

ANDREW F  
CARTER

THE  

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PRIVILEGE  

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OF  

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PRAYER  

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FIND HEALING, TRANSFORMATION,  
AND ANSWERS

“It’s rare you find a teacher, pastor, and anointed man of God who possesses not only the charisma of Christ, but also the depth of wisdom that is ageless. Andrew is a voice for generations, and his influence is not self-indulgent, but truly from a place of humility. His story, like Jacob’s, is one where he wrestled with God, left with a limp, and now lives boldly to testify the truth and mercy of God’s glory. We should all be so blessed to glean from what God has taught him and take his practical, real-life, day-to-day prayer walk and put it into action. Favor follows obedience, and Andrew and his bride are living proof of this.”

Tamra Andress, CEO and founder, F.I.T. in Faith Media  
and The Founder Collective Ministry

“Next to the Scriptures, *The Privilege of Prayer* might be one of the most important books I have ever read. Andrew talks about every kind of prayer, without judgment and with encouragement, wisdom, insight, motivation, and application. This is a book I will hang on to and read again and again. I’d recommend this to anyone who wants to see God in all His glory and experience Him more personally!”

Clarence L. Smith Jr., lead pastor, Enhance Church

“*The Privilege of Prayer* is a powerful reminder of the significance of daily, consistent prayer that will empower you to take on whatever call God has on your life. Andrew masterfully shares the truth in love through his use of Scripture and personal experiences with the power of being in the presence of God. No matter what your place in ministry is, this book will remind you of God’s invitation to spend time with Him each day, and His amazing purpose for your life.”

Caleb Rouse, relationship counselor; digital creator; author

“In his compelling book *The Privilege of Prayer*, Andrew presents a fresh and powerful perspective on the privilege of talking with our Creator. Andrew’s story is real, raw, and authentic. This insightful read is perfect for those who are new to their faith journey and are seeking a deeper understanding of prayer, as well as for anyone looking to reignite their prayer life. I highly recommend this insightful book!”

Ramzi Fakhoury, writer and creator, Coffee With My Father

“Prayer is like spiritual breathing in a world that is suffocating for lack of spiritual oxygen. Through practical prayer applications, Andrew’s book provides this dying world with a breath of fresh air! I love this book not only because he invites you into his personal

story, but because he helps lead you straight to Jesus with practical applications to grow in your prayer life!”

Craig Brown, pastor; digital missionary

“As a Christian therapist, I wholeheartedly endorse *The Privilege of Prayer*. This remarkable book captures the transformative power of prayer. Andrew’s authentic storytelling and deep understanding of Scripture resonate with those seeking a more intimate connection with God. It’s a profound invitation to experience His love, guidance, and purpose.”

Stefanie Rouse, relationship counselor; digital creator; author

“I have known Andrew for years. He understands we cannot thrive without the depth and intimacy of prayer that he describes in a beautifully simplistic way. Andrew speaks on prayer not as someone who has it all figured out, but rather as someone who’s on the journey. *The Privilege of Prayer* is refreshing, convicting, and insightful. This book on prayer will be an answer to prayer for many. Grab several copies and gift them!”

Rashawn Copeland, co-founder, Share The King;  
author, *Start Where You Are*

“This is the prayer book you’ve been waiting for! Whether you’re a seasoned prayer warrior or new in your journey, you will have many aha moments. Andrew’s time in the secret place has made him a deep well. I can read this book repeatedly and still receive insight. So good!”

Roxanne Grace, DREAM Label Group; host, *The Conversation*  
podcast; host at KWAVE 107.9

“Andrew Carter is the real deal. He shows up consistently to his worldwide audience and is an even better friend to me and many others. He takes prayer seriously and invites people to experience the power of implementing prayer into the rhythm of their lives and how it has the power to change lives.”

Joshua Broome, co-founder, Share The King; author

“When you begin to understand what prayer means, you will begin to realize the privilege of prayer. In this book, Andrew Carter takes us along the pathway of prayer on a journey of discovery. There is no question that this book will help you gain a deeper understanding of prayer than you have ever had before.”

Marcus Stanley, co-founder, Onewayhope

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**PRAYER**  

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# **THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER**

**FIND HEALING, TRANSFORMATION,  
AND ANSWERS**

**ANDREW F CARTER**

 **Chosen**  
*a division of Baker Publishing Group*  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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Published by Chosen Books  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
www.chosenbooks.com

Chosen Books is a division of  
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Printed in the United States of America

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#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Carter, Andrew Formby, author.

Title: The privilege of prayer : find healing, transformation, and answers / Andrew F. Carter.

Description: Minneapolis, Minnesota : Chosen Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2023. | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023014041 | ISBN 9780800763510 (trade paper) | ISBN 9780800763619 (casebound) | ISBN 9781493442508 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Prayer--Christianity.

Classification: LCC BV227 .C37 2023 | DDC 248.3/2--dc23/eng/20230505

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2023014041>

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Published in association with The Bindery Agency, [www.TheBinderyAgency.com](http://www.TheBinderyAgency.com).

Baker Publishing Group publications use paper produced from sustainable forestry practices and post-consumer waste whenever possible.

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

This book is dedicated to those who are  
struggling to hear God's voice.

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# Introduction

Some of my earliest childhood memories are of me lying in bed talking to God. I remember laughing, crying, and having back-and-forth conversations with what adults would call an imaginary friend. Even though I didn't know much about God and who He is, I remember lying in bed asking Him random questions about what the purpose of life is, why I exist, what it meant to die, and where would I go if I died.

When I was younger, I spent many days in and out of the hospital, so questions like these piqued my interest. My mother was a prostitute, my dad was her pimp, and I'm a product of their drug affairs. My mother struggled with a drug addiction and had consumed drugs for months before she found out she was pregnant with me. As a result, I had underdeveloped lungs. I had constant loss of breath that required me to undergo breathing treatments, take lots of medication, and wrestle with severe asthma. Throughout my childhood, I fully comprehended the fact that I could take my last breath if I didn't bring my inhaler with me

everywhere I went. This ultimately triggered a fear of death. Spending time in the hospital didn't help these triggers. I was surrounded by talk of the afterlife and going to Heaven when we pass away.

As years went on and I got a little bit older, I didn't just lose touch with my childhood innocence, I also lost touch with God's presence and the ability to interact with Him as I once had. With no godly counsel and guidance in my childhood, I became a very destructive teenager. I started rebelling against the adults in my life. I was a troubled kid who got attention for acting out. In my mind, receiving attention for being bad was better than not receiving attention at all.

To add to this, I grew up being mixed-race—black and white. I lived in a predominantly white state where the odds were stacked against me. I was bullied for the color of my skin and experienced racism every single day. This stirred up so many angry emotions, and I found myself getting involved with drugs, alcohol, lying, stealing, and having sex to numb the pain. This behavior carried with me into adulthood. Lost, broken, and confused, I ended up in jail multiple times.

Fast-forward to today—as an on-fire Christian and follower of Jesus, I now know that sin separates us from God. I've learned that my relationship with God must always come first and that I was created to serve Him. I've learned how to stay in alignment with God's plan and purpose for my life by staying in constant communication with Him and by understanding that prayer is a privilege. Being able to speak to God whenever, however, wherever is an absolute privilege.

I've come up with a hypothesis about childhood. Up to a certain point in our childhood, I believe we have a strong connection to our Creator even though we may not know

it. We have a childlike faith that's pure and welcoming. As we embark on the journey of life and we go astray, I believe that line of communication with Him is broken. We start building walls around our heart based on life experiences. It's part of our purpose to find restoration by putting our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. The years between then and when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior are jumbled together. What seems like a blur to us is actually the road of restoring our lines of communication with God.

Communication with God is what we call prayer. That communication is only possible because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice paid my debts by erasing it, restoring a clean slate, and giving me the ability to reconnect with God, our Father. Based on my personal journey, I'm going to share different things that have made me realize that prayer is not an option or obligation—it's a privilege. It's the essential ingredient for an effective life of following Jesus.

I will define what prayer is, show you how being consistent can improve your prayer life, give you a Scripture-based template of how we should be praying, and teach you how to navigate the answers to your prayers. God doesn't always say yes to our prayers, so we need to be prepared and ready when His answer doesn't look like what we expected. I will address the things that cause delays, resistance, and obstruction that many people face, and I will offer solutions on how to fix it.

This book will highlight the importance of following God's will and God's way; why we should repair relationships with some people; how to combat feelings and emotions; how to react to life situations like disappointments and

betrayal; how to handle closed doors and opportunities from God; how to apply physical, mental, and emotional habits; why we should forgive others; how I dealt with trauma; and how I came to recognize God's calling over my life. This will be a helpful book for your faith as a believer.

**PART I**

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# **What Is Prayer?**

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# ONE

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## My Journey into Consistent Prayer

Holiday seasons have always been difficult for me. My mother experienced seasonal depression, so she always struggled during this time of year. Living in the Northwest, winters are dark, gloomy, and rainy. It's almost as if you can see the depression roll in with the dark clouds. Some of the most traumatic events I've experienced have occurred between Thanksgiving and the new year. Going into adulthood, I carried that baggage with me. As the winter holidays approached, feelings of anxiousness, sadness, and fear would emerge. To cope and feel a sense of comfort, I would isolate.

One year, a few days after Christmas, I experienced a particular mental episode that changed the trajectory of my life. I dropped my three sons off after my allotted parenting time, and I went back home feeling alone. My thoughts were too much to handle, so I retreated to self-medication in an

attempt to escape from my invasive thoughts. What started as an attempt to relax soon became an overwhelming psychological ride that I wanted to jump off.

My mind was spiraling out of control as I sat remembering my failures, mistakes, and past. This led to self-sabotaging thoughts about my future decisions and the direction my life was heading. I was suffering through a drug-fueled anxiety attack as I was navigating the ups and downs of some extreme life changes. My breathing increased, and it felt as though my lungs were collapsing.

Leading up to this moment, I had experienced a divorce, had been recently released from prison, had been in and out of a couple short-term relationships, and was struggling with finding the purpose of my existence. While I had been incarcerated, I lost my business, which left me with little income. After I was released from prison, my only friend at the time moved in with me. The extra financial support was needed.

God knew what He was doing having my friend move in with me. He was a follower of Jesus, but he was never overbearing regarding his faith, and he never forced religion on me. He was always there when I needed to talk or had questions. I had given my life to Christ when I was seventeen, but I had spent over a decade running from a ministry calling and a prophetic word that had been spoken over my life. Although I knew who Jesus was, I hadn't talked to Him in a while, and I didn't know how to fully reconnect with Him.

In the middle of this paranoid panic attack, I remember running up the stairs and pounding on his door. It was the middle of the night, so he frantically opened the door thinking something was on fire or someone had been in an



accident. When he opened the door, he stared at me with wide-open eyes. I was crying and trying to explain to him that I couldn't breathe. I was lost and needed answers, and my mind was swirling with crazy thoughts, irrational fears, and too many outcomes I couldn't wrap my head around. It was a mental breakdown the likes of which I had not experienced before, so I was pretty shaken up by it.

Hoping to calm me down, he asked if he could pray for me. I agreed. I was willing to try anything. He prayed with me right there on the spot, and I immediately felt the peace and comfort of God rush over me. My breath was restored, my mind stopped racing, and an indescribable peace came over me. I sat down at the top of the stairs, and I was able to gather myself and share with him my concerns, overpowering fears, and all the things that had me extremely anxious. He gently answered all my questions, helped deescalate my invasive thoughts, helped me gather myself, and sent me back to my room to get some rest. There was one burning question that I had to ask before going to bed.

"What should I do if this happens again?" I asked him.

His simple but powerful response was, "Pray to God. Communicate with Him and spend more time reading His Word." I went back to my bedroom with the answer I had been looking for. I needed God.

Immediately an overwhelming number of questions spread like wildfire through my mind. *Who really is God? Does He want to hear from me? Is He mad at me? Does He want to help me even though I'm not living a life that glorifies Him? Does He still love me?* Even amid these questions, I felt the gentle Holy Spirit reassure me that I could come as I was, and that God desired a relationship with me.

I lay down that night and knew what choices had to be made. For me, this mental breakdown was like hitting rock bottom. I was ready for a fresh start and ready to refocus all my attention onto Him and no longer on me. This was the last straw of doing things my way. My way had always failed me, my way had always left me feeling empty, and my way had always left me lost and confused.

Now that I had encountered the Holy Spirit, I knew trying to solve all my issues and troubles on my own was no longer the answer. From that day forward (although I have been far from perfect), I committed to be in constant communication with God through prayer, to be devoted to Scripture, and to truly surrender my life to Christ.

### **Right Result, Wrong Motive**

When I first got saved, at the age of seventeen, I did it for all the wrong reasons. There was a girl I wanted to pursue, but her older brother said that I had to be a “Christian” in order to date her. Hoping he could reach me with the Gospel, he asked me to join him on a car ride. In the car, he boldly presented the Gospel of Jesus Christ to me for the very first time.

He explained what sin was and what the consequences of it were; about the separation between me and God; about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and how to receive the free gift of salvation. In that moment, it made sense. I was a lost soul, and I needed a Savior. I was living in a pit of despair but celebrating a life filled with sin. Before this moment, I had lived with no awareness of sin, the consequences of sin, or even the consciousness of offending

God with how I lived. So, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. That day marked the beginning of the end. The end of a life being lived blindly in opposition of a Holy and Perfect God. I repented from the life of debauchery, received the Holy Spirit, and accepted the free gift of salvation by putting my faith in Jesus.

After accepting Jesus into my life, sin never felt the same. It failed to satisfy, and I could see it for what it truly was—a counterfeit. I wish I could say that I experienced smooth sailing from that day forward and that I surrendered my life to Jesus all the rest of my days, but that’s not how the story ends. In fact, that was just the beginning. The years after accepting Jesus into my heart brought many lessons that were defined by hurt, pain, hard revelations, and tribulations straight from the school of hard knocks. I had sincerely accepted Jesus, but I had done it with a wrong motive.

I moved forward in life not attending church, not being disciplined, and not having Christian friends or mentors to provide guidance or to showcase how to live fully surrendered to God. I struggled to figure out what it was to be a Christian. My environment was the same. It was still filled with drugs, alcohol, violence, abuse, and immorality. I wasn’t able to establish good practices or truly understand what it was to have a relationship with Jesus and follow Him. There wasn’t anyone in my life to give me godly counsel and wisdom, and reading the Bible only confused me further. Although I had been set free, I didn’t know where to start. I didn’t know what being set free even meant. I had so many questions, and I was extremely lost.

I think a lot of people who didn’t grow up in the church also find themselves in these moments of wondering what

comes next. I said the prayer, I believe what I said, but how does this whole salvation thing work? Is life supposed to get easier? Do I get three wishes now? Am I still going to have hard times and troubles? When is this Jesus guy coming back anyway? It seemed as though accepting Christ was an urgent decision, and I thought my life afterward was going to be characterized by mountain-moving miracles. To my surprise, I went back home, and things were relatively the same.

Between the ages of seventeen and nineteen, my life was rough. It was filled with mistakes, failures, and visits to jail. Although I made my way to church at times, I never felt at home. I didn't fit in. At that time, the Christian culture and community seemed cliquey and seemed to emphasize living a perfect life free from sin. I never really found people who understood me. There wasn't much transparency of troubles and real-life issues displayed, and there wasn't openness or honesty. Since struggles weren't shared, it made it hard for me to relate to the Christian community. It seemed as if a bunch of hurt people were gathering together pretending that everything was good and putting on this great, elaborate show of a perfect life walking with Jesus. I couldn't relate.

I knew in my heart that I needed to be there because I was lost, broken, and in search of answers. This was a period in my life when I really understood what Paul was feeling when he wrote, "I do not understand the things I do. I do not do what I want to do, and I do the things I hate" (Romans 7:15 NCV). I was pulled between cultural norms and being Kingdom minded. I was being influenced by entertainment, music, my peers, and the world. As a young adult, it was very

difficult to try to navigate the tightrope of what it meant to fit in and be successful and yet die to myself, pick up my cross, and follow Jesus.

The fact of the matter is that I had spent more time in the world than I had in the Word. I didn't know how to be a Christian, have a relationship with Jesus, pray, or understand the Bible. Many of my stances, opinions, and beliefs were grounded and rooted in worldly wisdom that included my past trauma and personal experiences. The world kept calling me and making me feel accepted, but the Holy Spirit kept trying to direct me away from the world. There was this constant battle between good and evil, the world and the Holy Spirit, and living for myself versus living for Jesus. The truth is that during this season of my life, my flesh won.

### **From Crisis Prayer to Consistent Prayer**

When I was nineteen, I was sent to county jail. I started attending some of the church services they held every week. They called them “cookie church services” because the pastor showed up with a box of cookies for those who attended. It worked because I was drawn in. At first, I went just for the treats; however, the Word of God does not return void. I found myself looking forward to church, no longer for the cookies, but for the camaraderie, the brotherhood, and the peace that came with worshiping freely even while being locked inside of a cage. I started building the courage to communicate with God again. My communication with the Lord, however, was more of “If You do this, then I'll do that”—type prayers. Those prayers still reside in my memory.

“God, if You get me out of here, I promise I'll be good.”

“God, if You cut my sentence short, I’ll never come back to this place.”

“God, if You let me out this week, I’ll find a church and I’ll serve You the rest of my life.”

This is what I like to call crisis prayer. Crisis prayer is praying only to get something that I want, not what I need. It was only in the middle of a crisis that I communicated with God. I found myself bargaining with Him, trying to strong-arm Him, and trying to convince Him that if He let me out of jail, I would follow Him for the rest of my life. Even though my intentions weren’t pure, God was still able to pull me out of my wishful thinking of getting out sooner and allowed me to feel His love and presence while in jail.

I started developing spiritual habits such as consistently praying, reading my Bible, attending church, and hanging out with the other inmates who did the same thing. I found myself less likely to get involved in all the negativity that comes with being incarcerated. I started analyzing what I was watching and consuming, and I began a journey of being more consistent and disciplined in my devotions. My foundation of consistency and discipline was built in jail. Eventually, I was released from county jail, and I carried on with my old ways and habits.

Years later, at the age of 25, I began attending church again. Although I’d love to say attending this church fully transformed me, I can’t. When one of my prayers was answered, I left the church. Yes, my prayer was answered, so I left! I’d been praying for direction. I was asking God to answer me, to lead me, and to reveal to me why He had created me. One evening, an evangelist from this church pulled me out of the crowd and asked me to come up onstage. He had

received a prophetic word from God about my calling. This was the answer I'd been praying for. I thought, *He's going to reveal to me why God created me and what the direction for my life is.*

The evangelist looked me in my eyes and said, "Andrew, you have been called to ministry. You have words of gold, and you're going to speak to millions of people about Jesus."

My ear-to-ear smile dropped. This was the worst news I had ever received. My heart's desire was to be delivered from the dead-end jobs I was working, to receive a promotion, to get a better high-paying job, to step into my million-dollar career, anything that would have an impact on my financial burden. I viewed ministry as a death sentence. The pastor of this church was a father of ten children, and he worked a full-time job in addition to his role in pastoral care. It sounded outrageous that I would live a lifestyle of telling people about Jesus and still be weighed down by life's problems. Although he was an amazing man, that was not the life I wanted. He was the only example I'd seen of what ministry looked like.

Although I received an answer to my long-awaited prayer, it left me disappointed, discouraged, and defeated. I left before I even gave it a chance. I ran for my life as far as my feet would take me—in the opposite direction of church. I left the church for years pursuing my own dreams, visions, and goals. I tried building my own kingdom.

One thing I did take away from attending this church, however, was valuable biblical context. They were very militant in their discipleship process. While being discipled and spending so much time studying the Word of God, I became familiar with Scripture, fasting, praying, and seeking His face. This is when I realized what building and having a

relationship with God meant—the relationship between the Father and His child, me. I saw the results of consistently praying, and my desire for communication with Him grew stronger. Through prayer, I felt His loving presence. As a result of my prayer life, I watched God’s hand move in situations and witnessed miracles take place.

As I made an effort to draw closer to God, He drew closer to me. As I started praying to Him every day, my prayers turned toward seeking His guidance, provision, and direction for my life. I took all my decisions, questions, and choices before His throne. I learned the true meaning of fellowship with the Creator of the universe. Coming to this realization was a beautiful time in my life that was characterized by a deeper and stronger understanding of who God is and who He says I am.

It was during this time that I learned that prayer is not an obligation. It is an absolute privilege to be able to speak to the One who created me. As God’s children, we can have ongoing, open, honest, and transparent communication with the Creator of all things. We must stay in constant communication with Him so that He can continue to keep us in alignment with His plan and purpose for our lives. God answers our prayers, even if it’s a *yes*, *no*, or *not right now*. We must accept His response to our prayers, because we know that He will never lead us astray and that He always has our best interests at heart.

This is part of my journey to a consistent prayer life. The more consistent you are with prayer, the more you’re going to hear from Him. As you communicate with God and share your intimate thoughts and feelings with Him, your heart becomes more willing to listen and obey His directions. Prayer



is the greatest communion form that we have with God, and it conforms our thoughts to His. Consistent prayer helps us to remain in unity with God. Pray for consistency and discipline in your walk with Christ.

## **PRAYER FOR CONSISTENCY**

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*Heavenly Father, help me to be more consistent. I know that You are more concerned with my availability than my ability. Help me to set aside excuses, distractions, and anything that leads me to compromise. Give me the power to be moved by faith and not by my feelings. Help me to show up regardless of my circumstances, environment, and emotions. Renew the power of the Holy Spirit in me, and give me the strength to overcome any obstacles that are designed to pull my attention away from You. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## **APPLICATION**

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1. What are some ways you can be more consistent in your walk with Christ?
2. In what crisis in your life have you run to God?
3. What was the outcome?
4. What are some ways that being consistent will improve your relationship with God and with other people?
5. What value do you see in being consistent?