

# ONWARD

*in prayer*  
from the desk of Chris Greer

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Hey, ! Chris here.

If you picked one word to represent the rest of 2024, what would it be?

I've had more than one friend tell me that each January they ask God for a single word or phrase to define the year ahead.

My annual ["Look Back"](#) and ["Look Forward"](#) practices don't include asking God for a specific word, but it seems God decided to give me one anyway. 😊

And that word is **PRAYER**.

Here's how I know: In just the past month or two...God led our friend group to focus on prayer, he compelled me to teach my children to pray, and he provided an opportunity for me to create and teach a class on prayer at our church.

Plus, the books I plan to write and the retreats I lead this year are focused on engagement with God (which is PRAYER!).

So, , I'm taking his cues, and I'm including you in the journey.

So, let's get unstuck and keep moving ONWARD with Jesus *through prayer*...

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## quote of the week

"God is emphatically personal; God is only and exclusively God in relationship."

— Eugene Peterson

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What if we all *knew* God? I mean *really* knew him. Like the way we know our kids or spouses or best friends.

It'd be incredible. And would revolutionize our lives and communities.

For the longest time, I didn't realize that knowing God is the heart and soul of the Christian life. But now that I do, I can't stop thinking, reading, and talking about it.

As I've pointed out before, the definition of eternal life *isn't* living forever in heaven after you die. That's nice, and it's included, but it's not what *defines* eternal life.

### **Jesus defined eternal life as knowing God.**

Check it out...

*"Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."* - John 17:3 NIV

An interpersonal relationship with God fuels our desire and ability to communicate with God regularly, read Scripture relationally, obey God humbly, worship God fully, live in community sacrificially, and love our neighbors generously.

We pray because...

- *God created us to glorify and enjoy him.*
- *God created in his image, designed for relationship.*
- *God likes us and enjoys us.\**

In other words, we pray - as Jesus did - because it's a primary means for actually knowing God.

But for every reason why we pray, there are a dozen reasons why we *don't*.

We *don't* pray because...

- We forget that a relationship is more vital religion.
- We're don't think God likes or enjoys us.
- We're not sure God is truly knowable.

And, truthfully, we don't pray because nobody taught us how, and we're afraid we'll do it wrong. And our lives move so fast and we're so distracted that we don't make the time (and we can't focus when we do!).

Am I right??

### **But we can learn to overcome each of these obstacles if we get stuck.**

Here's a simple (though not easy) practice that will help us begin to move onward in prayer.

### **For 5 of the next 7 days...spend 5 to 10 consecutive minutes in silence.**

You can do it. Here's how...

Pick a time and place each day for the next week.

Then in that time and place, turn off your phone, take a few deep breaths, and sit or walk with God (because he's with you!) in the quiet.

When your mind wanders, that's OK. Just enjoy the freedom to be and think, or ask God to help you focus on him. Be gentle with yourself. Cultivating quiet these

days is tough.

At the week's end, jot a few notes about what your experience was like.

That's it!

You can do it, \_\_\_\_\_. And once you have, you'll have walked in the way of Jesus (see Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35, 6:46-47; John 6:15; Luke 6:12) *and* taken a step that will help you learn, or continue learning, to pray.

Onward,

Chris

## Help me?

, will you share with me your experience with prayer, the Holy Spirit, and connecting with God?

Your thoughts will help me develop content that helps folks know and experience God.

**Complete the brief questionnaire [HERE](#). It's only 5 questions!**

YES, I'LL HELP!  
([click here](#))

## dad joke of the week

What's orange and sounds like a parrot?

A carrot.

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\*For Scripture references on why we pray, see below...

- *God created us to glorify and enjoy him* - - - Isaiah 43:7 — Psalm 145:8:21, 37:3-5 — 1 Corinthians 10:31
- *God created in his image, designed for relationship* - - - Genesis 1:27-28, 2:18 — John 10:27, 13:14-15, 33-34, 15:1-8 — Galatians 3:27-28
- *God likes us and enjoys us.* - - - Zephaniah 3:17 — Psalm 18:19, 147:11, 149:4 — John 1:1-18

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**M Street Publishing**

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Little Rock

Arkansas, United States of America

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