

The background is a deep teal color with a visible, expressive brushstroke texture. Gold-colored leafy branches are artfully placed around the perimeter of the cover, framing the central text.

DICK
EASTMAN

TALKING
WITH
GOD

A PRACTICAL PLAN
FOR PERSONAL PRAYER



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FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

DICK EASTMAN



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Introduction

THE POWER OF PRAYER

In my early thirties I discovered the delight of spending time with God in prayer. Moved by Christ's appeal to Peter in Matthew 26:40, "Could you not watch with Me one hour?" I embarked on a journey of blessing that has touched every day since.

The challenge to set aside an hour a day to be with the Lord, in His Word, was born. Because of a special burden for world evangelization, my hour included a plan to pray for the nations each day, thus becoming a daily hour that let me partner with God in changing our world.

It is with my deep gratitude to the Lord for His blessing that this special adaptation of *The Hour That Changes*

the World is being published. I believe God is raising up an entirely new generation of faithful, fervent warriors of worship and intercession who will truly change our world through their prayers. If they are like me when I started out, they will appreciate a few guidelines to help them begin and to stay faithful. I pray these pages will help.

In addition to the hundreds of thousands who have read the original book, the circle of prayer with twelve prayer focuses has been reprinted in magazines, newsletters, prayer guides and church bulletins. It has also been photocopied all over the world, often presented to groups with accompanying teaching, even in such places as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, Jordan and Cuba. This training has touched people of various languages, including Chinese, Russian, Arabic, Swahili, Lingala, Farsi, Hindi, Indonesian, Tagalog, Nepalese, Burmese, Thai, Korean and Vietnamese, as well as more familiar languages like German, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian (to name only several).

In churches, communities and houses of prayer around the world, believers are also committing time each week in prayer to fill all 168 hours with nonstop praying. Truly something great from God must be at hand! The Church is certainly praying as never before.

Prayer is a marvelous mystery hidden behind the cloud of God's omnipotence. Nothing is beyond the reach of prayer because God Himself is the focus of prayer.

Prayer is the simplest act a creature of God can perform. It is divine communion with our heavenly Father. Prayer does not require advanced education. Knowledge is not a prerequisite to engage in it. Only an act of the will is required to pray.

But prayer is more. Prayer is the vision of the believer. It gives eyes to our faith. In prayer we see beyond ourselves and focus spiritual eyes on God's infinite power.

Prayer is also humankind's ultimate indication of trust in our heavenly Father. Only in prayer do we surrender our problems completely to God and ask for divine intervention.

Prayer is not optional. On the contrary, it is quite obligatory. Where there is an absence of prayer, there will be an absence of power. Where there is frequency of prayer, there will be a continuing display of God's power. God said, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

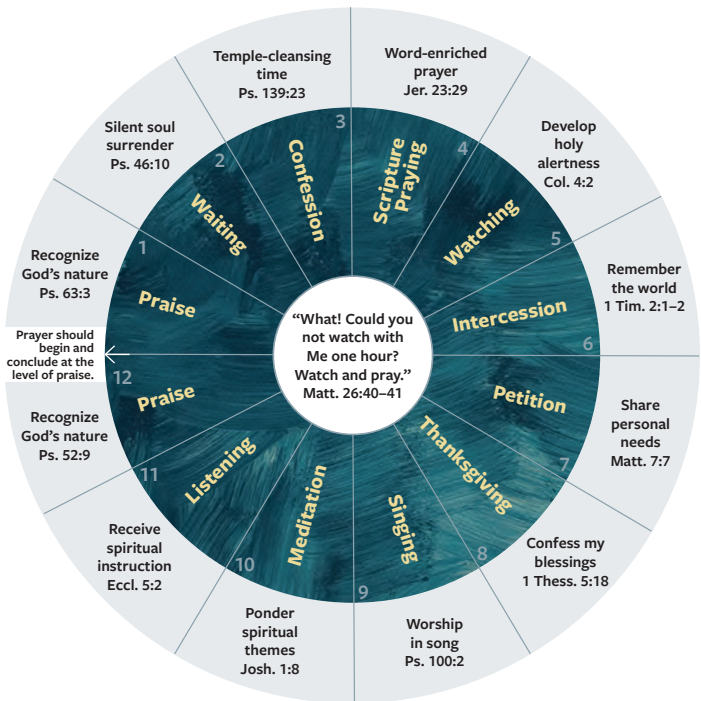
How to Use This Book

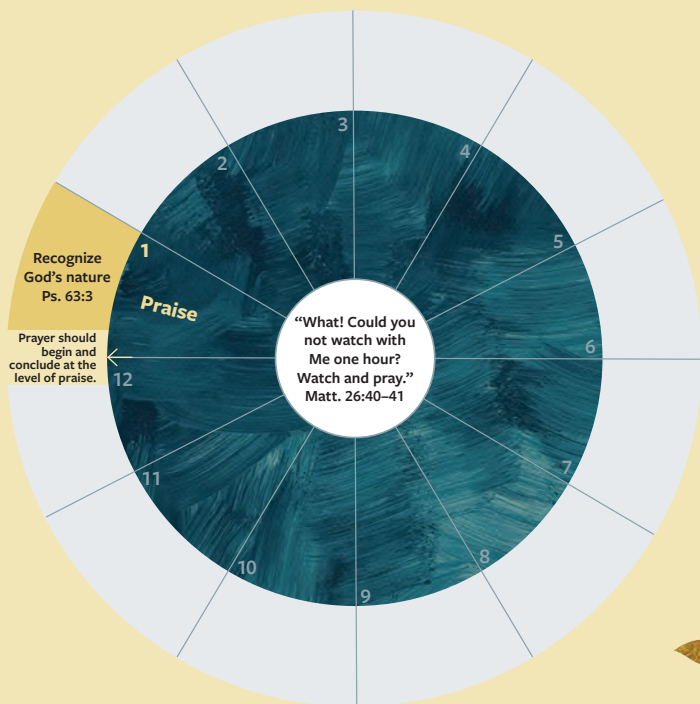
Whether you are able to pray a full hour or only a few minutes, the purpose of this book is to give you a plan for prayer. Here are some ideas for how you can use the twelve prayer focuses on the following pages:

- Read each chapter to learn more about the twelve prayer focuses, their biblical context and ways to incorporate them during prayer.
- Invest one to five minutes (or more) on each prayer focus depending on how much time you want to schedule for prayer. Each chapter concludes with practical action steps, a prayer starter and additional Scripture for meditation and prayer.
- Instead of trying to go through all of the prayer focuses in one setting, go deeper with only a few.
- Prioritize a different prayer focus each day for twelve days.
- Search the internet for “the hour that changes the world prayer circle.” There is also a copy of it in this book. Print a photocopy of the image to put in your Bible or notebook, or download the image to your mobile device for easy access wherever you are.

I cannot imagine a day without the worship and wonder of waiting on God's presence. I invite you to share in this joy. It could change your life, and your world as well. I'm convinced it will make your day!

Dick Eastman, international president,
Every Home for Christ





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1

PRAISE

THE ACT OF DIVINE ADORATION

Jesus left His disciples but a single prayer as an example upon which to base their praying. Although several of Christ's prayers are recorded in Scripture, only once did He say, "In this manner, therefore, pray." The prayer is recorded in its entirety in Matthew 6:9–13 and appears somewhat abbreviated in Luke 11:2–4. It is commonly called the Lord's Prayer, although the Disciples' Prayer would be a more accurate label. The first eight words of this important prayer provide the believer with a biblical foundation for commencing all prayer with a season of praise. The prayer begins, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name" (Matthew 6:9).

The goal of all praying is summed up in the expression “Hallowed be Your name.” *Hallowed* is a New Testament expression used only in reference to the name of God. The Greek word for *hallow* is *hagiazō*, meaning “to revere or to sanctify.” Since *sanctify* means “to set apart,” our prayer time should include several moments, at the very outset, when God’s name is set apart strictly as the object of our divine worship. During these moments of praise, our sole purpose is to bring glory to God with our words. God declared through the psalmist, “Whoever offers praise glorifies Me” (Psalm 50:23).

Praise is more than a single aspect of prayer. Praise is a way of life. The Westminster Catechism explains, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Praise helps the believer achieve this “chief end.” In fact, praise might well be the “chief end.”

What is praise? Praise is the vocal adoration of God. Adoration is the act of rendering divine honor, esteem and love. The word *adoration* is derived from an ancient expression that meant “to apply the hand to the mouth,” or “to kiss the hand.” In certain countries a kiss of the hand is still a symbol of deep respect and submission.

The act of vocal adoration is important because it implies we acknowledge God as God.

Why Praise First?

Aside from the fact that Jesus listed praise first in His prayer, there are numerous reasons for placing it first when we pray. Only praise puts God in His rightful position at the very outset of our praying. In praising God we declare His sovereignty and recognize His nature and power.

Some have taught that confession should be first in prayer because sin makes effective praying impossible. True, sin does rob prayer of power. And confession is important. But were it not for a loving, merciful God, confession of sins would mean very little, regardless of when it was included during prayer. So, we must first draw our attention to God in prayer before we draw our attention to self.

Another major reason for offering praise early in prayer is the fact that, in its very nature, praise is unselfish. Making the decision to worship and praise God moves our attention from self to God. We soon discover spiritual health has its roots in divine adoration. Thus, praise is quite practical. It is practical because it changes our focus. As believers recognize God for all He is, they soon realize it is this all-powerful God to whom they will be presenting all of their later petitions.

Offering praise at the outset of prayer is also wise because of the biblical precedent given to praise. Praise sparks victory. Note the scriptural account of God's glory flooding His earthly temple: "When the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD, . . . then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God" (2 Chronicles 5:13–14 NASB).

Not only does praise open our devotional hour to an outpouring of God's glory, but it promptly sends Satan running. He cannot tolerate the presence of God.

Where do we find God's presence? In Psalm 22:3 we are reminded that God inhabits "the praises" of His people. God manifests His living presence in the praise-saturated chamber of prayer. Adoration is the antidote to the poison of satanic oppression. To develop the "praise life" is to develop a certain immunity to the enemy's attacks. Satan is paralyzed in the presence of victorious praise.



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in divine adoration.*



To Prize God

“Praise the Lord” is an expression commonplace in the vocabulary of most believers. But what exactly do we mean when we say, “Praise the Lord”? Basically, praise is the act of expressing one’s esteem of a person for his or her virtues or accomplishments. It is to pronounce that person “worthy of honor.”

But rendering praise to God is even more. The full meaning of praise can be captured only in its Old French origin, *preiser*, which means “to prize.” To *praise* God is to *prize* God. The word *prize* means “to value, esteem, and cherish something.” During our times of praise, we cherish and esteem God with our words of adoration.

Prize also means “to estimate the worth of.” In praise, we mentally gather together all the facts we know about God and put these facts into words. Praise literally becomes “the fruit of our lips” unto God (Hebrews 13:15).

Because praise is to verbalize our esteem for God, it seems unlikely we will exhaust any potential list of possibilities for praise. The following are but a few scriptural suggestions for your moments of ministering unto the Lord through praise.

First, we should *praise God for His name*. The psalmist said, “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to Your name give glory” (Psalm 115:1). Although various titles describing God are shared throughout the Old Testament, the actual “name of the LORD” is not specifically revealed until the pages of the New Testament. His “name” is *the Lord Jesus Christ*. It greatly honors God when we take time during prayer to “prize” the name of Jesus Christ with words of praise. The Father loves the Son and wants us to love the Son, too.

When praising the name of Jesus in prayer, we may use expressions from Scripture, such as those used by Isaiah: “And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

Secondly, we should *praise God for His righteousness*. All that God is, deserves our praise. The psalmist intoned, “And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness and of Your praise all the day long” (Psalm 35:28).

Righteous means “meeting the standards of what is right and just.” God does more than meet certain standards—God *is* the standard. All that a prayer warrior can imagine concerning God’s faithfulness, justice and mercy may become a theme for these moments of praise.



*The possibilities
for praise
stretch beyond the limits
of our imagination.
Because God has no limit,
our praise is limitless.*



Thirdly, we should *praise God for His infinite creation*. The psalmist said succinctly, “Praise Him for His mighty acts” (Psalm 150:2).

Because we are challenged to praise God for His “mighty acts,” there is no limit to praise. God created countless species of plant and animal life, each serving as an individual basis for praise. The scope of praise ranges from the microscopic particles of the atom to the spiraling galaxies of the universe. All of creation is a treasure house of praise.

Finally, we should *praise God for His Word*. During moments of deep depression, King David wrote, “In God will I praise his word” (Psalm 56:10 KJV). Psalm 19 tells us some of the benefits of the Word of God:

1. “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.”
2. “The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”
3. “The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart.”
4. “The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

5. "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever."
6. "The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether."

Truly, the possibilities for praise stretch beyond the limits of our imagination. Because God has no limit, our praise is limitless.

Early in prayer take time to recognize all that God is. Express these thoughts vocally. And don't be in a hurry to go beyond praise until you have taken adequate time to adore God with your words of worship.

Lord, teach me to adore You!

Praise: The First Step in World-Changing Prayer

1. Always remember to start with praise.
2. Select a specific characteristic of God, such as His kindness, His patience or His righteousness.
3. Say out loud what comes to mind about that characteristic.
4. Expand your theme as much as possible. Allow God to reveal new themes for worship as your time of praise develops.



Almighty God, I praise You for who You are—the omnipotent Creator who still takes time to know and love me. You are my Provider and my attentive Father. Today I want to specifically praise You for being [faithful, loving, my Healer, powerful . . .] and ask You to make me aware of how You manifest Yourself in this way around me.

SCRIPTURES TO PRAY

Psalm 103:1–5; Psalm 139:13–18; Philippians 4:8;
Revelation 15:3–4

