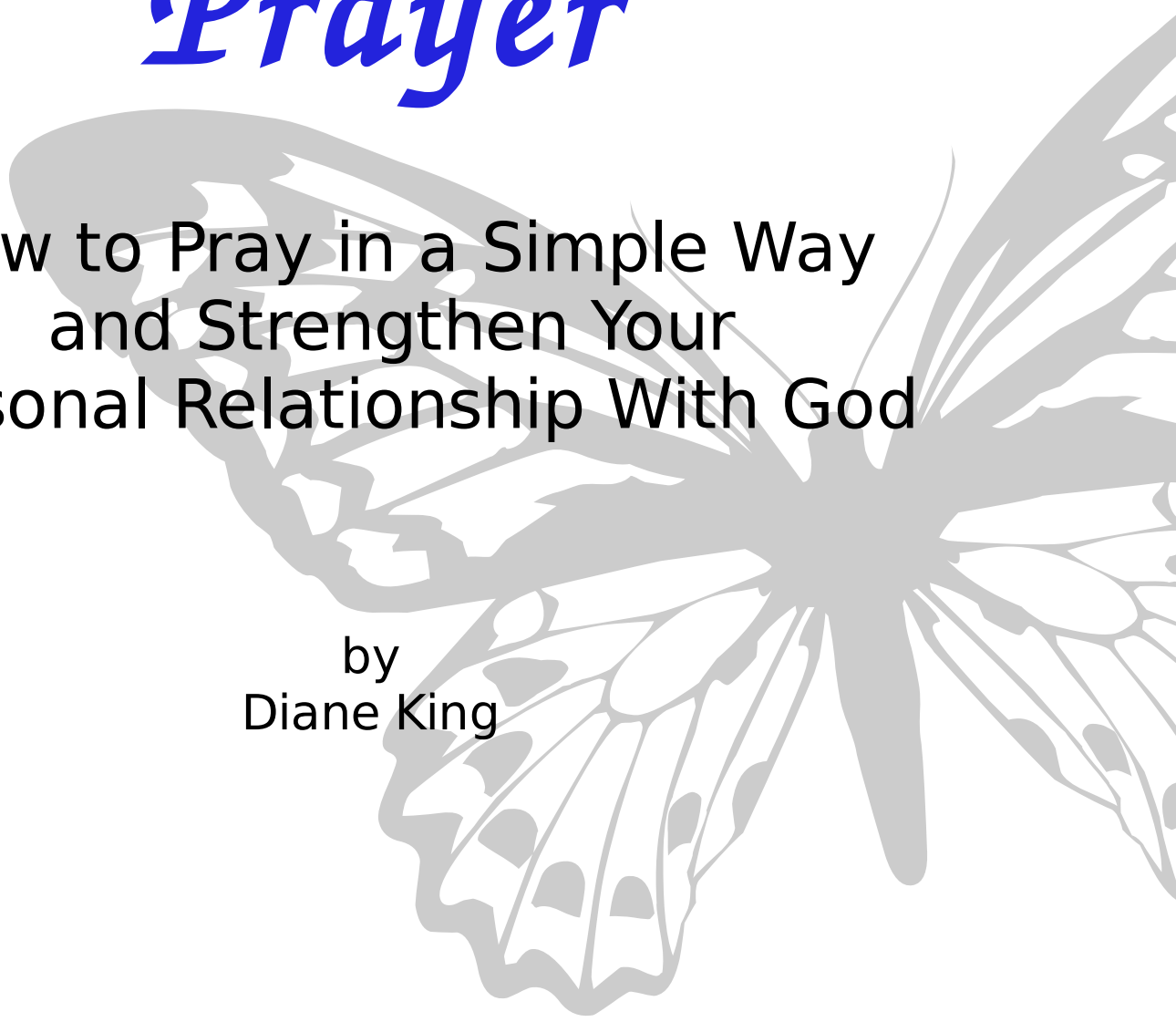


*Powerful  
Positive  
Prayer*

How to Pray in a Simple Way  
and Strengthen Your  
Personal Relationship With God

by  
Diane King



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I'm so grateful for you!

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# Chapter One

## Why This Book?

It seems like prayer should be simple. It's a uniquely personal process unlike anything else. It's not just thinking, it's communicating. It can be like a conversation, but it's internal. So, if it's personal and intimate, and if it is unique to each person, why would anyone consider writing what is basically a “how to” book about prayer?

Good question.

Like many people, there was a time in my life when prayer was hard. I just couldn't seem to connect with God. I felt isolated and frustrated. I knew this internal communication was possible, because I'd experienced it before.

That was fortunate, because if I hadn't done it before, I may have given up. I knew I could achieve that level of personal connection with God again, but I had either forgotten how to do it during the dark days in my life, or (the unthinkable) God had forsaken me during those days.

When I prayed, it wasn't from a place of confidence. I'd fallen away from my spiritual life. Don't get me wrong -- it's not like I was living on the street with a needle in my arm. I just forgot, somehow.

I don't know how someone could forget one of the most important relationships in her life, but I did. When I realized what I'd done, I felt ashamed. I thought God would have turned His back on me.

When I prayed, it was hard to focus because of my feelings of remorse. I couldn't ask for anything, not even for strength or guidance because I would be interrupted with thoughts like, "Who are you to ask God for anything? Where have you been lately?"

When I prayed I was coming from a mindset of lack. I had lost quite a bit, spiritually, and realizing it made my life seem bleak. An attitude like that made prayer very complicated. How could I ask for more when I was not in appreciation of what I already had?

I couldn't stop thinking about what I had lost. I couldn't stop obsessing about the subject of my prayers. First the prayers were ineffective because of so much static in my mind, and then I couldn't let them go in faith because I didn't trust them. They didn't feel right.

It was as if my prayers floated around somewhere in a dark corner of the ceiling, never making it out to God. I very clearly remember having that image in my mind – all my impotent prayers drifting around in my house like ghosts. I even had the thought that maybe if I sat next to the fireplace when I prayed, my prayer would go up the chimney and God might be able to find it.

That's how downright crazy my thoughts got during that difficult time. It was that fireplace idea that snapped me out of it. I mean, if I really thought that some pink insulation and tar paper shingles could inhibit communication with the Infinite, I needed to wake up!

It was time to approach my problem in a practical, not emotional, way.

At the time I was working and taking college courses. I was raising my son alone and life was pretty lonely. I really needed my relationship with God during those days.

A constant theme in my life during this period – in work, school and child-rearing -- were the concepts of "best practices" and "effective

methods.” I came up with the idea to analyze how I was praying and then come up with a better way – an effective method.

I needed a spark, something to ignite my passion for spirituality again. If I couldn't pray, I could at least study the concept of prayer. If my prayers weren't working, I needed to figure out why and then fix the problem. My prayer project gave me a sense of purpose and hope. And, it worked.

## What This Book is Not

This book is not based on the science of prayer. I am not going to research scientific studies or cite them. If you are even the slightest bit interested in prayer, you've heard of the stories of prayer's effectiveness in self-healing, healing others, reducing stress, lowering cholesterol, curing heart disease and depression – even helping plants grow faster!

It is also not my goal to help you pray so I can then guilt you into using your prayer skills for the betterment of mankind! You know what is best for you and your life. You will do what you are inspired to do, whether there is scientific proof or not, right?

I'm truly not interested in arguing with skeptics. I know what prayer does for me. I believe I see results in my life and that's good enough for me.

Somehow I have the feeling that the people who, like you, chose to purchase this book don't give a fuzzy fig what someone with a white coat and a clipboard, tells them about prayer. There's lots of things I'd like to consult a person like that about, but prayer is not one of them.

I am also not writing this book to convince you that you *should* pray, but rather to show you one way to pray that I believe to be powerful. If there's any information here that helps you, I'm happy.

## References to God

In the writing of this book, I have chosen to use the word “God” to represent...well, God! I know many people who write about spiritual issues use replacement names for God such as “Source,” or “Light,” or “Higher Power.”

I don't have a problem with those terms. In fact, they can be useful to round out our mental conception of God and help remind of of God's characteristics. God is the Source of everything, our Light in the darkness and an infinitely wise Guiding Presence. But to be honest, I've never been comfortable using them. I wanted to be comfortable while writing and not struggle over names.

Please feel free to use/fill in/replace whatever words are comfortable for you. I have no judgment about the use of them. I just can't comfortably have a conversation with you if I can't use the words that feel best to me.

## Links and Book References

At the end of each chapter I have included a section with links to books or websites that might help you study more deeply about the topics I discuss. You may not wish to interrupt your reading to follow those links, which is understandable.

That's okay, because every reference will be collected in a “recommended reading” section at the end so they will be together in one convenient spot for you. The purpose of putting the links at the end of the chapter is to let you know that those particular books or sites relate to something in that chapter.



## **Sometimes Even Spiritual People Don't Pray**

It's true. Even that lovely older lady who always sits in the third pew on Sunday goes through times when she doesn't pray. For all we know, she may never have developed a personal prayer practice and relied solely on guided prayer in church for her experience of prayer.

Life is constantly changing. Our faith and our discipline are occasionally challenged. So, why would somebody who is obviously steeped in a spiritual environment fail to pray during the toughest times of her life? It could be one of many, many reasons:

- Loss of faith
- Frustration about unanswered prayers
- Being distracted or overwhelmed during difficult times

All of these things can lead to a breakdown in prayer. Many people never even consider personal prayer. They just go through the motions every Sunday. So, look at you! See how far you are ahead of the crowd?

If you haven't prayed for a long time, or ever, it's okay. Please don't believe that God will punish you for your failure to pray, whether you've been taught that He would or not. It's hard to think of a less productive belief.

Yes, we should take good care of our relationship with God and give

Him and our prayer time the respect they deserve. If you have failed to do that for a week or a year, just get started again.

Let God know that you are grateful for His patience during your absence.

But back to the topic at hand, often we fail to return to a practice of prayer after an absence because we tend to personify God – or think of Him in human terms. This mistake applies to nearly every one of the reasons why sometimes even spiritual people don't pray. Let me share a few of them with you.

### **God is Busy**

*God is Infinite.* He doesn't wear a wristwatch or carry around a day planner. Time means nothing to the Infinite. He is with you in every moment anyway, so you might as well pause to have a little visit with Him.

We are miraculous beings, but the idea of something that has no beginning and no end is pretty hard for us to comprehend. I struggle with it all the time.

### **God Has Bigger Problems to Deal With Than Mine**

*God is Infinite.* The size of your problem is nothing to Him. He doesn't delegate smaller problems to middle managers.

Size is a characteristic of the physical universe, not God. You aren't going to overload God's server and crash the system if you ask his help.

### **God is Probably Mad at Me**

*God is Infinite.* Infinite love, patience and acceptance. And besides, even if He was mad at you, He's probably over it by now!



What sounds more like the truth is, “I'm mad at myself and I can't imagine how God, the only One besides me who knows the whole truth about my actions, wouldn't be mad at me too.

### **God Doesn't Know Me**

*God is Infinite.* There is no blade of grass on this planet that God isn't intimately familiar with. He lives within the heart of every person on this planet, including you. He lives within every person even if they have never heard of Him, or have rejected Him.

He is Infinite and cannot be separated from even a single atom or molecule of matter or energy in this Universe. God knows you. You are born of Him and he loves you.

### **God is Disappointed in Me**

Yes, here it is again. *God is Infinite* – infinite love, patience and understanding. Disappointment is a human experience. You are transposing your own feelings onto God. Your mother may be disappointed in you, but God is not! You may be disappointed in yourself, but how will you ever forgive yourself and be healed if you don't pray?

### **God Ignores Me**

Again, that is a human characteristic. Petty childishness and cruel arrogance are not in alignment with an Infinite Being with an infinite supply of love and kindness. If you use this book to develop your prayer practice and have faith that it will work, you will no longer be able to believe that God ever would or ever did ignore you.

### **I Feel Guilty Because I Haven't Prayed in So Long**

Okay. it's one thing to feel guilty because you haven't called your grandmother as often as you should, but, *God is Infinite.* He doesn't have

limited time. He's not going to cut you out of the will.

Be careful with personification. If it helps you to feel closer to God, fine. If the personified God in your mind keeps acting like hormonal teenager, maybe you need a different image.

Time means nothing. Love means everything. Guilt is less than useless, it is corrosive. Remember, you cannot feel guilty enough to restore your relationship with God.

I have a question for you: why don't you know how wonderful you are? Even with your every failure, disappointment and mistake, you are still worthy to step up to God's figurative doorstep and knock. The door will be opened and God will be smiling, happy to see you. If you don't think He already has, it's because you've been too busy with your head down scuffing the dirt with your toe.

Personifying God – giving Him human characteristics – is tough. It's hard to relate to God if we can't imagine Him as being like us. It's perfectly natural for us to have such an image of God, and I don't believe it to be damaging in any way – unless we start to overlay our negative human emotions and pettiness on Him.

Does it seem right to you that God would fold his arms and turn his back on you? No. That's a punishing behavior used by people.

How about pouting? Can you picture the Almighty with his lower lip slightly protruding because you haven't been praying enough? I don't think so. That's a passive-aggressive tactic used by people in order to manipulate others. It all seems pretty silly when you imagine it that way.

Unfortunately, it's all too easy for most of us to imagine a wrathful God – a God wrapped in a fierce wind of fury, striking down sinners and scattering plagues across the land to punish us for our failures. This is just another personification.

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