

# ONWARD

from the desk of Chris Greer



---

Hey, . Got a question for ya...

When are you most likely to pray? And what triggers your prayers?

In college, I met a fellow freshman with a strange habit: occasionally, she'd freeze. She'd literally take a short, physical pause in the middle of whatever she was doing.

She did it while studying, walking across campus, and even driving (I still thank God that her "pauses" didn't include closing her eyes).

Finally, one day I asked her, "What are you doing?"

She simply said, "I'm praying."

"Oh," I said. "That's weird."

Then she said something that's impacted my prayer life for the past 27 years: "Everything gives rise to prayer, Chris. Everything."

***Everything gives rise to prayer.***

A daily, moment-to-moment, conversational prayer life begins with and is rooted in those words. And the idea behind them will help us keep moving onward with Jesus in everyday prayer.

Let's get unstuck...

---

## quote of the week

"Our relationship with God is as unpredictable, unplannable, and unrehearsed as life with our neighbors."

— Eugene Peterson

---

There's a story Jesus told in Luke 11:5-13 to illustrate an aspect of prayer. The story is about a man, his hungry and unexpected friend, and his neighbor.

When the friend unexpectedly arrives in the middle of the night, the man rushes to his neighbor's house to ask for bread. He's in short supply and doesn't want to

be inhospitable. Initially, the sleepy neighbor refuses, but eventually gives in and provides some food.

Typically, we hone in on the man's persistence. But Eugene Peterson uncovers another layer of prayer:

*"The Neighbor prayer (Luke 5:5-13) weaves prayer into the natural fabric of daily life...Jesus places prayer (a conversation between a person and God) in a story between two neighbors."*

Two neighbors in the middle of life's unexpected joys, hassles, and routines, at that! Peterson then poses important questions and provides an important answer:

*"Do we think that prayer is a formal ritual with protocols unique to it, with its own vocabulary and syntax, manners and gestures, assigned to designated times and places?...If so, we think and suppose wrongly."\**

**If prayer is an ongoing conversation with an all-loving, all-knowing, ever-present God — then time, place, and subject are never roadblocks to prayer.**

The Spirit, through Paul's pen, prods, "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thess 5:17, ESV) Or, in the words of my college friend, "Everything gives rise to prayer."

The certainties that God is relational and enjoyable (see ONWARD [18](#) and [19](#)), and that prayer is an ongoing, unrestricted conversation, can fuel an impulse to pray about anything, anywhere, anytime.

If praying without ceasing is not yet your spiritual mentality or prayer practice, here are two things to try.

### **1. Stop saying Amen.**

I'm serious! Originally, "Amen" was a corporate response to public prayer, not a verbal end to personal prayer. Ancient Jewish congregants said "Amen" — which means "let it be so" — to voice their corporate agreement with and personal adoption of their Rabbi's teaching or prayer.

You may have noticed that "Amen" isn't included in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples.\*

Saying "amen" certainly isn't a harmful habit, but it might be an unhelpful one. If "amen" has become a subconscious signal that your conversation with God is over, then not saying it may help keep your mind and heart open to the reality that conversation with God never needs to stop.

### **2. Pick a Prayer Trigger.**

Identifying prayer triggers in the "fabric of life" is a great way to learn to pray continually.

Sirens and homelessness trigger my family to pray.

Each time one of us hears a siren or sees a person without shelter, we voice a prayer out loud. This simple habit — formed early in our kids' lives — has

multiplied in cool ways. We've grown to pray spontaneously for friends we think of, causes we hear about, forgiveness we need, injuries we sustain, words when speechless, and gratitude for meals, moments, and milestones.

I wonder... what sight, sound, or thought might trigger *you* to pray today?

**Anything and everything can give rise to prayer.**

God loves you and likes you. He listens and speaks and is always with you. So conversation with him can happen anywhere at any time.

Here's to learning to pray all day, every day.

Onward,

Chris

\*Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, pg 276

\*see Matt 6 and Luke 11

---

## **dad joke of the week**

Why did the hawk sit on the church steeple?

Because it was a bird of pray.

---

Did you miss one? Check out past ONWARD posts at [\*\*Chris-Greer.com/onward\*\*](http://Chris-Greer.com/onward).

---

Get this email from a friend? [\*\*Subscribe here\*\*](#) to get them in **your** inbox!

---

### **M Street Publishing**

6834 Cantrell Rd PMB 1479, Little Rock  
Arkansas 72207 United States

You received this because once upon a time you told Chris it was OK. But if ONWARD is unhelpful, feel free to unsubscribe.



It's all good.

[Unsubscribe](#)

