

Notes from How to Pray

A Simple Guide for Normal People

Pete Greig

Greig, Pete. *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019.

“Every pilgrim gets a stone in their shoe eventually.”¹

Introduction

“Some have camped out in contemplation. Others have built hides in the treetops of prophetic insight. You will eventually find your own favorite terrain in your walk with God. I must warn you, however, that none of these trails lead to God. That’s just not how it works. There’s no one superior way to pray. If you’re searching for the Holy Grail, go back where you began. But as you set out on the many paths of prayer, the Lord is going to join you on the journey.”²

“In these old, familiar words we are going to discover nine different paths of prayer: Stillness, Adoration, Petition, Intercession, Perseverance, Contemplation, Listening, Confession, and Spiritual Warfare.”³

“Our journey is going to be paced around an easy, four-step rhythm: P.R.A.Y. - Pause, Rejoice, Ask, Yield.”⁴

“...it’s simple, sensible, and sneakily profound.”⁵

Chapter 1: Prayer Everywhere

“In the words of Abraham Heschel, “Prayer is our humble answer to the inconceivable surprise of living.”⁶

¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), xiii.

² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), xviii.

³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), xix..

⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), xix..

⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), xix..

⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 4..

“Our English word prayer derives from the Latin *precarius*. We pray because life is precarious. We pray because life is marvelous. We pray because we find ourselves at a loss for many things, but not for the simplest words like “please,” “thank you,” “work,” and “help.”⁷

“Canadian psychologist David G. Benner describes prayer as “the soul’s native language,” observing that “our natural posture is attentive openness to the divine.”⁸

“From primitive cave paintings to the whitewashed walls of the Royal Academy, the universal impulse to pray permeates and pulsates through human anthropology and archaeology, sociology and psychology. It is no exaggeration to say that to be human is to pray.”⁹

“Prayer is more than a lighted candle,” insists the theologian George A. Buttrick. “It is the contagion of health. It is the pulse of life.” A real relationship with God means walking with him daily, like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It means talking with him intimately, like Moses, with whom “the Lord would speak... face to face, as one speaks to a friend.” And it means listening attentively to his voice because, as Jelearn, “My sheep listen to my voice I know them, and they follow me.”¹⁰

“We are told that, prior to giving the Lord’s Prayer, “Jesus was praying in a certain place.” That’s significant. There seem to have been certain places in which he preferred to pray. Elsewhere, he advised his disciples, “When you pray, go into your room, close the door.” The location clearly mattered.”¹¹

“The ancient Celtic Christians understood well that the Holy Spirit can saturate places as well as people; they described such sacred sites evocatively as “thin spaces.”¹²

“Spiritual teacher Richard Foster urges us “to 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.’”¹³

“After decades of night-and-day prayer, I have come to believe that 99 percent of it is just showing up: making the effort to become consciously present to the God who is constantly present to us.”¹⁴

⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 4..

⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 4.

⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 7.

¹⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 9.

¹¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 9-10.

¹² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 10.

¹³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 10.

¹⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 10.

“Two thousand years ago, the disciples welcomed Jesus back from his regular time and place of prayer with one of the greatest petitions of all time: “Lord,” one of them said, “teach us to pray.”¹⁵

“...he gave them the greatest prayer in world history. These were men who would go on to have extraordinary prayer lives. They would intercede until buildings shook. They would spring Peter from a high-security jail by the power of prayer. Their very shadows and handkerchiefs would sometimes heal the sick. They would receive the kinds of revelations that change cultural paradigms. And most remarkably of all, they would one day find the grace within themselves to pray for their torturers at the very point of death.”¹⁶

Chapter 2: Keeping it Simple

“The best of advice I ever received about how to pray was this: keep it simple, keep it real, keep it up. You’ve got to keep it simple so that the most natural thing in the world doesn’t become complicated, weird, and intense. You’ve got to keep it real because when life hurts, you’re going to be tempted to pretend you’re fine. And when you make a mess of things, you’re going to be tempted to hide from God (which never really works) and end up hiding from yourself (which works quite well). And you’ve got to keep it up because life is tough, the battle is fierce, and God is not an algorithm. The journey of faith demands a certain bloody-mindedness of us all, not least in the realm of prayer.”¹⁷

“God wants to spend time with us even more than we want to spend time with him.”¹⁸

“As Archbishop Justin Welby says, the Lord’s Prayer is “simple enough to be memorized by small children and yet profound enough to sustain a whole lifetime of prayer.”¹⁹

“There are very few rules for Christians when it comes to prayer.”²⁰

“God invites you to pray simply, directly, and truthfully in the full and wonderful weirdness of the way he’s made you.”²¹

“Many of the Psalms (the Jewish prayer book) are not happy-clappy songs but cries of unresolved pain.”²²

¹⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 12.

¹⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 12.

¹⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 15.

¹⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 16.

¹⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 18.

²⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 18.

²¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 18.

²² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 21.

“The truly remarkable thing about all the rude, irreverent, self-pitying prayers recorded in the Bible is not that they were prayed in the first place but that they were never redacted from the text. These outrageous prayers were prayed by a litany of antiheroes— capable of arch narcissism, crass stupidity, and the very heights of nobility too. A bit like you and me.”²³

“Just as you cannot get physically fit without regular exercise and a healthy diet, so your spiritual growth will be determined, to a very significant extent, by the prayer exercises you choose (or do not choose) to establish and sustain.”²⁴

“Just as an enduring marriage must be built on consistent rhythms and routines, so, too, our relationship with God survives and thrives only through disciplines such as Bible study, fellowship, confession, and prayer.”²⁵

“Making it easy...Much better to set yourself an achievable target, aiming initially for perhaps just fifteen minutes a day at a convenient time in a conducive place.”²⁶

“Making it enjoyable. It’s also important to make your daily devotions as enjoyable as possible...There is an excitement about opening my Bible thinking, I wonder what the Lord is going to say to me today! It’s a privilege to be able to discuss my concerns with the living God.”²⁷

“Since I generally eat three square meals a day, I try, in a similar way, to feed myself spiritually three times a day: in the morning, at midday, and last thing at night.”²⁸

“Morning: Quiet time. Almost every morning, I start my day with a little time of Bible reading and prayer.”²⁹

Midday: Lord's Prayer. At noon each day, an alarm on my phone reminds me to pause and pray the Lord's Prayer.”³⁰

“Night: Examen. Before heading to bed, I often sit quietly or take the dogs out for a short walk in order to process the day using my own version of an old Ignatian prayer tool called the

²³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 22.

²⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 23.

²⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 24.

²⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 26.

²⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 26.

²⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 27.

²⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 27.

³⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 27.

Examen.”³¹ (see chapter 10). In these moments, I do not rant or rave. I don't make big requests. I hush my soul, remembering the day with gratitude and preparing my soul to sleep.

Chapter 3: Slowing and Centering

“The human soul is wild and shy.”³²

“If we want to get better at hearing the one who speaks in “a still small voice,” we must befriend silence.”³³

“If we are to host the presence of the one who says, “Be still, and know that I am God,” we must ourselves become more present.”³⁴

“The best way to start praying, therefore, is actually to stop praying. To pause. To be still. To put down your prayer list and surrender your own personal agenda. To stop talking at God long enough to focus on the wonder of who he actually is. To “be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.”³⁵

“Before we launch into a long list of all the stuff we need— daily bread, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from evil- he tells us to pause, to address God affectionately (“Our Father”) and respectfully (“hallowed be your name”).”³⁶

“Prayer can easily become a frenetic extension of the manic way I live too much of my life. Distracted and driven, I step into the courts of the King without modulation, without introduction, without slowing my pace or lifting my face to meet his gaze.”³⁷

“We can all live our lives a lot like that demented greyhound-driven and disoriented by irrational fears, pursued by entire packs of bloodthirsty bistro chairs, too scared to simply stop. And so God speaks firmly into the cacophony of human activity. The Master commands the creature to “Sit!” Jesus rebukes the storm. “He makes me lie down,” as the famous psalm puts it.”³⁸

“Moments of stillness at the start of a prayer time are moments of surrender in which we stop competing with God, relinquish our messiah complexes, and resign from trying to save the planet. We stop expecting everyone and everything else to orbit our preferences; we recenter our

³¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 27.

³² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 35.

³³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 35.

³⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 35.

³⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 35-36.

³⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 36.

³⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 36.

³⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 37.

priorities on the Lord and acknowledge, with a sigh of relief, that he is in control and we are not.”³⁹

“I cannot emphasize too strongly how important it is for your spiritual, mental, and physical well-being that you learn to silence the world’s relentless chatter for a few minutes each day, to become still in the depths of your soul.”⁴⁰

“You must seek solitude and silence as life depends on it, because in a way, it does.”⁴¹

“In the words of Anthony of the Desert more than sixteen centuries ago: “Perfect prayer is not to know that you are praying.”⁴²

“There are several simple practices that can help you to center your scattered senses as you prepare to pray. It may be helpful to think of them in four steps: relax, breathe, speak, and repeat.”⁴³

“*Relax*: Start off by sitting comfortably without doing anything for a few moments, perhaps with your palm open in your lap. Take note of the places in your body where you are holding tension, and deliberately relax each one. Your posture matters.”⁴⁴

“*Breathe*. As you relax, take deep, slow breaths, inhaling the life breath of the Holy Spirit and exhaling your concerns with leisurely sighs. A common symptom of anxiety and other forms of stress can be shallow and erratic breathing patterns, which reduce the oxygen levels in our brains, exacerbating the very agitation that triggered our shallow breathing in the first place.”⁴⁵

“*Speak*: As you sit quietly and breathe slowly, you may also find it helpful to repeat a prayer word or phrase in time with your breathing. You could say “Father in heaven” while breathing in and “hallowed be your Name” while breathing out. Some people adopt the famous *Jesus Prayer*, which dates back to the great saints of the Egyptian Desert in the fifth century: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Traditions even older than the Desert Fathers advocate the prayerful repetition of the Aramaic word *Maranatha*, drawn from 1 Corinthians 16:22, which means “Come, Lord” or “the Lord has come.””⁴⁶

³⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 38.

⁴⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 39-40.

⁴¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 40.

⁴² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 40.

⁴³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 41.

⁴⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 41.

⁴⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 41.

⁴⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 42.

“Repeat. When distractions come, as they inevitably will, don't worry. Simply return to the process of relaxing, breathing, and repeating your prayer phrase until stillness resumes.”⁴⁷

“Occasionally, none of this works sometimes I am too wound up to find inner stillness in any of these sedentary ways. When this happens, I will instead use physical exercise to burn off a little adrenaline and calm my mind.”⁴⁸

“...serenity does not always have to be silent, cerebral, solitary, or even static. Stillness can be active.”⁴⁹

“By doing this, even just a few minutes each day, we recenter ourselves on Christ's eternal presence, which enables us to pray from a much deeper place of peace, faith, and reduced anxiety.”⁵⁰

Chapter 4: Adoration

“The way we view God affects everything about everything, and the primary purpose of our lives.”⁵¹

“Every other line of the Lord's Prayer is both preempted and primed by its opening words of adoration: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name.”⁵²

“When Jesus told his disciples to address God in this way, they would have been surprised, to say the least. They knew that their Scriptures occasionally compared God to a father but never would have dared to address him directly in such familiar - and familial - terms before.”⁵³

“After more than twenty-five years in pastoral ministry, twenty of them teaching on prayer, I have come to the conclusion that most people's biggest problem with prayer is God. They envisage him scowling, perpetually disapproving, invariably disappointed and needing to be placated or persuaded in prayer.”⁵⁴

“Our Father in heaven doesn't get distracted by our scribbled words and squiggled thoughts. He isn't impressed by the dictionaries and lectionaries we hurl at the sky.”⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 42.

⁴⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 43.

⁴⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 43-44.

⁵⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 45.

⁵¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 52.

⁵² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 52-53.

⁵³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 53.

⁵⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 52.

⁵⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 55.

“You may question the coherence of those scribbles and squiggles you present to God as prayer, you may doubt the strength of your own resolve and the sincerity of your faith, but at least try to trust that the Spirit’s translation of your prayers stands a pretty good chance of getting through to the Father’s heart on your behalf!”⁵⁶

“...immediately follows: “hallowed be your Name.” As biblical scholar William Barclay says, this “saves the idea of the Fatherhood of God from all sentimentality and...sets down in unmistakable terms the inescapable obligation of reverence.”⁵⁷

“We have a notion of divine love devoid of divine sovereignty. Unwittingly, we have unhallowed the Father’s name. And in losing the Godness of God, we struggle with prayer because we fail to grasp the mind-blowing privilege of simply being in the presence of the living God.”⁵⁸

“Familiarity breeds apathy until we can barely be bothered to try.”⁵⁹

“I am learning to understand that I may never fully understand. I am learning to be a bit more okay with not being okay.”⁶⁰

“...let’s look at a few simple, practical ways to worship God even when you don’t feel like it.”⁶¹

“If adoration fails to erupt spontaneously when I first approach God in prayer, I take hold of my soul quite firmly and make it wake up.”⁶²

“This is an act of the will. Instead of waiting to worship until I feel like it (which could be a very long wait indeed), I begin to thank God for all the evidence of his love in my life - often speaking out loud - until my feelings fall into line with the facts. Sometimes this can seem a bit fake at first, but that’s okay. And occasionally I continue to feel tired, sad, or lethargic, and that’s okay too. If I only said “I love you” to my wife when I was overwhelmed with passion, I wouldn’t tell her often enough.”⁶³

“The writer of Hebrews urges us to “offer to God a sacrifice of praise.” What could be more sacrificial than praising him when we don’t feel like it? It’s relatively easy to worship when

⁵⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 52.

⁵⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 56.

⁵⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 56.

⁵⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 56.

⁶⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 57.

⁶¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 59.

⁶² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 59.

⁶³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 59-60.

we're singing stirring songs with the saints on Sunday morning, but not so easy on a miserable Monday morning before work."⁶⁴

"One of the easiest ways of building adoration into my own prayer life is simply to read a psalm (or part of a longer one) every morning and every evening. It never ceases to amaze me that this is the very same prayer book that Jesus used and loved, and that much of it is three thousand year old, written by King David himself."⁶⁵

"It's fascinating that so many of these prayers seem to have been written for use at particular times of the day."⁶⁶

"I find it helpful to read the Psalms aloud whenever possible, because this is how they would first have been used and it helps to stir my soul. As I do so, I look for a particular phrase or line that resonates with my heart, and once I find one, I try to memorize it and revisit it in idle moments during the day."⁶⁷

"As well as praying the Psalms, I try to fill my day with music. Melody and harmony are God-given gifts that can stir the human soul more powerfully than any other external stimulus."⁶⁸

"When it comes to worship, instrumental music has the added advantage of bypassing the left hemisphere of the brain's central cortex, enabling our spirits to soar unencumbered by the constraints of language."⁶⁹

"You've probably noticed that the entire Lord's Prayer is written in the plural... This is a family thing... When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we do so corporately, in community with others."⁷⁰

"We all need the encouragement, the challenge, and the discomfort of active participation in a local worshipping community."⁷¹

"I am convinced that liturgy as an expression of worship belongs just as much to the two-thousand-year-old charismatic free church tradition as it does anyone else."⁷²

⁶⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 60.

⁶⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 60.

⁶⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 60.

⁶⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 61.

⁶⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 61.

⁶⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 61.

⁷⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 61.

⁷¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 62..

⁷² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 63.

“Thoughtful prayers written by others, and especially those written in the Bible, can enable us to express things we find difficult and to address things we might otherwise ignore.”⁷³

“When we repeat fixed prayers, several thousand years of faith begin to shape us and pray through us, providing solidarity (in every sense of that word) amid the subjectivity of our fragmenting culture, with all God’s people. Going through the motions, as every dancer knows, can be an important thing to do.”⁷⁴

“Where and when did you last feel close to God? Try to identify and pursue the particular people and places, the music and activities, that speak the mother tongue of your heart. By prioritizing these things, you will live with greater joy.”⁷⁵

“Having encouraged you to discover your own distinctive ways of praying, I am now urging you to do the same with adoration. The psalmist exhorts us on four separate occasions to “sing to the Lord a new song” because he wants us to worship spontaneously, creatively, and from the heart.”⁷⁶

“...the way we approach God in prayer, and the way we view him in life, affects everything about everything.”⁷⁷

“The invitation to adoration means greeting our heavenly Father by name, meeting his smile with a smile, receiving him as the loved one he truly is, and responding to his kindness with kindness, his presence with presence, and his love with our own.”⁷⁸

Chapter 5: Petition

“When you pray about the small things in life, you get to live with greater gratitude.”⁷⁹

“If you only ever pray about big, ugly, gnarly problems that seem onerous and serious enough to warrant divine intervention, you will only very occasionally experience miracles.”⁸⁰

“It is by asking more for lesser things that we rediscover how to live with the wide-eyed wonder of children.”⁸¹

⁷³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 63.

⁷⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 64.

⁷⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 65.

⁷⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 66.

⁷⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 66.

⁷⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 66.

⁷⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 75.

⁸⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 75.

⁸¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 76.

“The word pray comes from the Middle English “to ask earnestly” and the Latin *precari*, which means “to entreat.”⁸²

“Cambridge professor H.H. Farmer says that “if prayer is the heart of religion, then petition is the heart of prayer.”⁸³

“It’s fascinating to note that the first half of the Lord’s Prayer was not entirely original to Jesus. He seems to have adopted and adapted the opening lines from another contemporary prayer known as the *Kaddish* (one of the three most important prayers in Jewish liturgy), which went like this. *Magnified and hallowed be His great name. In this world which He created according to His will, And may He establish His kingdom during your life.*”⁸⁴

“Jesus softens the *Kaddish*’s concern with the vertical axis of God’s greatness and his impending Kingdom (“Our Father”) and then adds his own horizontal axis: a list of simple petitions for food, safety, protection, and forgiveness. He surrounds the reverence and longing of the original prayer with relational language and practical requests regarding the everyday concerns of ordinary people.”⁸⁵

“We cannot with integrity jettison or domesticate our belief in the power of petitionary prayer and still lay claim to any form of Christian orthodoxy.”⁸⁶

“The notion of “daily bread” harks back to the Old Testament when God fed his people in the wilderness with manna that only remained fresh for a day. There is a strong sense in this phrase, therefore, of asking for today’s needs rather than tomorrow’s want.”⁸⁷

“The story of Bartimaeus reveals that it’s not enough to sit silently in the crowd wishing for a miracle. “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus inquires. He asks us to ask, invites us to articulate our specific needs.”⁸⁸

“God asks us to ask for at least three reasons. First, because the act of asking is relational in a way that mere wishing is not...The second reason that asking is necessary is that it is vulnerable...Third, asking is intentional. It involves the activation of our wills.”⁸⁹

⁸² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 77.

⁸³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 77.

⁸⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 78.

⁸⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 78-79.

⁸⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 80.

⁸⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 81.

⁸⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 82.

⁸⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 82-83.

“Petitionary prayer is a logical and exciting consequence of human free will. It means that our fate is not set. Things can change.”⁹⁰

“God does not act the same way whether we pray or not,” says Karl Barth. “Prayer exerts an influence upon God’s action, even upon his existence.” That word influence is important. We can’t control God in prayer because he is God and we are not. But he does allow us to influence him. Neither can we overrule the sovereign choices of other people... But although we can’t override the free will of others, we can influence their choices through prayer.”⁹¹

“To pray in the name of Jesus means asking for things that are consistent with his character and aligned with his purpose.”⁹²

“Praying in the name of Jesus means wanting what God wants, aligning our wills with his will, our words with his Word, and our personal preferences with his eternal and universal purposes. It also speaks of family privilege. To ask in the name of Jesus is to approach the Father in the company of his own dear Son.”⁹³

“Preachers promising health and wealth reduce prayer to a form of positive thinking and God himself to a sort of celestial algorithm.”⁹⁴

“If you lack faith, it’s futile trying to stir it up from within. You can’t fake it or make it materialize by clenching your buttocks and trying to believe three impossible things before breakfast.”⁹⁵

“The more you see Jesus, the more you will trust him, because he’s the most reliable, loving, and powerful person you will ever meet.”⁹⁶

“Faith is God’s gift to us; faithfulness is ours to him. God’s “suddenly” happens slowly. Most instant miracles take years.”⁹⁷

“It’s impossible to grow in faith without growing in faithfulness, and it’s impossible to grow in faithfulness if all your prayers are answered right away. But when we endure delays, disappointments, and discouragements without giving up or backing down - when we keep

⁹⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 83.

⁹¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 83-84.

⁹² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 84.

⁹³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 84-85.

⁹⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 86.

⁹⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 86.

⁹⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 86-87.

⁹⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 88.

“beating on heaven’s door with bruised knuckles in the dark,” as George Buttrick described it - our faith expands into faithfulness.”⁹⁸

“Of course, some of your prayers will not require perseverance. They will be answered the moment you ask. You’ll get an immediate green light from God! Others won’t ever be answered, no matter how long you persevere. They’ll be met with a red light, and this may be deeply painful and perplexing. But there are other prayers - perhaps even the majority - that get neither an immediate yes nor a firm no. They are yellow lights requiring us to wait and persevere.”⁹⁹

“Jesus has told us to persevere in prayer, not to abandon our cars at every yellow light; to keep revving the engine, faithfully asking until his answer finally comes.”¹⁰⁰

Chapter 6: Intercession

“All too easily, my prayers can mostly be about me, but intercession requires my center of gravity to shift away from my own personal needs toward those of others.”¹⁰¹

“The forgiveness of sins and the healing of the land are entirely contingent on the intercession of God’s people. What tasks could possibly be more important, more urgent for our world today?”¹⁰²

“To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.” - Karl Barth, *As Heard By Jan Milic Lochman*¹⁰³

“To intercede is to “mind the gap” between heaven and earth. It is to intervene or mediate between two parties as the equal friend of both.”¹⁰⁴

“Intercessors are those who stand in the gap, mediating between heaven and earth as equal friends of both, pleading with God on behalf of people, and with people on behalf of God.”¹⁰⁵

“...we do all inhabit the liminal space between heaven and earth, Creator and creation, glory and the dirt. Belonging to both, we are unable or unwilling to take sides but long for them to be reconciled.”¹⁰⁶

⁹⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 88-89.

⁹⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 89.

¹⁰⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 90.

¹⁰¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 93.

¹⁰² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 95.

¹⁰³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 97.

¹⁰⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 97.

¹⁰⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 97.

¹⁰⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 98.

“To be in Christ is to be drawn up into his intercession for the world. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with an interceding spirit. Where once we could ignore the problems of others, we begin caring deeply. We are sensitized to the world’s brokenness. We yearn for our friends to know Jesus. Our lives take the shape of a single prayer: “Your kingdom come.”¹⁰⁷

“So let me give you four simple steps to help you grow in this vital aspect of your calling: (1) Get informed. (2) Get inspired. (3) Get indignant. (4) Get in sync.”¹⁰⁸

“The first step in intercessory prayer is to get informed. Do a little reconnaissance. Find out the facts of the problem you want to address.”¹⁰⁹

“Having been informed about the problems, the next step is to get inspired by the possibilities. What might happen if God’s purposes for a particular person, place, or situation started to come true?”¹¹⁰

“But I want you to understand just how powerful it is when you stop praying your own prayers based on your own inclinations and start praying God’s prayers based on his plans instead! By identifying relevant promises in God’s Word and focusing them on a particular person, place, or situation, you can be sure that you are interceding for them in line with God’s purposes and therefore in the name of Jesus.”¹¹¹

“There’s a strange thing that can happen when you really lay hold of God’s promises and begin to see his intended future for a contested person or place: You start feeling indignant about the ways in which his purposes are currently being undermined and resisted.”¹¹²

“We are to pray authoritatively, not as timid servants pleading with a master, but with a quality of confidence tempered with reverence appropriate to us as sons and daughters of a King.”¹¹³

“...there is a time and place to pray through tears, a groan with the Holy Spirit, to plead with God until your voice gives out, to lay hold of his promises and insist on their fulfillment, to go without food, to vent righteous anger, to dig your heels into a particular situation of injustice and cry out with clenched fists, “Lord, let your Kingdom come.””¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 99.

¹⁰⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 100.

¹⁰⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 100.

¹¹⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 101.

¹¹¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 103.

¹¹² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 104.

¹¹³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 105.

¹¹⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 105.

“One of the key ways to successful asking in prayer, according to Jesus, is agreement with other people. This is why we say Amen – “So be it” - when we pray: It’s a way of expressing our agreement.” - Get in Sync: Engaging with the Saints¹¹⁵

Chapter 7: Unanswered Prayer

“But prayer isn’t always wonderful. Sometimes it disappoints us deeply.”¹¹⁶

“In the garden of Gethsemane, we witness Jesus suffering pain at every possible level: physically, psychologically, and spiritually. “My Soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said... Whether your struggle with unanswered prayer relates to a physical illness, mental health, or a spiritual voice in which God seems to have abandoned you, Jesus truly understands. He’s gone ahead and shown how to endure disorientation and pain.”¹¹⁷

“Jesus wanted his three best friends by his side in his darkest hour. He didn’t try to put on a brave face. He didn’t pretend to be okay. He chose to include them in his distress, and even asked them to watch over him in prayer. There is a strong temptation toward self-isolation when our souls are overwhelmed. We want to roll up like a hedgehog or hide away alone. But Jesus modeled the opposite: actively involving his friends, drawing them into his private grief and engaging their support in prayer.”¹¹⁸

“The temptation to isolate ourselves from others in times of trouble can also apply to our relationship with God. Our friends are essential but insufficient. Our greatest need is to lay hold of the Lord in prayer. One clear word from the father can bring more clarity and comfort than a thousand words from friends.”¹¹⁹

“We may not be able to understand why God is allowing a situation to continue... we can still choose to trust in the love of our Abba Father. His comfort comes to us through the support of others, through the words of reassurance and hope in the Bible, and through the solace of prayer.”¹²⁰

“There is peace for those who pray.”¹²¹

“If the first temptation when we suffer is to isolate ourselves from our friends, and the second is to question the Father’s love, the third is to doubt his power. By downgrading our expectations in

¹¹⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 106.

¹¹⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 113.

¹¹⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 116.

¹¹⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 117.

¹¹⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 117.

¹²⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 119.

¹²¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 119.

prayer, we attempt to protect ourselves from the heartache of dashed hopes. But Jesus doesn't do this. He blinds to the Father's omnipotence even in his darkest hour. No matter how hard it is to keep trusting when our deepest, most desperate prayers go unanswered, getting rid of God's love and God's power doesn't actually help."¹²²

"Some people attempt to put on a brave face when they suffer. They pretend that everything's fine when in fact, they're terrified and falling apart. Others try to manipulate God by playing religious games, saying the things they think he wants them to say."¹²³

"...but for now, let me just suggest that most unanswered prayers can be attributed to either God's world, God's war, or God's will."¹²⁴

"Let's start with the easy ones: Some prayers aren't answered for fairly obvious reasons."¹²⁵

"God has intricately established certain governing principles that make the world work best for most people in most places most of the time...And so God tends not to tinker with these extraordinarily delicate, complex, and effective rules every time we pray."¹²⁶

"The Creator is not a cosmic slot machine, waiting to obligate our prayers with a can of Coke or peace in the Middle East. Neither is he a mad inventor continually fiddling with his own inventions. And he certainly isn't one of those ghastly helicopter parents, pouncing from the sky every time we might possibly make a mistake or get ourselves hurt."¹²⁷

"God has intricately designed the laws of science to work for the best for the majority of most of the time...The laws of science are explanations of the ways in which God mostly chooses to act, but sometimes he exercises his right to go off-book."¹²⁸

"As C.S. Lewis says, 'That God can and does, on occasions, modify the behavior of matter and produce what we call miracles, is part of Christian faith.' He adds, however, that 'the very conception of a common, and therefore stable, world, demands that these occasions should be extremely rare.'"¹²⁹

¹²² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 119.

¹²³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 121.

¹²⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 121.

¹²⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 121.

¹²⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 122.

¹²⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 122-123..

¹²⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 123.

¹²⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 123.

“Some answers aren’t answered because there is an active enemy at work in our world attacking and opposing the work of God - we live in a battle zone. As Christians, we are not immune from collateral damage, and we are often targets.”¹³⁰

“We must therefore learn how to exercise spiritual authority in prayer, wielding “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” against Satan’s attacks, actively subverting his systems and strategies, accepting that while we will not win every battle in this life - there will be pain - the war will one day soon be won forever.”¹³¹

“Having said that some prayers go unanswered because they oppose the laws of nature and others because they are opposed by satanic powers, still others go unanswered because they are opposed by God himself. Remember that Jesus only ever promised to answer prayers aligned with his will and purpose.”¹³²

“... Jesus ultimately invites me to trust in his wisdom, love, and power beyond my own limited capacity to understand, praying with him the hardest and most powerful prayer of all: “Not my will, but yours be done.”¹³³

“There is an invitation here to a darker kind of trust; to surrender ourselves to the will of God, not just when it makes sense and feels good but also when it makes no sense at all and even hurts us to display.”¹³⁴

Chapter 8: Contemplation

“If petition is prayer at its simplest, and intercession is prayer at its most powerful, contemplation is prayer at its deepest and most personally transformational.”¹³⁵

“First, that contemplative prayer is consumed with God’s love. Second, that it is mostly a “quiet,” “wordless” form without doing or saying anything. And third, that it is experiential rather than logical - “an intimate sharing,” “a trusting openness,” a “feeling [that] comes to the foreground.” Contemplation is stargazing rather than astronomy, listening to jazz rather than hearing a talk.”¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 124.

¹³¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 124.

¹³² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 124.

¹³³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 125.

¹³⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 125.

¹³⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 134.

¹³⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 135.

“Such mystical experiences are not common, but neither are they rare. Some are ecstatic but most are less dramatic, yet all are legitimate expressions of contemplative prayer.”¹³⁷

“We are commanded to love God with all of our hearts, all of our souls, and all of our minds, but most of us only use half of our minds - the left hemisphere of the cerebral cortex, to be precise - when we approach God in prayer. This is the area of the brain responsible for words and rational processing.”¹³⁸

“The experiential, nonverbal, right-hemisphere dimensions of prayer actually come more naturally to many people than the verbal, rational, mechanical varieties that we’ve been exploring so far in this book.”¹³⁹

“Contemplative prayer reassures us that it’s okay to just show up in prayer.”¹⁴⁰

“It may be helpful to think of contemplative prayer as a journey that passes through three clear stages, from meditation (me and God) to contemplation (God and me) to communion (only God).”¹⁴¹

“Contemplation begins with meditation - fixing your thoughts on a picture, an object, or most frequently, on a phrase from the Bible. Sit quietly, reflecting on a verse, exploring it from every angle in your mind. Whenever you get distracted, bring your thoughts back to focus again on this simple, single phrase or sentence. Meditation is hard work, but it does get easier with practice.”¹⁴²

“As we enter into contemplation through the gateway of meditation, we may well find that particular concerns begin to knock at the door of our minds. When this happens, the contemplative approach is neither to shut them out nor to start interceding about them, but simply to welcome them as guests and lift them to the Lord in silent prayer. We acknowledge the situation that is troubling our minds or the person who is weighing on our hearts and lift them to the Lord.”¹⁴³

“As I meditate on the Lord and become aware of his presence, my center of gravity shifts from “me and God” to “God and me.” He takes center stage. I’m no longer slogging away, trying to

¹³⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 136.

¹³⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 136.

¹³⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 137.

¹⁴⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 137.

¹⁴¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 138.

¹⁴² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 139.

¹⁴³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 140.

fix my attention on him, using that logical left hemisphere of my cerebral cortex, because I can now see that his attention is already fixed on me!”¹⁴⁴

“Sometimes it’s possible to become so absorbed in God’s reality that I forget myself completely. I am no longer consciously praying or worshiping. Word would be inadequate and even inappropriate....Anthony of the Desert described this experience more than 1700 years ago as “Perfect prayer is not to know that you are praying.”¹⁴⁵

“Such all-consuming experiences and the overwhelming human desire for them - in art, in sex, in nature, in moments of sporting euphoria, in deep conversations with friends - are rumors of another world. They whisper that we are made for eternity, wired to worship, happiest whenever we abandon ourselves to something greater and more beautiful than our own little lives.”¹⁴⁶

“Your soul is crying out for a deeper encounter with Christ, and if your faith is to thrive for years to come, if it is to survive seasons of darkness and pain, if you are to know and be known by Jesus in a richer, more fulfilling way, if you are to continue engaging with him when words no longer have meaning, if you are to become the loving person he wants you to be and to see the world the way he sees it, you must make space in your busy life for regular meditation, contemplation, and communion with God.”¹⁴⁷

“...when I pray contemplatively, I have to show up, shut up, and look up.”¹⁴⁸

“Contemplation changes us, and it also therefore changes the way we see the world.”¹⁴⁹

“The more we see Christ in prayer, the more we see him everywhere we go and in everyone we meet. The whole of life becomes an invitation to worship.”¹⁵⁰

Chapter 9: Listening

“Each one of us can learn to recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd for ourselves.”¹⁵¹

“But, of course recognizing the voice of the Good Shepherd is not always easy. We’ve probably all been hurt by people who misheard or misappropriated God’s word. Others have endured long,

¹⁴⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 140.

¹⁴⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 141.

¹⁴⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 141.

¹⁴⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 142.

¹⁴⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 143.

¹⁴⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 144.

¹⁵⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 144.

¹⁵¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 153.

dry seasons in which he remained completely silent. How then are we to discern God's voice with integrity, humility, and a healthy dose of common sense?"¹⁵²

"This isn't a bad checklist of the various ways in which God speaks:

- Hearing God in the Bible.
- Hearing God in dreams and visions.
- Hearing God in counsel and common sense.
- Hearing God in personal reflection.
- Hearing God in action."¹⁵³

"The Bible is our primary source of revelation and the ultimate authority by which we weigh all other words."¹⁵⁴

"We verify prophecies, dreams, visions, angelic visitations, premonitions, audible voices, supernatural hunches, and all manner of ephemeral inklings against the absolute truths of Scripture. If they don't measure up, they don't get in the door. It's as simple as that."¹⁵⁵

"We shouldn't just learn from the Bible, therefore: we should also listen to it. It's a totally different way of approaching the text: While learning about God from the Bible requires study, listening to God through the Bible requires prayer meditation."¹⁵⁶

"First, try to read it slowly and preferably out loud. When particular words or phrases grab your attention, linger a little, savoring them like a glass of wine or a favorite piece of music."¹⁵⁷

"As you explore these phrases, personalize and apply them to your own life. Allow your mind to go on bunny trails. Don't get too hung up on the literal meaning - this is a subjective exercise."¹⁵⁸

"Try to turn your thoughts, your questions, and even your distractions into prayers."¹⁵⁹

"Whenever we approach the Bible in this way, three internal shifts begin to take place. First, we discover that there are prayer prongs and conversation starters scattered on almost every page of the Bible (even if the conversation sometimes starts with "Lord, help me to understand this bit!"). Second, our prayers shift away from our personal priorities toward topics we might never

¹⁵² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 154.

¹⁵³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 156.

¹⁵⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 156.

¹⁵⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 156.

¹⁵⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 156.

¹⁵⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 157.

¹⁵⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 157.

¹⁵⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 157.

otherwise have addressed. The Lord is setting his own agenda for our prayer times. Third, we hear him speaking to us more clearly as we stop reading the Bible and start praying it instead.”¹⁶⁰

“Some Christians think that God only speaks through the Bible, but the Bible teaches that he speaks in other ways too! He speaks to us through dreams and visions, like that picture given to me of a flickering candle; he speaks through intuition, like Roger's impulse to wind up his car window; he speaks through prophecies and words of knowledge like that caution texted to me from South Africa. He also speaks through creation, through our consciences, through angelic visitations, through preaching, and even, on one occasion, through a talking donkey!”¹⁶¹

“Of course, dreams, visions, and prophecies are highly subjective, so we must weigh them against Scripture and apply common sense. If they are directional, we should also seek wise counsel.”¹⁶²

“I’m convinced that the main gift God wants to give some Chin is common sense.”¹⁶³

“Most people today miss the voice of God not because it's too strange but because it's too familiar. They expect the Almighty to sound dramatic, bombastic, unmistakable, and a bit spooky.”¹⁶⁴

“The "gentle whisper" of God sometimes comes to me as an idea or a mental impression during a time of quiet prayer, but more often it comes afterward, during a subsequent time of distraction. or a mental impression during a time of quiet prayer, but more often it comes afterward, during a subsequent time of distraction.”¹⁶⁵

“In a similar way, once you've asked the Lord to speak to you about a particular thing, it's often a good idea to stop trying too hard to hear him and to occupy yourself instead with the kind of activity that engages you enough to be absorbing but not too much, so that your mind has a little space to wonder.”¹⁶⁶

“Overthinking is not productive. Intensity and earnestness rarely attract the Holy Spirit. We may well become more receptive to the whisper of God by occupying ourselves with less spiritual activities.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 158.

¹⁶¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 159.

¹⁶² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 159.

¹⁶³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 160.

¹⁶⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 161.

¹⁶⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 161.

¹⁶⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 161-162.

¹⁶⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 162.

“In seeking to discern God’s voice, journaling can be an invaluable tool for personal remembering and prayerful reflection. By recording our prayers and impressions in this way, we follow the example of Mary, who “treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”¹⁶⁸

“There is a direct link between obedience and revelation.”¹⁶⁹

Chapter 10: Confession and Reconciliation

“At last we come to the hardest, most challenging line of the entire Lord’s Prayer. Who wouldn’t want a loving Father in heaven, the Kingdom of heaven to come, and a nice fresh loaf of daily bread? But then this. It sneaks up and hits us where it hurts. First, the jab in the guts: “Forgive us our sins.” No excuses. No ifs and buts. Caught red-handed. And then the right hook: “as we forgive those who sin against us.” The only line of the Lord’s Prayer that carries a big, fat caveat. If we won’t forgive, we won’t be forgiven.”¹⁷⁰

“This is the hardest line of the Lord’s Prayer, but it is also by far the most outrageous. No “please.” No “sorry.” Just this audacious request, sounding suspiciously like a demand: “Forgive us our sins.” In Matthew’s Gospel, it is rendered, “Forgive us our debts,” because the Greek word *opheilemata* is a commercial term, not a religious one, denoting “something which is owed, something which is due, something which is a duty or an obligation to give or to pay. In other words, it means a debt in the widest sense of the term.” The word *forgive* has similar commercial connotations, literally meaning “to wipe the slate clean.”¹⁷¹

“Here, then, is the gospel at the heart of Christ’s manifesto: If we confess our sins to the Father, asking for his grace, we will be forgiven.”¹⁷²

“At night, I like to take a few minutes before bed to replay and review the day with the Lord using my own version of the ancient prayer of Examen.”¹⁷³

“There’s a great deal that has been written over the last two thousand years about examining our consciences, most notably by the Jesuits who popularized the Examen, which advocates various steps (traditionally in Latin) for self-reflection.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 162.

¹⁶⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 162.

¹⁷⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 169.

¹⁷¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 170.

¹⁷² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 171.

¹⁷³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 172.

¹⁷⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 173.

“I have developed my own simple, four-step equivalent: Replay, Rejoice, Repent, Reboot.”¹⁷⁵

“First, replay your day in as much detail as possible. Don’t just skim through its headline moments - the obvious events that featured in your calendar. Try also to recall the mundane in-between interactions, fleeting attitudes, and casual conversations that filled the cracks of your day, asking, *where was God when that happened? Where was God in that person’s behavior? And even, Where was God in that moment of pain?*”¹⁷⁶

“Night after night, you will marvel at the furtive ways God has blessed you, the frequency of his whispers, the consistency of his presence, the lightness of his touch. Perhaps you will recall the joy of bumping into a friend unexpectedly in the street, the ridiculous video that made you laugh, the unexpected hug from your teenage son, the cup of fresh coffee in an earthenware mug, the lyric that moved you, the drumming of rain against the window while you worked indoors in your socks, the cloud formations and the rays of light that followed the storm, and now the quietness of this night, the stars above, and the exquisite prospect of your own warm bed.”¹⁷⁷

“But God is not just in the nice stuff. He is also with us in “the darkest valley,” in our seasons of doubt, and even in our sin.”¹⁷⁸

“Generally, I find it more useful, therefore, to pray Where? rather than Why? prayers. Where were you, Lord, in our medical appointment today? Where are you now in our weariness and disappointment?”¹⁷⁹

“The prayer of Examen enables us to receive and unwrap those gifts.”¹⁸⁰

“As you replay your day in detail, rejoicing in the evidence of God’s blessings, you will also, inevitably, be reminded of actions, words, thoughts, and attitudes that were wrong. In the stillness of prayer, the Holy Spirit will often highlight occasions when you were selfish, lustful, deceitful, pompous, hurtful, or unkind.”¹⁸¹

“You probably take a regular bath or shower to remove the dirt from your body. In the same way, you are invited to come to God regularly, praying, “Cleanse me... and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.” Without this discipline, you will begin to stink! Behaviors that

¹⁷⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 173.

¹⁷⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 173.

¹⁷⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 174.

¹⁷⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 174.

¹⁷⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 174.

¹⁸⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 174.

¹⁸¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 174.

would once have seemed shameful or even shocking will become tolerated, accommodated, and eventually normalized as your conscience is numbed.”¹⁸²

“But by confessing your sins regularly, your life will smell sweet! You will be healthy and holy a little bit more like Jesus each day.”¹⁸³

“Having replayed the day in detail, rejoicing and repenting along the way, we turn our attention to the challenges of tomorrow, asking for God’s strength to live a little more for his glory.”¹⁸⁴

“Jesus calls us to forgive those who sin against us. This is how the cycles of hatred can be broken. It’s what he models for us on the cross, praying, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”¹⁸⁵

“The Lord’s Prayer is a cry for reconciliation at every level - in our broken relationship with God, in our broken relationships with one another, and in our broken relationship with the world.”¹⁸⁶

“Reconciliation is what the coming of his Kingdom looks like!”¹⁸⁷

Chapter 11: Spiritual Warfare

“The Bible is quite clear that we are at war. There is a vicious battle raging all around us between the Kingdom of God and the tyranny of a cruel insurgency.”¹⁸⁸

“Spiritual warfare tends not to be meek and mild, but forceful, assertive, and authoritative. It is sometimes accompanied by fasting and generally requires perseverance and careful spiritual discernment.”¹⁸⁹

“He concluded his Lord’s Prayer with a disconcerting cry for help and the alarming would evil, which isn’t the way you’re supposed to conclude great creedal prayers. The early church took it upon themselves to add a doxology, partly, I suspect, just to round things off on a less alarming note.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 175.

¹⁸³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 175.

¹⁸⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 175-176.

¹⁸⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 180.

¹⁸⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 180.

¹⁸⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 181.

¹⁸⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 188-189.

¹⁸⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 189.

¹⁹⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 192-193.

“Fasting can help focus our prayers the way a magnifying glass focuses sunlight to start a fire.”¹⁹¹

“Many Christians have no problem at all recognizing the reality of principalities and powers at work in our world (especially if they come from cultures that bypassed the Enlightenment), but they do not necessarily understand their own personal authority to contend against such forces and win.”¹⁹²

“Too many people are timid in their prayers and terrified in their dealings with the enemy.”¹⁹³

“We don’t know how many more hours or days we must hold the line within the dark caverns of this life, but we have every reason to hope. Christ’s cross means that we have been found, and his resurrection assures us that we shall one day soon be free!”¹⁹⁴

“There are free questions you should always ask when comforting any kind of conflict in prayer:

- Diagnosis: What is the enemy’s strategy against this person or place?...
- Prognosis: Having diagnosed the problem, ask yourself, What might God’s better plan be for this person or place...
- Prescription: Having discerned what Satan is trying to do and what God is wanting to do, ask yourself, What can I now do, both prayerfully and practically, to thwart Satan’s plan and to welcome God’s better purposes into this person, place, or situation?”¹⁹⁵

“When it comes to spiritual warfare, power is increased when we agree with other people in prayer.”¹⁹⁶

“You take a stand against the enemy every time you preach the gospel, forgive an enemy, stand up to a bully, care for the poor, create something beautiful, behave with integrity, practice civil disobedience for the sake of righteousness, or take a stance that defies his insidious systems of control.”¹⁹⁷

Chapter 12: Amen

“These final lines don’t feature in the original Gospel renditions, but they’ve been used to conclude the Lord’s Prayer since the very earliest days of the church and, significantly, they are drawn directly from King David, who prayed: “Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and

¹⁹¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 194.

¹⁹² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 196.

¹⁹³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 196.

¹⁹⁴ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 200-201.

¹⁹⁵ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 202.

¹⁹⁶ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 207.

¹⁹⁷ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 208.

the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heavens and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom.”¹⁹⁸

“But to pray these closing lines of the Lord’s Prayer is to give “the kingdom, the power, and the glory” back to God. It’s to give him our little empires (family, ministry, career) and say, “Yours, Lord, is the Kingdom.” It’s to give him the power bases we’ve built and say, “Yours, Lord, is the power.” It’s to give him our credibility, our trophies of success, and say, “Yours, Lord, is the glory forever and right now.”¹⁹⁹

“Ultimately, we learn to pray by praying - by regularly setting aside time to spend alone with the Lord.”²⁰⁰

“Whenever we say “Amen” at the end of a prayer, we are speaking an ancient Hebrew word from the Old Testament that was used in the synagogues and later adopted by the church, literally meaning “Yes!” I agree! So be it!”²⁰¹

“When we say “Amen” at the end of the Lord’s Prayer, we are saying “yes” to God’s Fatherhood and “count me in” to his family. We are agreeing with God’s people around the world that his Kingdom would come and his will would be done. And together, as the apostle Paul puts it, “the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God.”²⁰²

“One day soon, a trumpet shall sound... When that happens, the Lord’s Prayer will become the world’s prayer. Every knee will bow before the Father, every tongue will hallow his name, and members of every tribe will lay down their crowns, declaring together that the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.”²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 213.

¹⁹⁹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 214.

²⁰⁰ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 217.

²⁰¹ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 218.

²⁰² Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 219.

²⁰³ Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 222.