

# ONWARD

*in prayer*



Hey there, . It's Chris here, and I wonder...

Have you ever experienced a “thin” place? You know... a spot where the distance between heaven and earth (between you and God, more precisely) is particularly thin?

For me, it's always been the mountains. California's Sierras, in particular.

And retreat centers like [Seek Well's](#) “Haven” and [Harbor Ministries](#) “Blue Spruce Manor” where others have led me into rich times with God.

Closer to home, spots like the trails in Burns Park and the sanctuary at Park Hill Baptist, my kayak and my kitchen table, have each become a thin place where I recognize and engage with God more easily.

**Particular places can have powerful impact as we practice praying.**

Today let's get unstuck and keep moving onward with a practical tool for prayer: picking *your* place...

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## quote 'em

“Even when you don't really want to pray, a place of prayer can often make it easier.”

– Pete Greig

“Find a place of focus — a loft, a garden, a spare room, an attic, even a designated chair — somewhere away from the routine of life, out of the path of distractions. Allow this spot to become a sacred ‘tent of meeting.’”

– Richard Foster

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It's easy to over-spiritualize the practice and privilege of spending daily time with God and completely overlook the power of routine. But routine is vital.

**We're creatures of habit, formed by what we do on a regular, rhythmic basis.**

And that's something we can tap into to grow our prayer lives.

Quick question for ya: What happens in your head and heart when you drive through your hometown or revisit your old high school or college campus?

...or think about the place where you first experienced God, met your spouse, or held your children?

...or arrive at your favorite coffee shop, trailhead, office, or chapel?

*That's* the power of place.

**The emotional connection and habitual behavior that give meaning to our favorite places can also be used to open us up to engage with God and enrich our prayer lives.**

Did you know that *Jesus* had a place?

Check this out: When Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them to pray, Jesus had just returned from a "certain place." (Luke 11:1) That phrase could mean "any ole place" or it could mean "his regular spot." I think it's the latter. Here's why...

The gospels recount numerous instances when Jesus pressed pause to spend extended time with the Father in prayer,\* and he regularly returned to one location: the Garden of Gethsemane.

How do we know it was a favorite spot? Luke tells us he went there "as usual" (Luke 22:39), and John tells us that Jesus went there "often." (John 18:2)

**The garden at Gethsemane was a thin place for Jesus: a place where he cultivated encounters with God.**

Some "thin" place we find *organically*. They don't typically require effort or routine. They almost happen *to* us. Almost every time I walk in the woods, see the mountains, or sit atop my kayak on a quiet lake, I sense the joy of God's presence and I'm naturally drawn into awe and prayer.

Other prayer places we *cultivate*. These are spots worn thin (in a GOOD way!) by our regular, intentional visits. I encounter God often at my kitchen table at 5am, Central Baptist on Sundays, and my friends' homes every other Thursday evening because I prioritize and plan to be with him and/or his people there.

You ever been to a place where you organically encountered God?

**And where can you begin (or continue) to designate regular, undistracted time with him?**

Maybe it's a chair, a room, a closet. Or your garden, your car, or a route you walk every day.

Pick a place and go there to spend undistracted time with God each day for several weeks. Over time, that spot will become special. Holy, even. And you'll find it easier and easier to begin, sustain, and enjoy meaningful experiences with God.

Onward,

Chris

P.S. When you pick a spot (or if you already have one), reply to this email and let me know where it is! I promise I won't show up there unannounced. 🙌

P.P.S. Want to unlock the spiritual power of habit even more? Try to *Pick a Time* (same time every day if possible!) and *Pick a Posture* (Praying on your knees or standing up can be a game-changer.)

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## NEWS

### **MEN's "STILL" EXPERIENCE:**

**STILL** is a weekend experience I lead to help guys **retreat** from the madness, **reconnect** with Jesus, and **recalibrate** to move onward.

The next STILL is April 12-14 in Central Arkansas, and there's only 2 spots left!

**Sign up or send a friend [HERE](#) for more info!**

### **SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS:**

If you haven't taken the chance to anonymously share your experience with prayer, **CLICK [HERE](#) to complete a brief questionnaire.** It's only 5 questions and it helps me create helpful content for you and others.

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*\*For Scripture references on when Jesus got away to pray, see Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, Luke 6:12, and John 6:15 in their context.*

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