



an advent devotional
His Name Shall Be Called

What's In A Name? An Advent Devotional¹

Introduction

Parents often have multiple names for their children. They change how they refer to their child based on the circumstance. For instance, consider parents who have a son named James Joseph Johnson (their family likes the letter J). If the child's father is introducing him to a new person, he may say, "This is my son, James". If the child is hurt, his mother may express concern exclaiming "Jimmy, I'm so sorry! Where does it hurt?" (Or, as a mother, she may also use endearments such as "Honey" or "Sweetie!"). If the child's father or mother needs his full attention, they may shout: "James Joseph Johnson!" We often use different names for the people to whom we are closest in order to express our love and care in accordance with the situation we are sharing with them.

Did you know that Scripture uses over 200 different names for God? Yet when it comes to prayer we often only address him in one or two ways. Perhaps we say "Heavenly Father," "Lord Jesus," or "Dear God", all of which are wonderful ways to address our Creator. Yet what may happen if in our prayers we started using a variety of names for God rather than just our old standbys? What if we shaped our prayers based on the name of God that we used to begin them? That is the experiment of this devotional book! Each day of Advent we will consider a different name of God and offer a prayer that corresponds to that name, and see what happens. Maybe nothing will change, maybe something will change. Shall we find out? Let's get started!

Rev. Shelley Kral
Advent, 2017

¹This devotional is derived from chapter 2 and the prayer templates of *Pray With Your Eyes Open: Looking at God, Ourselves, and Our Prayers* by Richard L. Pratt Jr., P&R Publishing, New Jersey, 1987

Bread of Life

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” John 6:35

In life we find ourselves hungry for many things: friends, love, justice, purpose, success, food, clothing, etc. When we “come to” or “believe in” Jesus (in other words, when we move toward Jesus in a positive way), we find that the deepest things we are hungering and thirsting after become completely satisfied. He is our Bread of Life!

Bread of Life, my soul is hungry for _____.
(Describe something you desire)

So I come to you asking you to fill that hungry place in my soul. I’m tempted to fill it by _____ but that would
(Provide an example of how you may wrongly try and satisfy this desire)

_____. Instead I ask you, who are
(Describe why it is wrong)

_____, to provide all I really need.
(Describe a quality of God that meets this kind of need)

How wonderfully you take care of me! Amen.

Example: Bread of Life, my soul is hungry for friendship, I don’t want to eat alone at school. So I come to you asking you to fill that hungry place in my soul. I’m tempted to satisfy it by making jokes at the expense of another kid, so people will think I’m funny and want to be around me, but that would be hurtful. Instead I ask you, who enjoy me and are my friend, to provide all I really need. How wonderfully you take care of me! Amen.

Everlasting Father

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

God himself, the one with so much power he was able to create the cosmos, the one with so much wisdom he will always do right, the one who loves you so much he sent Jesus to bring you back to him, this is your Dad! He has his family in his hand and no one will ever be able to snatch them out. He is our Everlasting Father!

Everlasting Father, thank you for moving heaven and earth to be my Dad! I've always wanted a father who would _____.
(Describe attributes of a good father).

You are this, and more.

I have experienced you as my good Dad when _____.
(List times when God has taken care of you like a good father)

Open my eyes to see even more ways in which you are being my good Dad. The bottom line is, Everlasting Father, you have all wisdom, goodness, and power and you are fighting on my behalf, and on behalf of my brothers and sisters throughout time. Thank you for loving your children so well! Amen.

Example: Everlasting Father, thank you for moving heaven and earth to be my Dad! I've always wanted a father who would teach me how to be wise and courageous in everything I do so I could stay out of trouble and really help people. You are this, and more! I have experienced you as my good Dad when you taught me how to understand your Word deeply in my mind and my heart, when you gave me the courage to go to a school far away from home, when you stopped me from taking that job I really wanted but would have led to trouble. Open my eyes to see even more ways in which you are being my good Dad. The bottom line is, Everlasting Father, you have all wisdom, goodness, and power and you are fighting on my behalf, and on behalf of my brothers and sisters throughout time. Thank you for loving your children so well! Amen.

Father of Compassion

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
who comforts us in all our troubles,
so that we can comfort those in any trouble
with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

As our Father, God is tender and tenacious in his grace-filled actions and attitude toward us, his covenant children. When our sin is exposed, when others sin against us, when we experience what it means to live in a sin-broken world, our God is always compassionate toward us (see Lamentations 3:22). This, in turn, fuels our ability to be compassionate toward others. He is our Father of Compassion!

Father of Compassion, you are _____. Yet when
(Describe an attribute or action of God)

I think of _____ my heart is
(Describe a specific problem)

_____. In this helpless state
(Describe how the problem makes you feel)

I turn to you for _____.
(Describe what you would like God to do for you and/or what you'd like him to do for others)

Thank you for caring more deeply about these things than I ever will. Amen.

Example: Father of Compassion, you are working all things together for those who love you and are called according to your purpose. Yet when I think of the natural disasters devastating our country, my heart is heavy with sadness, so much loss of life and homes! In this helpless state I turn to you for comfort, to know that all is not in vain, that there is meaning behind such seemingly meaningless tragedy. I turn to you for words and actions I can offer to help those who are suffering because of the disasters. Thank you for caring more deeply about these things than I ever will. Amen.

Friend

*I no longer call you slaves, because the slave does not understand
what his master is doing.
But I have called you friends, because I have revealed to you everything
I heard from my Father. John 15:15*

Friendship with God is not friendship between equals, for we can never be on the same footing with God. However friendship with God does include qualities of human friendship: loyalty, sharing of information with one another, coming to one's aid, etc. The whole plan of salvation is an act of God's friendship as he transforms enemies into friends through Jesus Christ, working in us to make us people of faith. God is our Friend!

Jesus, my Friend, today I doubted you. I questioned _____.
(Describe a doubt that you have)

Yet you have not withdrawn your friendship from me. In fact, you remain loyal to me in order to make me a person of faith. I see your friendship in _____
_____. (Name ways in which God at work in your life)

I hear your friendship in _____.
(Name ways in which God is at work in your life)

Thank you for the way in which you are a friend to me even when I am less than a friend toward you. Amen.

Example: Jesus, my Friend, today I doubted you. I questioned why I had to get injured in the game. I confess I was mad! Aren't you supposed to protect me? To make sure nothing bad happens to me? Yet you have not withdrawn your friendship from me. In fact, you remain loyal to me in order to make me a person of faith. I see your friendship in providing doctors and nurses to take care of me, medicine to help my pain, friends and family to pray over me, the Holy Spirit to remind me that I've still got great things ahead of me. Thank you for the way in which you are a friend to me even when I am less than a friend toward you. Amen.

Giver of Gifts

*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;
and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;
and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God
who empowers them all in everyone. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

Although God is one, he expresses himself in a variety of ways (e.g. Father, Son, Holy Spirit). In a similar way, our Triune God gives his covenant children various gifts so we may reflect his diversity. Through these gifts he provides all that is necessary for people to see and experience what he is up to in his world. Scripture assures us that each of his covenant children received something directly from God which they are to share with the rest of God's children for our good and God's glory. Look at 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 for examples of these gifts. He is the Giver of Gifts!

Giver of Gifts, you created and re-created me to be a reflection of your active love here in Longview, TX. I sense that you have given me the gift(s) of _____
(List gift(s) you believe God has given you)

so that people may see _____. Are there other
(Describe how that gift(s) reflect who God is)

gifts you have given me as well? Please show me what you have given me and empower me to use my gifts in such a way that people are drawn closer to you. Amen.

Example: Giver of Gifts, you created and re-created me to be a reflection of your active love here in Longview, TX. I sense that you have given me the gift of healing so that people may see that you are a God who cares about the brokenness sin has wreaked in our bodies and is actively working to make us whole. Are there other gifts you have given me as well? Please show me what you have given me and empower me to use my gifts in such a way that people are drawn closer to you. Amen.

God of Hope

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Romans 15:13*

God is both the object and source of our hope. As the object of our hope we step out confidently in his direction believing that he will not let us down. With faith and joy we may leave behind our past, our commitment to doing things our own way for our own good, and live for God and his good reputation. As the source of our hope, God the Holy Spirit empowers us take that first step and to continue to walk faithfully in his direction.² Because he is the God of Hope we may live with humble confidence in all things!

God of Hope, you promise that in both my present and in my future I can be a

_____ person because your Holy Spirit

(Name a fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)

is active within me. I want to be a person of _____. In you I am a person of

_____ as well as _____

(Name the selected fruit again)

(List the other fruit of the Spirit)

_____! Thank you that your grace

makes this possible. Please empower me to live it out especially when

_____. Amen.

(Name a situation or in which or people with whom you
especially want to live out that reality)

Example: God of Hope, you promise that in both my present and my future I can be a patient person because your Holy Spirit is active within me. I want to be a person of patience. In you I am a person of patience as well as love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control! Thank you for your grace that makes this possible. Please empower me to live from that truth especially when I am in traffic and surrounded by terrible drivers. Amen.

² Language from Leon Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1988

God of Justice

You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?"
By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?" Malachi 2.17

He will not break a bruised reed or extinguish a smoldering wick,
until he brings justice to victory. And in his name the Gentiles will hope. Matthew 12:20-21

While we live in a world full of evil and it may seem as if God does not care, Scripture promises that Jesus Christ will persevere in bringing justice. Evil will never have the final victory. And that victory will not be for a limited group of people, but all peoples of the world will come under the vindication for which all redeemed hearts long. He is the God of Justice!

God of Justice, I look in the world and I see _____.
(List things you see that are sinful, wrong, evil)
I listen to the world and I hear _____.
(List things you hear that are sinful, wrong, evil)

These things make me wonder if bad will win the day, if good will ever fully overcome evil. Then I remember who is Lord of the world. It is not _____.
_____. It is you.
(List things or people who seem to have all the power)

May your justice roll down now as it will when Jesus returns in full force and establishes the New Heavens and New Earth right here on this earth. Come quickly Lord of Justice. Amen!

Example: God of Justice, I look in the world and I see abandoned children. I listen to the world and I hear children being ridiculed, told they are worthless, sold into slavery – and it's been happening for centuries. These things make me wonder if bad will win the day, if good will ever fully overcome evil. Then I remember who is Lord of the world. It is not the bullies at school, the self-centered parents, the power-hungry overlords. It is you. May your justice roll now as it will when Jesus returns in full force and establishes the New Heavens and New Earth right here on this earth. Come quickly Lord of Justice. Amen!

Helper

[Jesus said] But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 14:26

It has been said that Christians are like “Cinderella with amnesia”; we forget “who we are and Whose we are.”³ Thankfully we are provided with the best Helper in the universe. The Holy Spirit gave the first disciples of Jesus Christ an accurate and full understanding of who Jesus was, what he did, and why he did it. The Helper then oversaw the writing down of that accurate and full understanding in the original copies of the New Testament. He is what makes the Bible today reliable, authoritative, and our greatest source of knowledge of God, what he is doing in our world, and how we may live lives that honor him! Likewise, the Helper lives inside each follower of Jesus, praying for us, convicting us, and encouraging us that we may increasingly remember we are and whose we are. He is our Helper!

Helper, thank you for keeping before me who I am and whose I am. When I

_____, you _____

(Name something you struggle to remember about who you are in Christ)

(Name a way the Spirit reminds you of who you are in Christ).

(Repeat this sentence as much as you’d like) Over and over you do this for me and I am grateful. You are a kind and generous God. Thank you for being so good to me! Amen.

Example: Helper, thank you for keeping before me who I am and whose I am. When I disobey, you convict me and lead me to repentance. When I am weak, you strengthen me. When I feel like I don’t belong, you draw me close. Over and over you do this for me and I am grateful. You are a kind and generous God. Thank you for being so good to me! Amen.

³ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/scotty-smith/a-prayer-for-those-suffering-from-doxological-dementia/>

Holy One

Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 12:6

And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say,
“Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was,
for you brought these judgments.” Revelation 16:5

Holy is a word often used to describe the fullness of who God is. If you put together all his attributes (things like his being everywhere present, all-knowing, all-powerful, all-wisdom, without beginning or end [eternal], without limitation [infinite], unchangeable, self-existent, self-sufficient, goodness, mercy, gracious, just, sovereign, and love), what you have is supreme moral excellence, you have the Holy One. His holiness is purity at its peak, is beauty at its greatest. So his justice is a holy justice, his wisdom a holy wisdom, his promise a “holy promise” (Ps 105:42), his powerful arm a “holy arm” (Ps 98:1). His name (a way of speaking of God in his totality) “is holy” (Ps 103:1). Can you imagine what it would be like to have a God who wasn’t holy? How wonderful it is that we don’t have to know! He is the Holy One!

Holy One, when I think of your holiness I realize my own unholiness and I, like Isaiah, am undone (Isa 6:5). Whereas you are always _____,

(List an attribute of God from above)

I am/can be _____.

(List how you are far from that attribute)

(Repeat the previous sentence as often as you like). Forgive me the arrogance that suggests I am more like you than I really am. Thank you for the grace and power at work in me through your Son. Though I will never be divine, through Jesus Christ you have eradicated and are eradicating my unholiness. You are making me more like Christ every day. In response to this unearned gift, I echo Isaiah once again giving myself to you saying “Here am I, send me.” (Isa 6:8) Amen. He is the Holy One!

Example: Holy One, when I think of your holiness I realize my own unholiness and I, like Isaiah, am undone. Whereas you are just, I am often unjust. Whereas you are always all-knowing, I have limited knowledge. Whereas you are always merciful, I can so often be harsh. Forgive me the arrogance that suggests I am more like you than I really am. Thank you for the grace and power at work in me through your Son. Though I will never be divine, through Jesus Christ you have eradicated and are eradicating my unholiness. You are making me more like Christ every day. In response to this unearned gift, I echo Isaiah once again giving myself to you saying, “Here am I, send me.” (Isa 6:8) Amen.

King of Nations

There is none like you, O Lord;
 you are great, and your name is great in might.
 Who would not fear you, O King of the nations?
 For this is your due;
 for among all the wise ones of the nations
 and in all their kingdoms
 there is none like you. Jeremiah 10:6-7

Right now, the King of Nations is ruling over all things. He always has. He always will. It is impossible to exist in a place that is not under his rule. The great news is that he rules in goodness and love and justice. He is a King who always rules for the best of his subjects (that's us!). He is ruling over all things in such a way that it is for the help and benefit of his people - so peace can reign in us, around us, and through us for ever and ever. No one other being is like this! There is none like him! He is the King of Nations!

King of Nations, I look to you with amazement because _____.
 (Name a blessing that comes from
 having God as your king)

When I think of this blessing, I feel _____.
 (Name an emotional reaction)

How good it is to be under your rule!

Example: King of Nations, we look to you with amazement because you rule with all knowledge and wisdom. When I think of this blessing, I feel safe because it means you can't be surprised, caught off guard, without a plan for protecting us. You've got everything under control. How good it is to be under your rule!

Mighty God

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Though Jesus came as a baby, and though he lived a meek and humble life, by no means did he lack power. He, the Mighty God, was always protecting us and fighting for us – and he still is! He grew into a man who conquered evil and death. All authority on earth belongs to him; he has a plan to build a righteous kingdom, and he has the power necessary to get it done. One day he will return to earth and finish what he started. He is a Mighty God!

Mighty God, we remember your powerful work in _____.
(Name an episode in Jesus' ministry)

We see _____.
(Describe the sights of the event in detail)

We hear _____.
(Describe the sounds of the event in detail)

As we think on these things, our hearts _____.
(Describe your emotional reaction)

_____.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for this, your mighty work. Amen.

Example: Mighty God, we remember your powerful work in calming the stormy sea. We see the waves crashing against the ship, the water rising above the feet of the disciples. We see the fear in their eyes. We see you sleeping until awakened. We see you stand and face the storm. We hear the raging of the wind, the panic in the men's voices. We hear you commanding the storm to cease. We hear the deafening silence of nature's obedience. As we think on these things, our hearts are awestruck. We feel excited and we feel afraid. We wonder who you are that has so much power. We are grateful that your power is on our side. We give you thanks, O Lord, for this, your mighty work. Amen.

Prince of Peace

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

In Scripture peace is not simply the cessation of hostility, it is the restoring of balance so that each plant, fish, insect, animal, and human may thrive in perfect relationship with their Creator, themselves, and each other. This is what Jesus came to bring about. This is what Jesus is bringing about. This is what Jesus will bring about. He is the Prince of Peace!

How I need you, Prince of Peace. When I think about our dependence on you for peace, I bow in humility and gratitude.

I depend on you to _____

(Describe a quality of God associated with
peace that meets some of your needs)

because _____. I confess how

(Describe how you need God)

often I forget how much I depend on you to bring about the peace for which I long. How wonderfully you provide for us. Amen.

Example: How I need you, Prince of Peace. When I think about our dependence on you for peace, I bow in humility and gratitude. I depend on you to give me the desire and the wisdom to live in restored relationships because my hurt prevents me from wanting to seek restoration, it's easier to simply be angry and blaming when my efforts to set things right don't work. I confess how often I forget how much I depend on you to bring about the peace for which I long. How wonderfully you provide for us. Amen.

Light of the World

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light do we see light. Psalm 36:9

Light is used to describe God throughout the Bible. The glory of the presence of God lit up the skies by day and night as God protected the Israelites as they journeyed through the wilderness to the Promised Land. They were taught to sing of the LORD as their light and salvation. They were given the law of God to be a light on the path toward true living. When Jesus declared himself as Light of the World, it was during the Feast of the Tabernacles where the four huge lamps in the temple’s court of women were lit in a celebration. As the orchestra played, men and women would dance and sing songs with torches in their hands, shedding light throughout Jerusalem. In this context Jesus declared he was Light of the World.⁴ If we follow him through the wilderness we will overcome the darkness for we will have the light that produces life. He is the Light of the World!

Light of the World we ask that you shed your light on _____.

(Name people you know personally or know at a distance who are walking in darkness)

We make this request because they _____.

(Note what leads you to believe they are in darkness)

We make this request of you because as Light of the World you _____
_____. Hear our prayer, O God. Amen.

(Give support from God’s character or Word).

Example: Light of the World we ask that you shed your light on the Muslim world. We make this request because they are worshipping a God who doesn’t exist, because many express their faith in a way that oppresses people and leads to violence. We make this request of you because as Light of the World you are strong enough to dispel even the deepest darkness, because you love all tribes and nations and desire that none should perish, because you instruct us to pray for our enemies. Hear our prayer, O God. Amen.

⁴ From a description from the *Mishna Sukka* in D. A. Carson, (1991) *The Gospel according to John*, Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991.

Master Potter

*But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand. Isaiah 64:8 (cf Romans 9:20-21)*

As Master Potter, God may do whatever he wants with whatever he has created. Because he created us that means he may do whatever he wants where we are concerned. This makes us fearful and resistant until we remember that because God is righteous and just, whatever God wants and so does is also righteous and just. He will never act nastily or unjustly toward us. Therefore, the main question is: are we willing to submit ourselves into the hands of the Master Potter or will we demand to be consulted along the way? Our answer leads us to experience life in two very different ways. And regardless of the answer, he remains the Master Potter.

Master Potter, as your clay there are times you _____
(Describe ways a potter shapes clay)

and it feels _____.
(Describe how clay might feel as it is being shaped)

Sometimes I don't know exactly what is going on, but I trust that you are an expert and you are doing the right thing.

Help me to be _____ in your hands. In
(Describe an attribute of clay that make it easy to work with)

Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Example: Master Potter, as your clay there are times you push and pull on me and it feels like you are trying to destroy me. Sometimes I don't know exactly what is going on, but I trust you are an expert and you are doing the right thing. Help me to be soft in your hands. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Rock and Fortress

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
 my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
 my shield, and the horn of my salvation,
 my stronghold and my refuge,
 my savior; you save me from violence.
 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,
 and I am saved from my enemies. 2 Samuel 22:2-4

These words written by David express his deep love for God that came as a result of God's displays of love to David. Throughout his life God provided David with help in the midst of trials brought on by his enemies. "Rock" refers to the cleft of a rock which conceals (and so saves) you from your enemies as well as God's unshakeable faithfulness to David which is grounded in the fact that God himself is unshakeable. "Fortress" refers to a building that is difficult to get to because of its location, height, or strength and so protects you against ambush and attack. It refers to God's real help in a real world that is able to deliver us from those who oppose us. He is our Rock and Fortress!

Rock and Fortress, you are committed to hide us from harm. Yet, when we think of

(A specific problem)

our hearts are _____.

(Description of emotional reaction)

We see _____.

(Sights of the event)

We hear _____.

(Sounds of the event)

These things trouble us because _____.

In our helpless state we turn to you for _____.

Hear us, and come to our aid. Amen.

Example: Rock and Fortress, you are committed to hide us from harm.

Yet, when we think of the physical persecution of Christians in the Middle East, our hearts are broken for the pain and loss they are experiencing. We see people imprisoned. We see people executed. We hear the slam of prison doors and the bang of guns and the swish of swords.

These things trouble us because it seems as if you are not providing the protection you promise. In our helpless state we turn to you for comfort, hope, vindication, and courage. Hear us, and come to our aid.

Amen.

Savior

But now thus says the Lord,
 he who created you, O Jacob,
 he who formed you, O Israel:
 “Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by name, you are mine.
 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
 and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
 when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
 and the flame shall not consume you.
 For I am the Lord your God,
 the Holy One of Israel,
 your Savior.” Isaiah 43:1-3

As Savior, God moves his people out of danger and places them in safety. Jesus did this by fulfilling the Father’s plan for the Savior who would pay the debt his people owed for their sin (redeem them). Through belief that Jesus truly did this on their behalf, people are saved - they are moved from the shores of sin and death (with its brokenness and despair) to the land of righteousness and life (with its healing and hope). In this land they remain - they live with security and significance for all time. He is Savior!

Blessed God, I celebrate you as Savior! I think of how you _____
 (Describe something from which Jesus saved you)

and my heart is _____
 (Describe your emotional response)

I remember _____
 (Describe the details around the event)

This makes me _____
 (Describe how it make you feel or makes you want to act)

I rejoice before you. Great are you, my Savior! Amen.

Example: Blessed God, we celebrate you as Savior! I think of how you rescued me from the sin of lying and my heart is happy. I remember feeling that if I told the truth I would be hated or rejected, that I would have no friends, no one who loved me. But then I told the truth to you, and you didn’t hate or reject me, you still listened to me and loved me. And I told the truth to others and many of them didn’t hate me or reject me, they stayed my friends. This makes me courageous to tell the truth even when it is really hard. I rejoice before you. Great are you, my Savior! Amen.

Teacher

You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. John 13:13

In the Bible teachers are those with responsibility for instructing others especially when it comes to faith and life. There are various levels of teachers. Parents are to be teachers in the home. Priests, rabbis, pastors, etc. are to be teachers of God's covenant people. The greatest teacher of all was (and is!) Jesus Christ. Because of his uniqueness as Son of God and son of man, he is able to instruct us in ways no one else can. So, we look to him as our primary means of knowing who God is, who we are, and how to live faithfully in God's world. He is our Teacher!

Teacher, I look on you with amazement because _____.
(Name a blessing that comes with Jesus as Teacher)

When I think of this blessing, I feel _____.
(Name an emotional reaction)

How good you are to us!

Example: Teacher, I look on you with amazement because you instruct us with such realism and wisdom. You don't ask people to step out of the real world to follow you, but teach us how to be faithful to you in life as it really is. When I think of this blessing, I feel encouraged. I can bring my real questions to you in all their messiness, and you will instruct me in what faith looks like in those situations. Not only that, you then provide me with the faith and power to live out what you teach me. O Lord Jesus, how good you are to your people!

The Faithful God

*Into your hand I commit my spirit;
you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God. Psalm 31:5*

The Faithful God is absolutely dependable. Because of his loyalty to his covenant people, we can trust in his pledge to keep us safe from sin and any other mortal enemies we may encounter. His redemption of us proves he has the power and commitment to do this. He is our Faithful God.

Faithful God, I remember the way you have remained loyal to me even when I have been less than faithful to you. I experienced your faithfulness in _____

(Describe an event)

I saw and heard your faithfulness _____

(Describe the sights and sounds of an event)

As I think on these things my heart is _____

(Describe your emotional reaction)

I am so thankful for your faithfulness O God!

Example: Faithful God, I remember the way you have remained loyal to me even when I have been less than faithful to you. I see your faithfulness in giving me courage to step into conversations I'd run from having for a long time. I saw angry faces, hurt feelings, defensive postures. I heard attacks and accusations. But I also saw compassion and strength. I heard encouragement and support. As I think on these things my heart is humbled. I am grieved by the sin in me and in our world. I am also relieved and joyful because Jesus addressed and is addressing all these issues in love and truth. I am so thankful for your faithfulness O God!

The God of All Comfort

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 2 Corinthians 1:3

One characteristic of God's fatherhood is deep compassion for humans in our "creatureliness and sinfulness."⁵ His tender mercy toward his children is abundant. "God is not called the Father of judgments or vengeance but the Father of all mercies and comfort."⁶ This mercy and comfort is especially realized in Jesus Christ through whom God fulfills the promise of Lamentations 3:22 which says "The LORD's loyal kindness never ceases; his compassions never end. He is the God of all comfort."

God of All Comfort, I recall how you have shown me mercy and comfort _____

(Recite a story where you experienced comfort).

This reminds me of when in the Bible _____

(If you can, summarize a relevant biblical story)

I thank you with all my heart for your endless mercy. Amen.

Example: God of All Comfort, I recall how you have shown me mercy and comfort when I've wanted to change the subject and not deal with the issues you are asking me to face. You were patient with me; you let me talk, but then you kept placing the subject you knew was the important one before me through different people in different ways. And when we did have the conversation, you corrected me in a way that I knew you were for me and not against me. This reminds me of when in the Bible you talked to the woman at the well and you kept bringing her back to the important things when she wanted to hide behind and talk about other things. But when she let you make your point, she found repentance and healing and joy. And I can, too. I thank you with all my heart for your endless mercy. Amen.

⁵ Harris, M. J. (2005). *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 142). Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press.

⁶ Bernard in Garland, D. E. (1999). *2 Corinthians* (Vol. 29, p. 59). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

The God of Armies

*The Lord who commands armies is on our side!
The God of Jacob is our protector! Psalm 46:7*

The God of Armies (also known as the Lord of Hosts) is Lord and Commander of all heavenly powers. He is using this power to protect his covenant people, a.k.a. his Church. Therefore, his Church can confidently ask him for whatever she needs for he has guaranteed that even though the Church will be rubbing up against the darkness of the world and hell may storm against her, she will never be toppled. We can have peace in the midst of whatever war the world wages because God himself, and all at his command, stand at her ready. He is the God of Armies!

How we need you, God of Armies. When we think about our dependence on your power, we bow in humility and gratitude. We depend on you to be _____
_____. Because _____
(Describe a protective quality of God that meets your needs)

_____.
(Describe how you need God)

We confess, O Lord that we often forget how much we depend on you for protection. How wonderfully you provide for our needs. Amen.

Example: How we need you, God of Armies. When we think about our dependence on your power, we bow in humility and gratitude. We depend on you to be keeping the forces of hell at bay, to fulfill your promise that no power can prevent Jesus from coming back and finishing what he started. Because the Church seems to be under increasing attack, we can wonder what will happen to her. Unfortunately we can think it is up to us to figure out new ways to ensure she doesn't die, as if that is even a possibility, as if we even have what it takes to keep her alive. We confess, O Lord, that we often forget how much we depend on you for protection. How wonderfully you provide for our needs. Amen.

The Life

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.
Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.
Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26*

The Life of which Jesus speaks is the "life of God", "life in the kingdom of God", or "eternal life." This Life is not simply something Jesus gives; rather it is who he is. And the promise is not simply that those who cooperate with this truth, who believe in Jesus, will have Life in the age to come, but that they will possess it now. It is theirs before, as well as after, they physically die! Mortal life may give way, but The Life will never give way! Because he is alive, so are we. He is The Life!

Jesus, you are The Life. As such you have blessed me with _____.
(Describe a blessing associated with having eternal life)

This makes a difference as I think about _____.
(Describe how having eternal life makes you think about life differently)

This makes me feel _____.
(Describe how having eternal life now affects you emotionally)

This reminds me of _____.
(If you can, summarize a relevant biblical story)

I thank you with all my heart for your loving goodness to me. Amen.

Example: Jesus, you are The Life. As such you have blessed me with the knowledge that this life isn't all there is. This makes a difference as I think about the work that I do and the people with whom I do life - I don't only have decades to accomplish all the things I want to or to spend with the people I'd like to, I have an infinite amount of time! This makes me feel relieved (my bucket list isn't on a deadline) and excited (I'll get to have plenty of laughs with that person). This reminds me of when you told the thief executed next to you that he would be with you today in paradise. This life isn't all there is- the two are connected, but the best is yet to come. I thank you with all my heart for your loving goodness to me!

The Truth

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6*

Jesus is The Truth because he embodies God – he shows us who God is in a way relatable to us. To see Jesus is to see God, to see Truth. If we are to know God, we must know Jesus. And Jesus wants to be known. He doesn't want us to believe lies about God anymore. He wants us to know the Truth; he wants us to know him so we may know God, so we may have God and enjoy him (and so life!) forever. He is The Truth!

The Truth, we need you. We need you because life without Truth _____

(Describe specifically how life is difficult when you don't have Truth)

But with you we can be assured _____.

(Describe how life is when you know the truth; give examples if you can)

Please continue to show me Truth, so I can have you and enjoy you forever. Amen.

God The Truth, we need you. We need you because life without truth makes us timid and afraid. We don't know if up is up and down is down and so it's hard to know what the right thing to do is. But with you we can be assured that up is up and down is down; even when it doesn't seem that way, we can believe you and act accordingly. So when you tell me 'up' is forgiving people even when it feels like 'down,' I can trust you, forgive even when I don't want to, and be aligned with you. Please continue to show me Truth, so I can have you and enjoy you forever. Amen.

Wonderful Counselor

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Counselors do things like guide, direct, advise, and encourage. Because Jesus took on human form, because he became human in every way except for sin, he understands us. He understands our hurts, our needs, our concerns. This is part of what makes him Wonderful Counselor. He is here for us not off in the distance, but as someone who has been a little child, a tweener, a teen, a young adult, a worker, a son, a sibling, a friend, a leader. He knows what it is like to be human and he is ready to guide us, correct us, comfort us, challenge us, and encourage us so that we can live faithfully and joyfully in the Kingdom of God. He is Wonderful Counselor!

Wonderful Counselor, I come to you asking _____.
(Present request for help)

I make this request because _____.
(Present the need)

I'm asking because of what it's like _____.
(Give support from the circumstances that create the need)

I call upon you because you _____.
(Give support from God's character described in the Bible)

Hear my prayer and direct my words and my steps. Thank you for your kindness.
Amen.

Example: Wonderful Counselor, I come to you asking for help with Mrs. Jones, my teacher at school. I make this request because I'm having a really hard time with her. I'm asking because of what it's like for me at school. I've tried my best to do as she asks, but nothing seems to please her. I'm always getting in trouble. I'm asking you because you know all things and you've said you care about me, so I'd think you'd want to show me the best way to handle my problems. Hear my prayer and direct my words and my steps. Thank you for your kindness. Amen.



3800 Judson Rd., Longview TX 75605
903-234-0032 info@epclongview.org

TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN