

Prayers from “Every Season Prayers” by Scotty Smith (Baker Publishing Group, 2016)

A Prayer for Healing and Health Concerns

¹⁷ For I will restore health to you,
and your wounds I will heal,
declares the LORD (Jer. 30:17)

² Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. (3 John 2)

...we who are living will also be transformed. ⁵³ For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. 1 Cor 15:52-53

Dear heavenly Father, my stuffed-up head and slightly sore throat are mere irritants compared to the health crises many of us face as this day begins. How we long for the day of no more cancer, no more dementia, no more heart disease, no more respiratory issues, no more Ebola and AIDS, no more disease of any kind—the day of perfect health.

Thank you for the promise of a resurrection body that will never get sick, wear out, or die. Thank you that our life in the new heaven and new earth will not include visits to the ER, health insurance, medical bills, hospitals, nursing homes, palliative care, or funeral homes. Hasten that day, Father; hasten it.

Until then, we will pray for healing—thankful that Jesus’ finished work has secured the redemption of our whole being—mind, body, and spirit. Though we’d love for you to answer all of our prayers affirmatively and on our timetable, we will trust and love you when you grant us sufficient grace instead of instant healing (2 Cor. 12:7–10).

Father, we will also seek to take care of these “tents” in which we live (see 2 Cor. 5:1–5). Thank you for good food, opportunities for exercise, the gift of sleep, clean water—gifts you’ve given us by grace, gifts you intend for us to share with others. Indeed, Father, may our suffering make us more sensitive to the sufferings of others. Even as Jesus joyfully fulfilled the law for us, grant us great joy in fulfilling the law of Christ as we bear one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2). In Jesus’ triumphant and tender name we pray. Amen.

A Prayer for Remaining Grateful When Life is Messy

¹⁸ Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thess 5:18)

*Don’t be afraid, for I am with you.
Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you.
I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. (Isa 41:10)*

Dear heavenly Father, there are some days when it’s good (and important) to remember that you call us to offer thanks in, not for, all circumstances. The gospel isn’t about magical thinking or make-believe living, spiritual anesthesia or circumstantial amnesia. In fact, the gospel is the only

place in the universe where we don't have to pretend about anything. That's one of the many reasons we love you and are grateful to be your children.

Father, strengthen, help, and uphold us with your righteous right hand, in stories that are recipes for dismay. For those of us for whom holidays highlight the brokenness of our family system—grant us grace and freedom to love well in the chaos.

For those of us bearing the weight of health concerns for ourselves or those we love—grant us grace, peace, and the assurance of your nearness.

For those of us weighed down by some combination of the six o'clock news, financial pressures, vocational issues, and relational heartache—grant us grace and a vision of the occupied throne of heaven.

For those of us who hear the condemning whispers of Satan louder than the consoling voice of Jesus, grant us grace and fresh assurance that nothing can separate us from your love—that Jesus plus nothing is our righteousness, period.

Father, in these and other scenarios of difficult circumstances, reassure us that you are very much at work, for your glory and our good. For you have called us – you have subpoenaed us to an eternal life of intimacy with yourself. You want us, you have us, and you love us. Hallelujah, now and forever we are yours. In Jesus' merciful and mighty name we pray. Amen.

A Prayer for Reaffirming That God Is In Control of Everything

⁹ *Remember the things I have done in the past.*

For I alone am God!

I am God, and there is none like me.

¹⁰ *Only I can tell you the future*

before it even happens.

Everything I plan will come to pass,

for I do whatever I wish. (Isa 46:9-10)

Dear heavenly Father, though there are days when I, the clay, presume to tell you, the Potter, what to create next; and though there are stories where I, the character, want to dictate to you, the Author, how the plot should change; and though there are circumstances about which I, your subject, want to order you, my King, into action—no, I really don't. Not really. A thousand times over, not really! I am so thankful that you are God and I am not.

I am so thankful that you are the Alpha and the Omega and every other Greek letter in between. I am so thankful you know the beginning and the ending and every other moment as well. I am so thankful that you don't answer all my prayers with a resounding "Yes!" I am so thankful that you don't cater to my fancies, give in to my whining, or share your throne with me—even for a nanosecond.

I am so thankful that you do as you please, even when your pleasure requires my displeasure. I am so thankful that you're not codependent on me in any way, shape, or form, and that I'm absolutely dependent on you – even when I "kick against the goads" (Acts 26:14), get frustrated with your sense of timing, or, in my moments of temporary insanity, question your goodness.

Father, I am so thankful you are God and the gospel is true, period. In Jesus' triumphant and tender name I pray. Amen.

A Prayer for Perspective When Suffering

But now, O Jacob, listen to the LORD who created you.

O Israel, the one who formed you says,

“Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you.

I have called you by name; you are mine.

² *When you go through deep waters,*

I will be with you.

When you go through rivers of difficulty,

you will not drown. (Isa 43:1-2)

¹⁰ *In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. (1 Pe 5:10)*

Dear heavenly Father, thank you so many times over for the way you come to us in your Word. You don't merely give us "verses to claim," but you reveal yourself as a Father to know—a Father who loves and cares for us, so much more than we realize.

Today, in particular, thank you for validating our sufferings and for pledging yourself to us in our hard places and broken stories. There is no name that you call us that is any more precious to us than "Mine." We are honored to be yours and relish everything that belonging to you implies.

Father, you say to us that not if but when we pass through deep waters and rushing rivers, you will be with us. Thank you for being up front about life between the resurrection and return of Jesus. There will be, and there are, difficult seasons and all types of suffering in this life.

Grant us the perspective Peter had. No matter how many years you give us in this world, sufferings in this life are for "a little while." In the big scheme of things, it's only going to hurt for "a little while." Thank you for your promise to restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us—in, through, and after our suffering.

And grant us Paul's perspective as well—his sense of redemptive math. The things you have prepared for us in the future do far, far, far outvalue the present sufferings we are called to endure now. Father, grant us the grace we need to suffer to your glory, the strength to trust you in the hardships and with our heartaches, and the wisdom and kindness to care for our fellow sufferers. In Jesus' tender and triumphant name we pray. Amen.

A Prayer for Knowing the Full Extent of Jesus' Love

Having loved his own who were in the world, he [Jesus] now showed them the full extent of his love. (John 13:1 NIV, 1984)

Dear Lord Jesus, I often return to the scene from which this verse is taken, for it's homeroom for my heart—the place I go to settle and center my restless soul. It's the night of your betrayal, the night you would be denied and abandoned, not just by Peter but also by every disciple. You knew the full extent of their weakness, so you showed them the full extent of your love. Washing their feet was a prelude to washing their hearts. Water sufficed for the first; your lifeblood was required for the second.

This is how you love each of us, Jesus—how you love me. Absolutely nothing can separate us from your love or impact the way you love us. You don't love us more when we "get it right," and you don't love us less when we fail you. That doesn't mean you're indifferent; it means you're our Savior, the one who remains committed to showing us the full extent of your love—how wide, long, high, and deep it really is (Eph. 3:18–19).

Only your love, Jesus, can free and change me. Only your love is better than life. Only your love is enough. In my most gospel-sane moments, I know this to be true—my truest truth. Nobody or nothing has to change for me to be at peace and joyful. Continue to rescue me from thinking otherwise. Forgive me for plugging my happy-meter into what people think of me, or how easy or difficult life is, or how much or how little money I have, or how in control or not I am of my circumstances, or anything beyond you.

Jesus, you are my loving Master, not my private masseur. Forgive me when I forget the first and start demanding the second. By the gospel keep washing me, Jesus – bathe me in grace every hour of every day. You are already my perfect righteousness; I long for the day when I will be made perfect in love (1 John 4:18). In your merciful and mighty name I pray. Amen.

Some Short and Simple Prayers

Confused

Lord Jesus, I don't know what's going on inside my heart in this moment. Please center and settle me. I feel confused, weary, and anxious. I hate not knowing what's next, what to do, and when things might change. Be my peace, take my hand, and lead the way forward.

Failure

God, I did it again, and for the ten thousandth time, I ask you to forgive me. I'm not asking for a second chance but for more of Jesus. I'm so tired of fighting this same battle. Do what you must to change and free me.

Darkness

Father, a veil of fear has fallen over my heart, and I'm having a hard time seeing your hand in my circumstances. I feel out of control and alone. Please meet me in this dark hole. I love you. I trust you. I need you, Lord.

Renewal

Holy Spirit, fill me with a fresh love for Jesus, quicker repents before my family, and a willingness to trust God with important decisions in front of me. I'm fearful and yet at the same time excited.

Children

Jesus, grab the hearts of my children. Make your grace irresistible to them. More than anything else, I want my kids to know you, love you, and serve you.

Adult Children

Father, help me to know what good boundaries look like with my adult children. It's hard to watch them make bad choices and not say something, but they resent my unsolicited suggestions. Grant me grace, Lord. Help me to trust you with their lives.

Marriage

Father, please intervene in our marriage. I feel lonely, mad, and hopeless. I want to run away, but I choose to run to you. Please help us. Humble me, gentle me, grace me.

My Husband

Dear Jesus, my husband is overwhelmed at work [OR with being unable to work during this time]. I hate to see him under so much stress. Help me know how to encourage him. Give me the right words. Please make yourself very real to him in this season. Thank you, Lord.

My Wife

Jesus, I don't know how to get close to my wife right now. She feels angry, depressed, and hopeless. Grant me grace to be present in the storm. Free me from every impulse to try to "fix her." Give me a nonanxious spirit, because I'm feeling just the opposite. Help me listen with my heart and wait upon you. I can't do without you, Jesus.