

## **Praying Like “David”**

**This study for Small Groups is based on prayer. The goal is to live or experience prayer rather than intellectually studying it. Over the next 7 weeks, these sessions will help your group rediscover this spiritual discipline. For this reason, I ask you follow the outline and directions provided. These are for the facilitator’s eyes alone! Do not share the outlines to prevent others from jumping ahead of the process. To help you appreciate the process, following the steps slowly as a participant yourself beforehand.**

### **Week 1 — “Who God Is”      Psalm 8**

**Introduction:** Begin by reading Psalm 8 aloud as a group. Resist the urge to explain it. Ask participants to silently write down four thoughts that come to mind as they hear David’s words. Or, if they were to add some similar phrases to David’s Psalm in today’s wording, write 4 things. Give enough time for silence to sink in—and wait a bit longer.

**Group Reflection:** Invite people to share what they wrote.

**Facilitator’s pause:** Ask this *experience-focused* question: “*What did writing and sharing these thoughts do to your mental or emotional state? Where do you find yourself right now?*”

-Tools if needed: Don’t rush this. Let the group wrestle with putting the experience into words. If the group struggles, gently prompt: Did anything quiet down? Did anything feel bigger or smaller? Did your focus shift in any way?

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**Naming the Experience:** “Orientation” — setting our minds

Psalm 8 is pure orientation. David looks “up” before he looks “inward.”

-During this process where does your mind go? *Key observations that may surface:* God’s holiness and majesty, God’s nearness and care, Humanity’s place compared to His ...

**Facilitator note:**

Avoid correcting or steering too quickly. Let Scripture do the work. If someone isn’t responding the way you hoped, don’t worry. Everyone’s thoughts adjust at different speeds.

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**DBS Emphasis:** Prayer begins by remembering who God is, not by rushing to what we want.

Key Discovery Questions on Ps 8: Allow discussion, but don't force resolution.

#1 What do we learn about God's character here?

#2 How does seeing God rightly reshape how we pray?

#3 How does this perspective affect fear, anxiety, or urgency?

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### **Reveal: Lord's Prayer Portion**

**Facilitator:** Read this slowly. Don't explain it yet. Pause a moment

*"Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."* — Matthew 6:9

Then ask: Why do you think Jesus teaches us to begin prayer this way?

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### **Conclusion (for the Facilitator to Guide)**

Jesus does not begin the "model" prayer with requests. He begins with **orientation**. Is this for God's benefit or our own? Who really needs reminding that God is holy?

Facilitators: You are teaching people how to experience prayer as God meant for us to: If we approach the Lord's Prayer as a checklist of what God wants from us, we miss Jesus' intent. Jesus is discipling His followers in how to pray—by reshaping their posture before reshaping their petitions. If we approach it as God's guidance to how we can find an enriching prayer life. Knowing what to say or how to pray is very different than experiencing a conversation with God.

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### **Practice for the Week**

Encourage the group to begin each prayer this week by **naming who God is** before proceeding to requests. Remember, Orientation is about posture, not performance.

## Week 2 — "*Who We Are Under His Rule*" Psalm 40:1-8

**Welcome:** Does anyone want to share experiences from practicing "Orientation" last week?

**Introduction:** Begin by reading Psalm 40:1–8 aloud. Ask the group to listen for desire, not duty.  
-What does David want? Give a short pause. Then ask participants to quietly note one phrase that stands out to them.

**Group Reflection:** Invite people to share the phrase they noticed.

**Facilitator pause:** Ask: Why did that phrase stand out? What do you notice about David's posture toward God's will here? How would you describe the scene unfolding? Does it feel forced, reluctant, eager, or something else?

If needed, gently prompt: Is obedience described as burden or delight? Let the group wrestle with putting their feels into words. Remember experiences are a process.

**Naming the Experience:** "**Alignment**" — bringing our will into line with God's.

David does not speak about God's will as something imposed on him. He speaks of it as something he delights in. Alignment is not about surrendering reluctantly, but about reshaping desire. Does last week's "Orientation" process help with "Alignment?"

**Facilitator note:** Avoid turning this into a lesson on obedience. Stay with desire and posture.

**DBS Emphasis:** Prayer aligns us with God's purposes before it asks Him to act on ours.

Key Discovery Questions on Psalm 40:

-What does this Psalm teach us about God's will? What stands in the way of delighting in God's will? How might alignment change how we view our circumstances?

**Reveal: Lord's Prayer Portion**

Facilitator: Read slowly. Pause. Then ask: How does this line echo what David expressed?

*"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."* — Matthew 6:10

**Conclusion:** (for the Facilitator to Guide): Jesus teaches His followers to pray for alignment before outcomes. This is not passive resignation, but active trust that God's way is better.

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**Practice for the Week:** Encourage the group to name one situation where they will intentionally pray for God's will rather than a specific outcome.

## Week 3 — “*What We Need*” *Psalm 37:23-34*

**Welcome:** Review last week’s practice goal. “Did praying for God’s will reshape yours?”

**Introduction:** Read Psalm 37:23-34 aloud. Ask the group to listen for provision and care rather than abundance. Invite participants to quietly write one phrase that reflects what God provides in this Psalm that can be seen in their own life. or one thought they may still bring before God.

**Group Reflection:** Share the words or phrases.

**Facilitator pause:** Ask: How does this Psalm describe our dependence on God? Is it desperate, calm, or confident?

**Naming the Experience:** “Dependence” — trusting God for what is needed today. David describes a life sustained by God’s care, not controlled by his own efforts. Dependence here is daily and relational.

-During this pray, Where are our minds without steps 1 & 2? What is different when we complete steps of “Orientation” and “Alignment”?

**DBS Emphasis:** Prayer teaches us to rely on God one day at a time.

Key Discovery Questions on Psalm 37: What needs does God meet in this Psalm? How does trust replace anxiety here? Where are we tempted to provide for ourselves instead?

**Reveal: Lord’s Prayer Portion**

Facilitator: Read slowly. Then Pause.

*“Give us this day our daily bread.” — Matthew 6:11*

Ask: Why do you think Jesus limits this request to ‘daily’? How does the beginning of the prayer prepare us for a “daily” request?

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**Conclusion** (for the Facilitator to Guide): Jesus invites His followers into dependence, not independence. Daily bread keeps the relationship current. When we run ahead of current into our agendas and goals, what transpires in our hearts and minds?

Can this leave room for stress, worry, or anxiety?

**Practice for the Week:** Pray only for **today’s needs**, resisting tomorrow’s anxiety.

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## Week 4 — “How We Live” Psalm 51

**Welcome:** *Did practicing “daily prayers” effect you over the last week? How? This might be a good time to remind people that this is a “experience study, not an intellectual one. Likewise, studying fasting and a world apart from practicing it.*

**Introduction:** Read Psalm 51 aloud. Prepare the group by saying this Psalm is about honesty before God. Invite participants to quietly note what David asks God to do within him.

**Group Reflection:** Share observations. Then have people write down what their version of this might look like. They won’t be asked to share so encourage people to be honest. *“Find the part of your heart you find most shameful and ask God to examine it.”* Let silence sit if needed.

**Facilitator pause:** What stands out about David’s tone? Is he defensive, broken, hopeful?

**Naming the Experience:** “Transformation” — allowing God to change us from the inside out.

David does not ask merely for relief from consequences. He asks for renewal of heart and spirit. What does a transforming moment of prayer feel like? People are only asked to share the feeling, not the details of their prayer.

**DBS Emphasis:** Prayer forms our character, not just our circumstances.

Key Discovery Questions on Psalm 51: What does David believe God desires most? Is this pray for God’s benefit or mine? What might repentance look like in daily life or in a daily prayer?

### **Reveal: Lord’s Prayer Portion**

Facilitator: Read slowly. Pause.

*“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” — Matthew 6:12*

**Facilitator note:** Avoid turning this into a lesson on confession. Stay with how this changes our heart during prayer. Then ask: What do you think God was hoping for us to gain during this step of the prayer?

**Conclusion** (for the Facilitator to Guide): Jesus connects receiving grace with extending it. Prayer shapes how we live with God and with others. Is God actually teaching us daily in this model prayer? If yes, then what does He want us to consider everyday?

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**Practice for the Week:** *(Take note of where your heart is today)*

Confess privately to God daily—and forgive intentionally where you’ve withheld grace.

## Week 5 — “Where We’re Going” Ps 25:1-12

**Welcome:** *For those who daily spent time asking for God favor and grace, while extending it to others... where is your heart compared to last week?*

**Introduction:** Ask the group to write down what we normally ask God for in a column. Afterwards read Psalm 25:1–12 aloud. Invite participants to note any request David makes of God in a second column next to the first.

**Group Reflection:** Share what was noticed. Try to line up thoughts that are parallel.

**Facilitator pause:** Ask: What does David seem most concerned about—answers, protection, or direction? Both are requested, but which seems more urgent?

**Naming the Experience:** “Guidance” — trusting God to lead us through temptation and danger.

David asks God not only to rescue him, but to teach and lead him.

**DBS Emphasis:** Prayer invites God into our decisions, not just our emergencies.

Key Discovery Questions on Psalm 25: What kind of guidance does David ask for? Why is humility important for being led? How does God’s character affect trust?

**Reveal: Lord’s Prayer Portion:**

Facilitator: Read slowly. Pause.

*“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” — Matthew 6:13a*

Then ask: How does this line change how we view temptation?

**Conclusion:** (for the Facilitator to Guide): Jesus teaches His followers to depend on God’s leadership, not their own strength.

**Practice for the Week:**

Encourage the group to pray for guidance before decisions, not after mistakes. Ask God to lead your **decisions**, not just fix your problems. Notice this is the last request Jesus makes in the model/outline prayer he taught. Try to end your prayers this week with a request for what lies ahead.

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## Week 6 — “*Why We Trust*” Psalm 62

**Welcome:** For those practicing this, could you tell a difference in focus. Many of us spend time in stress over past decisions. Anxiety and bitterness can consume us if our focus remains in the past. Did focusing on asking for God’s help in what’s coming change your headspace?

**Introduction:** Read Psalm 62 aloud. Ask the group to listen for confidence and rest. Invite participants how David’s words make you feel. Restate one line that stands out to share.

**Group Reflection:** Share observations. When we actually spend time leaving God’s throne room in the same way we entered it... how do you feel?

**Facilitator pause:** Ask: What does resting in God look like here?

**Naming the Experience:** “Assurance” — resting in God’s power and faithfulness.

David’s confidence is not in outcomes, but in who God is.

**DBS Emphasis:** Prayer ends with trust, not control.

Key Discovery Questions on Psalm 62:

-What gives David confidence? How does trust affect fear? What competes for our trust?

**Reveal: Lord’s Prayer Portion**

Facilitator: Read slowly. Pause. Then ask: Why is it important to end prayer this way?

*“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.”* Matthew 6:13b

**Conclusion:** (for the Facilitator to Guide): Jesus teaches us to close prayer with confidence in God’s rule and faithfulness.

**Practice for the Week:**

End prayers with **confidence statements**, not worry statements. End prayers only when you can find a moment of assurance or rest

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## Week 7 — “The Whole Prayer” Psalm 145

**Welcome:** This is our final study in prayer. What section of prayer has stood out to you most over the last 6 week? Review the Lord’s prayer and remind others of the steps.

*Steps of Prayer: Orientation, Alignment, Dependence, Transformation, Guidance, or Assurance*

**Introduction:** Read Psalm 145 aloud. Ask the group to listen for each phase of prayer that Jesus taught. It would be idea if at least 6 people were assigned a part.

Move through the steps of prayer again and ask for people to share where they see David praying for through that phase.

**Group Reflection:** Share observations.

**Facilitator pause:** What are the benefits of praying in order these steps? How does each phase affect the next? How does each prepare the heart for the conversations that need to happen?

**Naming the Experience:** **Formation/Design** — prayer as a way of life.

Psalm 145 contains every movement found in the Lord’s Prayer. David models what Jesus later teaches. In hindsight we understand why David is called a man after God’s own heart, because what proceeds from the mouth flows from the heart.

**DBS Emphasis:** Prayer is not a formula to repeat, but a pattern that shapes us. The Lord’s prayer teaches us this pattern. Learning to pray through these phases, not just what they are, changes a person prayer life. We begin to pray like “A Man After God’s Own Heart.”

Key Discovery Questions on Psalm 145: What patterns of prayer do you notice? Which movement feels most natural to you? Which is most difficult?

**Reveal: Lord’s Prayer** (Full) Matthew 6:9–13

Facilitator: Read the prayer slowly, one line at a time.

**Conclusion** (for the Facilitator to Guide): Jesus invites His followers into a rhythm of prayer that forms trust, humility, and dependence.

**Write out a prayer over the next few weeks and share it with the group:**

Try to move through these steps and write your own Psalm