

# HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

## TOOL 7: PRAYING THE BIBLE



Our final tool in the *How to Read the Bible* course is *Praying the Bible*. Rather than helping us interpret the text, this tool unites the mental exercise of reading the Bible to our spiritual need of intimacy with God. Of course, studying the Bible is a spiritual discipline itself, but incorporating the tool of praying the Bible into our regular Bible reading process makes this link explicit. In a sense, it is our devotional next step.

Donald Whitney's book, *Praying the Bible*, is an easy read and great resource on this topic. In it, he names one of the most embarrassing thoughts we may have while praying: "I'm bored."<sup>1</sup> I've had that thought many times during my own prayers. Along with boredom, I tend to lose focus, find myself saying the same things, and even drift off to sleep. But I remember my dad's pastoral prayers at church growing up. He'd pray for 10 minutes easy, and amazingly, never seemed bored, didn't get lost, and didn't seem ready for a nap. What was the difference between his prayers and mine? He followed a pattern, consistently using the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 as the outline and guide for his prayer. It took me years to try this for myself, and I'm so glad I did.

How do you do it?

1. **Choose your passage.** | I will often pray through my devotional passage that day. Today, it's Philippians 4:8-9.
2. **Read a line or verse.** | <sup>8</sup> *Finally, brothers, whatever is true... think about these things.*
3. **Pray what comes to your mind from that verse.** | "Basically what you are doing is taking words that originated in the heart and mind of God and circulating them through your heart and mind back to God."<sup>2</sup>
4. **When you're ready, move on to the next line or verse, and repeat.** | You may be prompted to thank God, confess personal sin, pray for others, etc. Do it all.
5. **If you're not sure how to pray a certain verse, move on.** | Repeat the first 6 tools, then pray through it later.
6. **Close your prayer when you come to the end of your passage.** | Do it again tomorrow.

### LET'S PRACTICE: PRAYING THE BIBLE.

Whitney encourages his readers to pray the Psalms regularly, but we can pray any passage of Scripture. Today, we'll pray through a small portion of the book of Philippians.

#### Philippians 4:8-9

<sup>8</sup> *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* <sup>9</sup> *What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Note any insights, encouragements, or newfound requests:

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<sup>1</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Praying the Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.