.

With these verses and the concept of bringing your full self and emotions to prayer, reflect on the following questions about creativity:

1. What stood out to you from this episode? Where did you experience gratitude, hope, or clarity while listening?
2. Where did you feel yourself withdrawing or dismissing something?
3. What rhythms and practices would you like to develop further or return to?
4. Is there a friend or mentor you can learn from or imitate? Can you ask them to guide you as you explore these concepts or meet regularly to practice Creativity in Prayer together?

# Practice:

## Meditate, Feel, Live Out

### 1. Read and meditate on Psalm 23

Find a quiet place in your home that you can return to regularly.  
Read Psalm 23 aloud. We recommend reading through it 3-4 times, slowly.  
Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you and guide you as you read.

You may find the practice of Lectio Divina helpful for your meditation:

**Read (lectio):** read (aloud) the passage of scripture to yourself

*Pause*

**Meditate (meditatio):** ponder on what the Spirit is highlighting to you

*Pause*

**Pray (oratio):** pray into the passage, asking the Spirit to make the Word clear or a reality

*Pause*

**Rest (contemplatio):** in silence, rest and receive God's presence before moving on

If this practice is new for you, start with where you are.  
One reading may be just enough.

### 2. Feel

As you sit and read, take note of what emotions rise to the surface. Be a curious observer of your feelings. Don't judge or push them away. It may be helpful to imagine your soul as a house with each emotion stepping up to the front porch. Sit there with them. Allow the Spirit to highlight which emotions get to come in today, and which can stay out for now.

If naming your feelings is difficult in this moment, ask the Spirit to guide you. Start where you are, and ask the Spirit to help. However you choose to spend this time, it may be beneficial to journal through the following prompts.

**What am I feeling as I read this passage?**

Pay special attention to the emotions you may not necessarily want to feel. It is often in confrontation and discomfort that God most desires to meet us.

**Why am I feeling this way?**

Are there attachments, questions, hopes, or doubts underneath that feeling? Do you find yourself scoffing at the idea of green pastures in the midst of a difficult year, or feel offense or shame arise at the idea of "lacking nothing" amidst a lived experience of loneliness or poverty?

**Is there anything, God, that You want me to know about this feeling?**

Wait and allow God to speak. He may bring up a word, picture, or passage of Scripture to your mind. If you hear and feel nothing, that is okay too!

Find relief in knowing you're finally praying.

### 3. Find an outlet

The practice of "living out" our prayer time with God reminds us that we are embodied creatures. All of our senses, emotions, and thoughts were made to work together to ground us in the present moment and awaken us to the beauty of everyday life. Allow yourself to experiment with what makes you feel fully integrated and able to communicate your whole self before God.

Examples of embodying creative practices include:

- Sing the Psalms back to the Lord.
- Express your emotions through poetry, painting, or playing an instrument.
- Practice gratitude while washing dishes or folding laundry.
- Journal your feelings in prayer every morning and evening.
- Go for a walk in nature.

Douglas Kain McKelvey says, "By putting words to the longing of our hearts throughout the ordinary moments of our days, we can connect the dots, making every moment holy as we live before our God."

The unique way God has wired us as individuals in our specific contexts demonstrates beauty in the breadth of His creation. Allow yourself to experiment with what makes you feel fully integrated before God.

After reviewing these examples, which practice do you feel invited to explore deeper? It may be helpful to set a time and place to practice Creativity in Prayer.

## NOTES

## NOTES



# Suggested Resources

We suggest a few key resources with each *Praying in Color Podcast* episode to help you further develop your prayer practice. These resources have been helpful to many seeking to deepen their relationship with God in prayer. May they also encourage you!

## BOOKS:

*Sacred Pathways* by Gary Thomas

*Designed to Pray: Creative Ways to Engage with God*  
by Kelly O'Dell Stanley

*Devotions* by Mary Oliver

*Art+Faith: A Theology of Making* by Makoto Fujimura



WEEK 07



# Confession

WITH RICH VILLODAS

## Overview

In week seven, Rich Villodas discusses the practice of **Confession**. As we dive deeper into this practice, we discover Confession to be one of the most liberating tools in our prayer toolkits.

Different denominations have various ways of understanding and practicing Confession, but at its heart, Confession can be broken down into two categories: sin and struggle. Rich states, “to confess our sins is to root us deeply in reality, and reality is where we meet God — not in untruth, deception, and lies, and illusion.” When we are unable to name areas in our lives where we struggle, we live in unreality. This is where sin thrives and forces us into shame and secrecy.

### 1 John 1:8-9 NIV

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Confession is God’s gift to humanity, to remind us of our limits — to unburden us from needing to be more than “human-sized,” as Rich puts it. In this week’s guide, we engage with the practice of Confession as a means to meet with God, choose to live in reality, and experience healing and grace from others.

# Reflect

After listening to the *Praying in Color Podcast* episode “Confession with Rich Villodas,” take some time to reflect on the following passage of Scripture. Refer back to it throughout the week, allowing the Spirit to highlight different or the same elements as you do.

**Psalm 139:23-24 NIV**

“Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.  
See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.”

With Psalm 139 in mind, take a couple of minutes to reflect on the following questions to continue your exploration of Confession:

1. What stood out to you from this episode? Where did you experience gratitude, hope, or clarity while listening?
2. Where do you feel resistance to this practice? Where did you feel yourself withdrawing or dismissing something?
3. How is God inviting you to go deeper in this practice? What rhythms and practices would you like to develop further or return to?
4. Is there a trusted friend, spouse, or peer with whom you can mutually practice Confession? A pastor, mentor, or spiritual director would also be a good person to reach out to.

# Practice:

## Confess Through Examen and in Community

To confess is to simply put into words what is true. Sin, translated from *hamartia* in Greek, means to miss the mark. Think of an archer, with a target and bullseye in range. They ready their arrow, focus their vision, breathe with deep intention, and release, hitting the nearby tree instead. Sin distorts the path or way we aim to go.

Sin forces us to miss the mark in pursuit of abundant life and deep satisfaction. Let's take time now to invite the Holy Spirit to search and know us, and to reveal any hidden patterns he may want to bring to light.

## Confession through Examen

One ancient way of preparing ourselves for Confession is through the practice of Examen. The Examen stems from St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuit movement and involves a series of reflections for the purpose of "rummaging for God."<sup>2</sup> Imagine the Examen as a practice of going through the day's drawer, brimming with seemingly ordinary moments, and looking for God.

### 1. Begin by taking deep breaths to focus your attention.

Repeating a short prayer such as "Come, Holy Spirit," may help your mind and body settle into this moment.

### 2. Reflect back on your day and invite the Spirit to bring up any sin.

Ask yourself, "When did I feel disconnected from God today?" and "Where have I not loved my neighbor today?" You may know the answers right away; you might also be surprised by what comes to mind. Confess that moment, conversation, or pattern to God, and receive his forgiveness and mercy that is always extended toward you. Thank him for the gift of his grace.

It may be helpful to make this practice a regular evening rhythm, reflecting on your past 24 hours. You can also do this practice weekly or monthly; start where you are.

<sup>2</sup>Hamm SJ, Fr. Dennis. (1994, May 14). Rummaging for God: Praying backward through your day. Archdiocese of Milwaukee. <https://www.archmil.org/ArchMil/ArchbishopListeckLetters/Synod-2014/Post-Synod-/Lay-Ministry/RummagingforGod.pdf>

### 3. Share and confess with a trusted friend.

James 5:16 NIV tells us, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." Having a trusted friend or mentor to speak the truth of God's love over you can be a powerful and transformative time when you can experience God's presence through the care of another.

## Confession in community

This week, Rich gave us a simple outline for engaging with the practice of Confession in community. If you are part of a small group at church, a leadership team, or have a circle of friends you would like to invite to the regular practice of Confession, allow the following questions to serve as a guide to that time. Read the questions out loud and give roughly 5–10 minutes of silence for people to think through their answers before sharing.

### 1. What are you carrying right now?

Allow yourself to reflect on and name any disappointments, unmet expectations, and anxieties you are currently struggling with. What feels heavy, burdensome, or overwhelming in your life right now? Where are you tempted to hide?

### 2. What does your soul need?

These can be emotional or tangible needs that impact your well-being.

### 3. What is an image that encompasses one or both of those things?

Is there a helpful metaphor or picture you can use to communicate what you feel and need? Does the burden of being laid off feel like a ton of bricks or more like losing control of a steering wheel? Does uncertainty in a relationship feel like walking around in the dark or more like a gift you are scared to open?

### 4. Pray together.

End by praying for each other, reminding one another of God's forgiveness and love. You may find it encouraging to read a passage of scripture such as Romans 8:31-39. We recommend scheduling time with the same group of people every week or once a month. Through practicing vulnerable Confession in community, we experience greater transformation and freedom, therefore building and reinforcing cultures of authenticity and humility.

## NOTES

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# Suggested Resources

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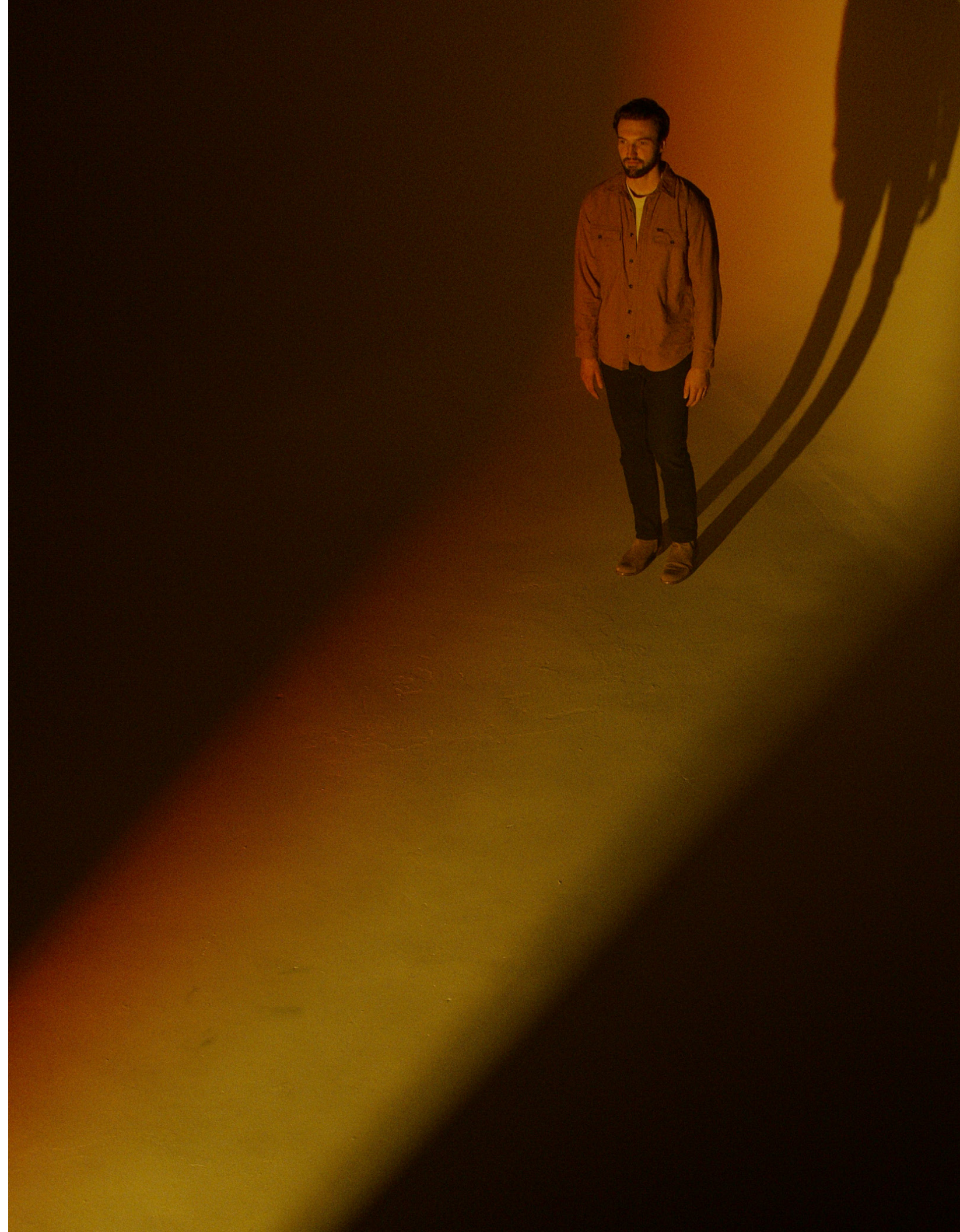
## BOOKS:

*The Soul of Shame* by Curt Thompson

*Now I Become Myself* by Ken Shigematsu

## PRAYER PRACTICE:

The Ignatian Examen







WEEK 08

# Communal Prayer

WITH JON TYSON, RICH VILLODAS,  
AND THE HELSERS

## Overview

In week eight of the *Praying in Color Podcast*, we explore the practice of **Communal Prayer**. While there is so much power in our individual prayers, it is undeniable that God loves and seeks to form us through Communal Prayer — prayer with others. Communal Prayer is a unifying reality in the church that allows us to be the unified people God has intended us to be. Prayer and worship are what we were made for, and God is always seeking out people who will love him and long to be more like him.

Communal Prayer also brings a spiritual anointing to our prayers. While we cannot control God or bend him to our will, God loves it when his people are unified so much that he is quick to be present to those who call upon him in community.

As we take some time to reflect on the following passages, consider how prayer unites us and brings us into God's presence.

# Reflection

## Acts 4:23-31 NIV

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.' Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

**Keeping these scriptural examples of Communal Prayer in mind, reflect on the following:**

1. What are some of your experiences with Communal Prayer and worship? How have you seen it unite the people of God? How do you think Communal Prayer expresses God's heart for his people?
2. Is Communal Prayer a challenging or enjoyable practice for you? Why do you think that is? What are some ways for you to grow more in Communal Prayer?
3. What is God showing you about prayer right now? How have you grown in your prayer life through other people?

# Practice:

## Gather Together

This week, our practice is to gather with a group of people to pray. This could be a small group, Bible study group, or friends and family. Whoever you want to gather with, find a comfortable space to spend some time in Communal Prayer. You can do this in any way that you would like! Below are some ideas for guiding your prayer time:

### 1. Begin with worship

Start with some worship or the reading and praying of Psalms. Worship brings our prayers alive and centers our thoughts and hearts on the reality of who God is and who we are in light of his beauty.

### 2. Pray the Lord's Prayer thematically

Use the Lord's Prayer as your guide, and make your way through prayers of adoration, intercession, petition, confession, and spiritual warfare. Take time for people to move slowly through each theme.

### 3. Prayer of Contemplation and Prophecy

Take some time in silence to gaze on the beauty of God individually and allow the relational connection to guide your time of prayer. Ask God what he might want to say or show the group. How might God want to encourage us?

### 4. Intercession

Pick a particular theme or people group to intercede for and spend the prayer meeting asking God to meet those specific needs. Be patient with these prayers and allow God to create an ache or bruise in your heart for what you're praying for. Nothing is more powerful than God's people united with a particular burden in prayer.

No matter how you go about your prayer time together, the most important thing is for this to be an act of unity and love. Be gracious and compassionate to each other, and expect to see God move!

## NOTES

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# Suggested Resources

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## BOOKS:

*When the Church was a Family* by Joseph Hellerman

*Beautiful Resistance* by Jon Tyson

*Water from a Deep Well* by Gerald Sittser

*Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* by Esau McCaulley



WEEK 09

# Contemplative Prayer

WITH JOHN MARK COMER



## Overview

In the bonus episode of the *Praying in Color Podcast*, we explore the practice of **Contemplative Prayer**. Though Contemplative Prayer has many different meanings and expressions throughout Church history, John Mark defines it as simply looking at God as he is looking at you, in love. We see God with the eyes of our hearts, and as we gaze upon his glory, we are transformed to become more like him.

Contemplative Prayer is also about surrendering our wills to God. When we pray in this way, attachments or idols in our lives often rise to the surface of our minds and seek to distract us from gazing upon God. In Contemplative Prayer, we intentionally release those attachments to God so that he can come and heal those places in our lives.

As we take some time to reflect on the following passages, keep in mind how Contemplative Prayer seeks to transform us through a deeper union with God.

# Reflection

## 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 NIV

But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

## John 15:1-10 NIV

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.

After thinking about union with God in these scriptures, take some time to reflect on the following:

1. What do you spend most of your time looking at? How are those things forming and shaping you?
2. How can you create space in your life to behold or contemplate God? What might you need to do less of or let go of to create more space for this type of prayer?
3. How has this podcast shaped or challenged your idea of Contemplative Prayer? What do you feel about the invitation? Where do you feel resistance?

# Practice:

# Contemplative Prayer

Tyler Staton outlined a helpful way to journey into Contemplative Prayer. Remember, Contemplative Prayer is not a technique. It has to be unique to you and your journey with God. This is just a suggestion for getting started.

## 1. Intention

Find a quiet space, and position yourself in an open and honest posture. Begin with some deep breaths, quieting your mind, and focusing your thoughts on God. If helpful, set an alarm clock for 5–10 minutes, so you don't have to worry about the time.

## 2. Invitation

Invite God's presence by saying, "Come, Holy Spirit." If helpful, pray this as a breath prayer, saying the same words over and over with the rhythm of your breath. This helps keep our minds focused on God and away from distractions.

## 3. Surrender

Don't be surprised if distractions or points of tension begin to arise; simply acknowledge them and surrender them to God by saying, "God, I surrender this to you." Distractions will come, but every distraction is simply an opportunity to turn back to God. As many times as you need to, yield to God all that seeks to take away from this moment of prayer.

## 4. Wait

Continue waiting for as long as you feel led. The aim is to simply enjoy the presence of God and wait for him. Sometimes, Contemplative Prayer can feel quite ordinary, which can lead some to think they must have done something wrong. But don't be discouraged! Many times in Contemplative Prayer, our experience is simple and ordinary, but that is God's love nonetheless. Continue to show up intentionally and invite God's presence into your life. At the end of your time, express your gratitude and continue on with your day, always watching to see where God may meet you next.

## NOTES

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# Suggested Resources

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## BOOK:

*You Are What You Love* by James K. A. Smith

*The Way of the Heart* by Henri Nouwen

*Invitation to Silence and Solitude* by Ruth Haley Barton

*Spirit of the Disciplines* by Dallas Willard



