

Bestselling author of *Jesus in Me*

ANNE GRAHAM LOTZ

The LIGHT *of* HIS PRESENCE

PRAYERS TO DRAW YOU NEAR
TO THE HEART OF GOD

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yet who long to draw near
to the heart of God*

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One thing I ask of the LORD,
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him.

Psalm 27:4

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Introduction

P RAYER HAS BEEN ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES OF my Christian life. While I know I'm commanded to pray, encouraged to pray, invited to pray, and often compelled to pray, I have still struggled with prayer. My struggle has centered primarily on three areas.

First, I have struggled with concentration—why is it that as soon as I bow my head to pray, my thoughts start to scatter? Instead of truly communicating with God, I think about what I need to fix for supper or what I'm going to wear to a special event or when I can schedule coffee with a friend. Or I'm so tired that I simply doze in the quietness of the hour.

The second area I have struggled with is consistency—making time daily to meet with the Lord in prayer. How often I have been distracted by my chirping phone or interrupted by my dog needing to go out or so busy I jump out of bed at the last minute and into my day with-

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out any real prayer at all.

And I have struggled with content—just knowing what to say and how to say it.

As I have sought victory in these three areas, I have asked God to give me solutions. And He has! Setting my alarm for an earlier time—allowing me to meet with the Lord before I begin my day—has helped with consistency. And writing down my prayers has helped not only with content but also with concentration.

In this volume you'll find some of the prayers I have written. These prayers do not cover every crisis or cry, desire or delight, longing or lack, struggle or success, or a myriad of other issues I have taken to the Lord in prayer over the years. But I hope you'll find these prayers a helpful resource to refresh your own conversations with God. Especially if you, too, have struggled with prayer.

While I can't help you set your alarm, I wonder whether reading some of the prayers I have written will help you with your own concentration and content in prayer. As you read them, you may want to make note of the four elements I try to include in my prayers: *worship*, *confession*, *thanksgiving*, and *intercession*.

I have made a habit of beginning my prayers by worshipping God for who He is, because as I focus on Him, it's amazing how my own needs and problems are reduced in size compared with who He is. Then I look at myself and confess the sin that now seems obvious, revealed by the light of His holiness and glory. God has used a list of sins to effectively guide me deeper into confession. I

have included this list as a resource for you in Appendix B. I do not beat myself up over my sin, but instead, once I have named it for what it is, I move into thanksgiving to the One who has forgiven and cleansed me. At this point, I am ready to present my requests and intercede for others. While every prayer does not include each of these four elements, you will recognize the pattern. I have left some of the pages in this volume blank so you can write down your own prayers, using this pattern if it's helpful.

And remember, the purpose of prayer is not just to get answers. The purpose is to develop an intimate, personal relationship with the One who loves you, gave Himself for you, and longs for you to live in the light of His presence.

My prayer for you as you read this volume is that God will use my struggle with prayer to help you overcome yours. And that, as a result, you will be drawn nearer to the heart of God.

The apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian followers of Jesus, and I have prayed these words for you:

For this reason

I kneel before the Father,

from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

I pray that out of his glorious riches

he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

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so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
And I pray that you,
being rooted and established in love,
may have power,
together with all the saints,
to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love
of Christ,
and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—
that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of
God.

Ephesians 3:14–19



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When God puts a burden upon you
He puts His own arm underneath.

—L. B. Cowman

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A Prayer of the Weary

GREAT, PERFECT HIGH PRIEST,
I worship You, the One who understands the feeling of my infirmities.¹ You are tender. Gentle. A bruised reed You will not break. Smoking flax You will not quench.² You never grow tired or weary.³

I confess that sometimes I do feel weary. Breakable. Lonely as I stand for You and speak out for You when so few others do. You don't blame me for my weariness and weakness. Instead, You sympathize with me. Yet I remember that You have said You set the lonely in families.⁴ So I thank You for Your family, for my Christian brothers and sisters who stand beside me shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart, as together we continue to live for You in this increasingly dark, dangerous, and hostile world.

Dear Father God, I ask that You would use me to encourage others—and bring into my life those who will do the same for me. Let us build one another up. Strengthen

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one another. So that when the Enemy comes in like a flood, assaulting us from every side, on every level and from every angle, we still stand. With spirits battered, maybe. With hearts wounded, maybe. But with sword raised in victory!⁵ May we continue standing firm!

For the glory of Your great name—*Jesus*,
Amen.

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Men ask for a rainbow in the cloud;
but I would ask *more* from Thee.
I would be, in my cloud, myself a
rainbow—
a minister to others' joy.

—George Matheson

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A Prayer for Stormy Days

AWESOME, OMNIPOTENT CREATOR GOD,
I worship You, the One . . .
who “laid the earth’s foundations,”
who “marked off its dimensions,”
who “shut up the sea behind doors when it burst
forth from the womb,”
who “made the clouds its garment,”
who “fixed limits for it,” and
who said, “This far you may come and no farther;
here is where your proud waves halt.”¹

I think of when Your disciples struggled in the storm on Galilee, then called out to You, and You commanded the wind and waves to be still. And they obeyed!²

As the storms of life assail me, as those I love face waves that threaten to submerge them in despair, I ask You to look on us with mercy. I cry out to You, knowing that just as the wind and waves know Your voice and respond,

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so too are all the forces of this world subject to Your power. I ask that You would speak into our lives the words *Peace! Be still!* Please. For the glory of Your great name.

I ask that You would keep Your promise: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.”³

You are Immanuel. God with us. Facing every storm that comes my way, I cling to You in trust.

In the name of the One whom the waves and wind still obey—*Jesus*,
Amen.

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Personal Prayer

God has said,
“Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you.”
So we say with confidence,
“The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?”
—Hebrews 13:5-6

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A true prayer
is
an inventory of needs,
a catalog of necessities,
an exposure of secret wounds,
a revelation of hidden poverty.
—C. H. Spurgeon

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A Prayer in the Hardest Times

MAN OF SORROWS,
As I watch the devastation and heartache in the lives of those around me, my spirit cries out, “No. No! No!” How can this be? How can You look on and allow such suffering? *Why?*

I will stand at my watch and look to see how You will answer me.¹ In the silence, I seem to hear Your soft whisper echoing what You have said to me before when unexpected and unexplained crises have erupted. Your answer seems to be the same: *Trust Me when you don't understand.*

O God, You have been our Help in ages past. You are our Hope for years to come. And You alone are our Shelter from this stormy blast.² You alone are our Refuge and our Strength. You are the Good Shepherd, who will lead us safely through this valley of shadow.³

As I reflect on the One whom I am asked to trust, my soul finds rest. You are my great High Priest, who under-

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stands. You are well acquainted with grief. Suffering.⁴

So please, look on all those I love who are in pain, in fear for their future. *Please*. Draw near to them. As they become more focused on the reality of their stark situations, I ask You to balance their feelings of devastation and loss with the comfort of Your presence. Your peace. Your love. Wipe the tears from our eyes. Turn our faces to Yours. Cause us to choose to look up. To look to You. With trust.

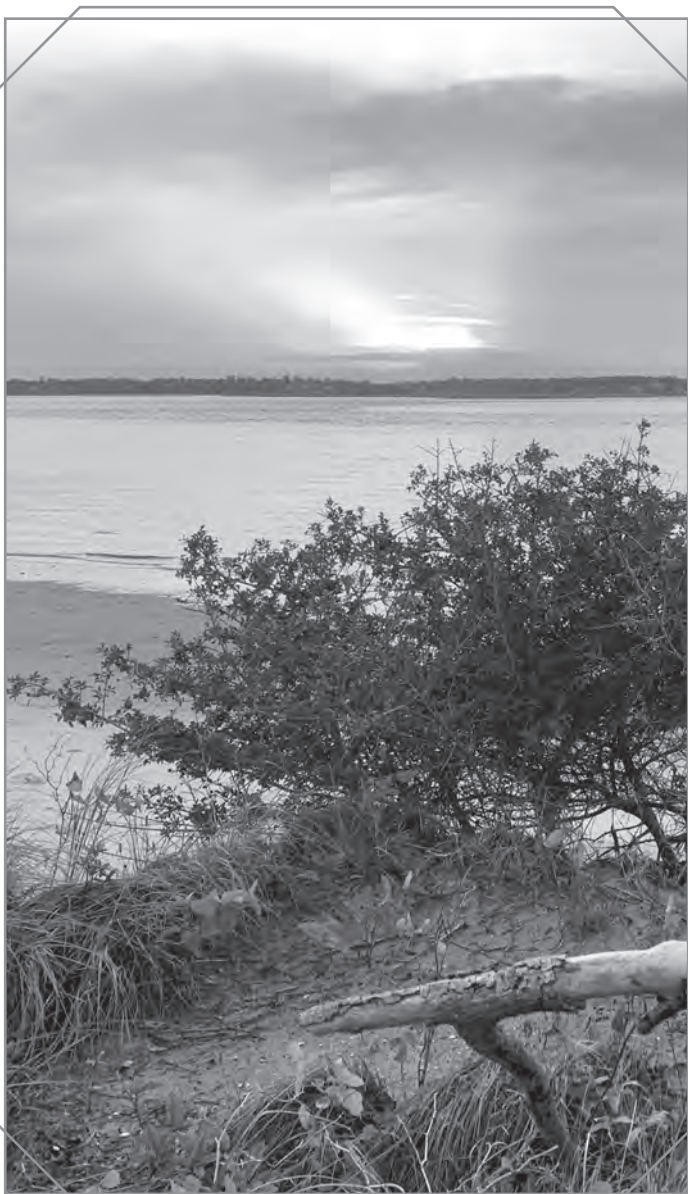
I pray this in the name of the One who has given His word, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”⁵
Jesus.

Amen.

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Let the morning bring me word of your
unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.
Rescue me from my enemies, O LORD,
for I hide myself in you.
Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God;
may your good Spirit
lead me on level ground.

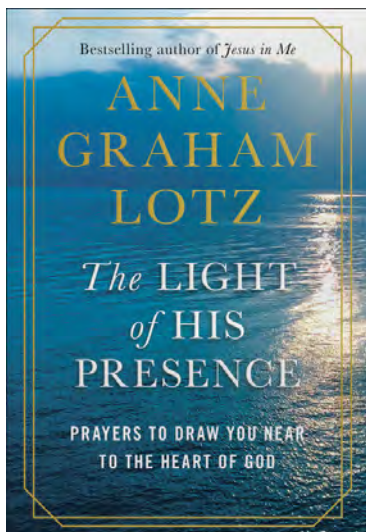
—Psalm 143:8–10

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