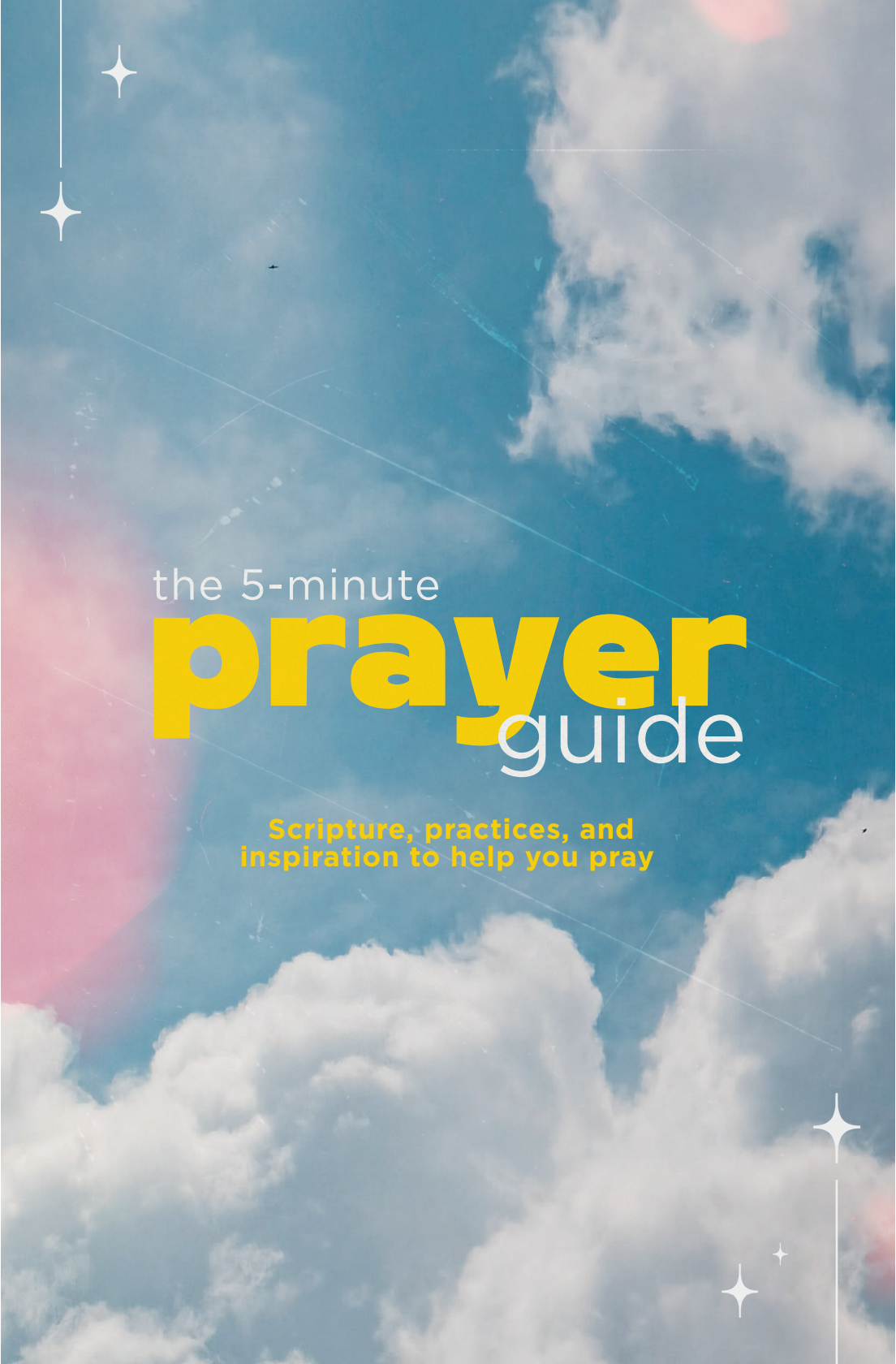

the 5-minute
prayer
guide
Scripture, practices, and
inspiration to help you pray

“WHAT DOES IT ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE TO PRAY FOR FIVE MINUTES?”

Maybe that’s a question you’re afraid to ask out loud. When it comes to prayer, it’s easy to assume everyone else has an easier time with it than we do.

But the reality is, we live in a culture that is busy and loud — full of smartphone notifications, work and school demands, parenting responsibilities, and a thousand other things competing for our attention. Because of that, five minutes of slowing down and focusing on God can feel like a long time. We may even wonder what we’re supposed to do for all five minutes.

Prayer is just talking to God. The goal isn’t to say the perfect words or follow a certain formula. It’s simply to spend dedicated time with God — to talk with him, bring him what’s on your heart, and make space to listen.

But sometimes freedom can leave us wondering: *Okay, but still, what do I actually do?*

That's where this guide comes in. If you're not sure how to spend your five minutes on any given day, try one of these three approaches:

SCRIPTURE

Pray through a Bible passage.

Use the words of Scripture to shape your prayers. We've gathered some biblical passages that you can read, reflect on, and respond to.

SIMPLE STRUCTURES

Give your prayer time some direction.

These are prayer patterns and prompts Christians throughout history have used to help them focus and connect with God.

PRAYERS FROM THE PAST

Borrow someone else's words.

Sometimes it helps to see how someone else has prayed. This section includes prayers from others — some ancient, some modern — that you can read, pray, or make your own.

As you use this guide, don't be afraid to try something new. Embrace the awkwardness. Don't worry about doing it perfectly. Just show up and see what happens. We believe God can do something meaningful in us, our church, and our world as we make space to seek him together through prayer.



SCRIPTURE

Passages to Pray Through

Four-Step Scripture Prayer

READ: Read the passage slowly.
REFLECT: What words, phrases, or ideas stand out?
RESPOND: Talk to God about what you noticed.
REST: Sit quietly for a moment and be present with God.

Matthew 6:9-13
(The Lord's Prayer)
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today 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 the evil one.

Ephesians 1:15-19
(Praying for wisdom and spiritual understanding)
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.

Ephesians 3:16-21
(Praying to know the love of Jesus)
I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to

know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Philippians 4:4-7
(Praying through worries)
Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:9-14
(Praying for wisdom, strength, and patience)
We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 4:14-16
(Coming with confidence to God for mercy, forgiveness, and grace)
Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who

is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Psalm 23

(Trusting God as Shepherd)

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.

Psalm 63:1-8

(Hungering and thirsting for God)

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.

Various Psalms To Pray During Tough Times

(From the book “Lead with Prayer”)

Psalm 3:3

But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high.

Psalm 13:1

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

Psalm 18:16

He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters.

Psalm 22:1

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me?

Psalm 27:1

The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?

Psalm 42:5

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God.

Psalm 91:1-2

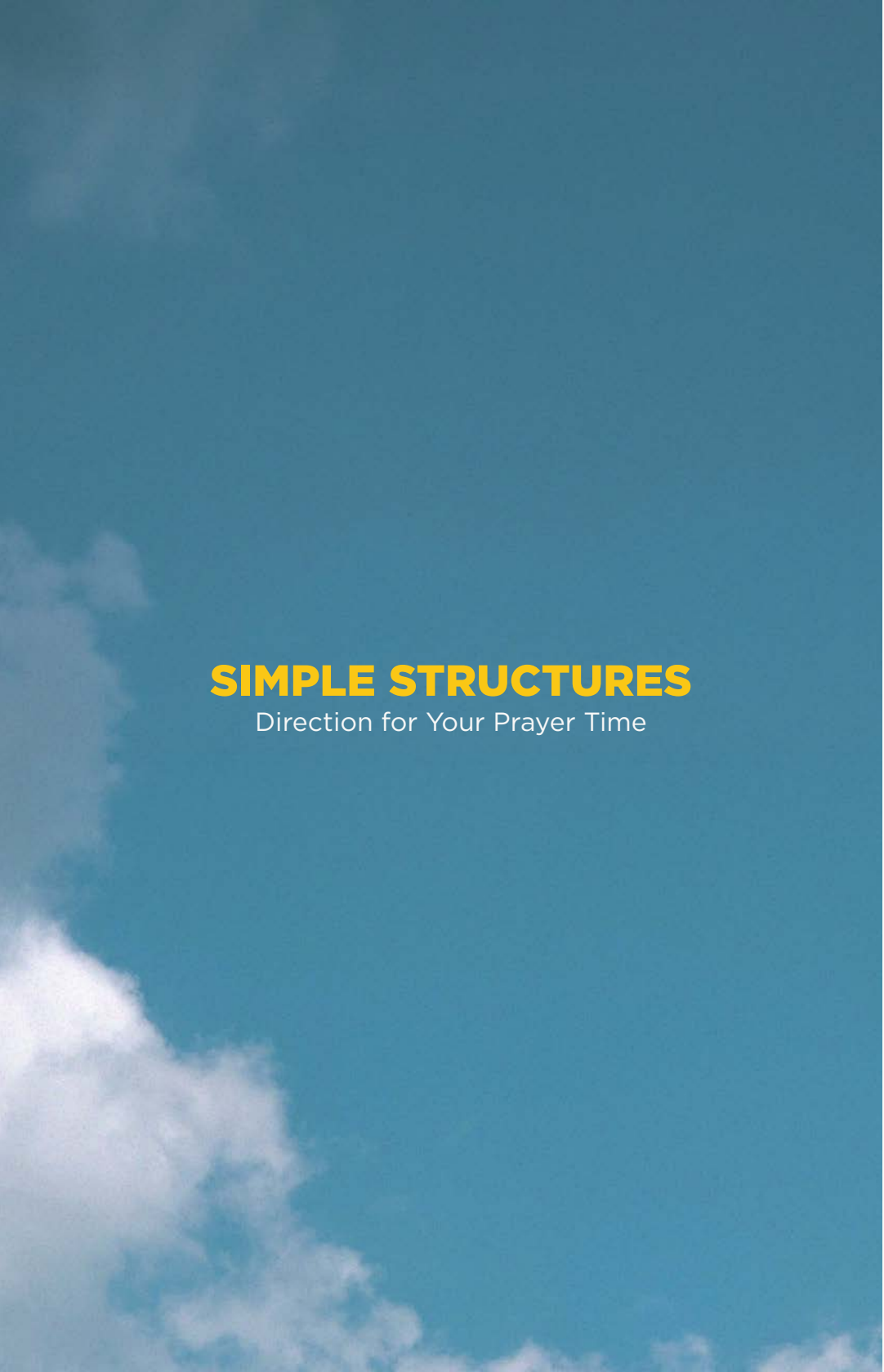
Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

Psalm 121:1-2

I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 126:5
Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.

Psalm 130:1
Out of the depths I cry to you LORD.



SIMPLE STRUCTURES

Direction for Your Prayer Time

The PRAY Acronym

Jesus taught his disciples how to pray in Matthew 6:9-13. This acronym (PRAY) comes from that teaching. Follow the steps to personalize Jesus' model for prayer for yourself.

P – Praise: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." Begin by focusing on who God is.

R – Repent: "Forgive us our debts..." Confess where you've fallen short and receive God's forgiveness.

A – Ask: "Give us today our daily bread." Bring your needs and the needs of others to God.

Y – Yield: "Your kingdom come, your will be done..." Surrender your plans and desires to God's will.

Help, Thanks, Wow

(Anne Lamott)

"Help!": God, I need you. Here's where I'm struggling, hurting, afraid, or in need of your help.

"Thanks!": God, thank you. Here's where I see your goodness, provision, grace, or presence in my life.

"Wow!": God, wow. Here's where I'm amazed by you, your creation, or something beautiful and unexpected.

The Examen Prayer

(This version from "The Prayerful Leader")

In the Gospels, Jesus and his followers would spend time together, talking about what they had seen and done. That same rhythm eventually grew into the Examen prayer practice — a chance to sit with Jesus at the end of the day, like friends around a campfire, and look back on it together. Here's a simple pattern to try it:

Replay: Walk through the events of your day and your emotions.

Rejoice: Thank God for his presence, guidance, and provision.

Repent: Let the Spirit reveal areas in which you need to confess and repent.

Resolve: Pray about how you can take the lessons from this time today into the next day.

Breath Prayers

(From "Our Daily Breath Devotional" by Kayla Craig)

Use these short prayers to check in on how you're doing. How is your mind? Your body? Your soul? In Matthew 11:28, Jesus welcomes the weary and burdened, offering rest. Take a minute to stop and let your breath become a prayer, accepting Jesus' offer of divine soul rest.

INHALE: "I'm weary."
EXHALE: "You give me rest."

Inhale and exhale God's promise. People, places, and policies will disappoint. But God will not fail or abandon you, just as God has never failed or abandoned his people. This breath prayer is from Joshua 1:5. May you feel stronger and more courageous as you breathe in and out the promise that God will not disappoint, even when others do.

INHALE: "You won't fail me."
EXHALE: "Or abandon me."

One-Sentence Prayers

(From "Lead with Prayer")

Sometimes one short phrase or simple sentence will lead into a longer conversation with God. Here are a few to consider.

"Lord, fill my soul with your peace."

"Father, fill my heart with your love."

"Holy Spirit, fill me with your joy."

"Teach me to listen to your voice today."

"Help me understand your will."

"Open my eyes to see you."

"Protect my mind, soul, and spirit in this moment."

“God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you.”
“Why so downcast, my soul?”
“Give me your wisdom for this moment.”
“Remind me you are here right now.”
“You are my best thought both day and night.”
“Make my life a prayer to you.”
“Hide me in the shadow of your wings.”
“Make me a blessing to everyone here.”
“Show me your heart.”
“Help me love everyone in this room.”
“Help everyone in this room find salvation.”
“I give you this burden.”
“Lift my eyes to see you, Jesus.”
“Forgive my wandering thoughts.”
“Father, I need you right now.”
“Take this sin from my heart.”
“Yahweh, show me your glory.”
“Come near, Lord Jesus.”
“Help me do what pleases you today.”
“Come bring salvation to the nations.”
“Come to my neighborhood/family/work.”
“Remind me of your love in this moment.”
“Lord, what do you want?”
“Show me how deep and long and high your love is.”
“Help me be still and not miss your presence in this moment.”
“God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause your face to shine upon us.”



PRAYERS FROM THE PAST

Borrow Someone Else's Words

St. Patrick's Breastplate

(Attributed to St. Patrick, abridged)

I arise today
Through God's strength to pilot me;
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's shield to protect me,
God's host to save me
From the snares of the devil,
From the temptations of vices,
From everyone who desires me ill,
Afar and anear,
Alone or in a multitude.

Christ before me.
Christ behind me.
Christ on my right.
Christ on my left.
Christ above me.
Christ beneath me.
Christ in me.
Christ upon me.
Christ when I lie down.
Christ when I sit down.
Christ in the eyes of all who see me.
Christ in the ears of all who hear me.

I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through a belief in the Threeness,
Through a confession of the Oneness
Of the Creator of creation.

The Serenity Prayer
(Attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr)

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
forever in the next.
Amen.

A Northumbrian Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,
wherever He may send you.
May He guide you through the wilderness,
protect you through the storm.
May He bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders He has shown you.
May He bring you home rejoicing
once again into our doors.

Bookmark Prayer
(St. Teresa of Ávila)

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing;
God only is changeless.
Patience gains all things.
Who has God wants nothing.
God alone suffices.

Forgive Us for What We Could Have Been

(Martin Luther King, Jr., from "Thou, Dear God: Prayers That Open Hearts and Spirits")

O Thou Eternal God, out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence the whole universe has come into being, we humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls, and minds, and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us. We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ. We often give in order to receive. We love our friends and hate our enemies. We go the first mile but dare not travel the second. We forgive but dare not forget. And so as we look within ourselves, we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives is the history of an eternal revolt against you. But thou, O God, have mercy upon us. Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be. Give us the intelligence to know your will. Give us the courage to do your will. Give us the devotion to love thy will. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray.

Make Me an Instrument of Peace

(St. Francis of Assisi)

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

Be My Vision

(Attributed to Dallán Forgaill)

Be my vision, O Lord of my heart.
Be my meditation by day or night.
May it be you that I behold even in my sleep.
Be my speech, be my understanding.
Be with me, may I be with you.
Be my father, may I be your child.
May you be mine, may I be yours.
Be my battle-shield, be my sword.
Be my dignity, be my delight.
Be my shelter, be my stronghold.
Raise me up to the company of angels.
Be every good to my body and soul.
Be my kingdom in heaven and on earth.
Be solely the chief love of my heart.
Let there be none other, O high King of heaven,
Until I am able to pass into your hands,
My treasure, my beloved, through the greatness of your love.
Be the constant guardian of every possession and every life,
For our corrupt desires are dead at the mere sight of you.
O King of heaven grant me this:
Your love be in my heart and in my soul.
With the king of all, with him after victory won by piety,
May I be in the kingdom of heaven, O brightness of the sun.
O heart of my heart, whatever befall me,
O ruler of all, be my vision.

Radiating Christ
(John Henry Newman, prayed daily by Mother Teresa)

Dear Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of yours. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus. Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be a light to others.

A Prayer for Today
(Ryan Skoog, Peter Greer, Cameron Doolittle)

Lord, today, help me see what I need to see, hear what I need to hear, know what I need to know, and do what I need to do.

Lord, also help me look away from what I should not see, not listen to what I should not hear, ignore what I should not know, and say no to what I should not do.

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