DANGEROUS PRAYERS

BECAUSE FOLLOWING JESUS WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE SAFE

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. On a scale of 1–10 (with one representing pathetically lame and ten representing passionately faith-fueled), what would you rank your prayer life last week and why?

2. How has praying been easy for you? When have you found praying to be more of a challenge? Why?

3. When you were growing up, was prayer a part of your life? If so, describe what part it played.

4. Is there a dangerous prayer that you know you should be praying but are afraid to pray? Talk about it openly.

5. If God helped you grow in one area of your prayer life, what do you think it would be and why? Describe.
1. A lot of people will say or believe that they have a “good heart.” But we learned in this chapter that the heart is deceitful (Jer. 17:9). Can you think of a time that your heart led you to do something that you shouldn’t have done? Did you rationalize something? How did your heart lead you astray?

2. When David was in a dark place, he prayed the dangerous prayer, “Search me, God” (Ps. 139:23). Have you ever asked God to search you? If not, why not? If you have, what did he show you?

3. David asked God to reveal his “anxious thoughts” (see Ps. 139:23). What concerns or burdens are making you anxious? Is something weighing on you or keeping you awake at night?

4. We also watched as David bravely asked God to show him if there was anything offensive in him (see Ps. 139:24). Have you ever asked God to show you your sinfulness? Did he ever reveal something in you that he wanted to cleanse or change? If so, describe what happened.

5. David prayed the dangerous prayer inviting God to “search him”—to lead him and direct his steps. Has God ever prompted you, spoken to you, or nudged you to do something after you prayed? Or maybe he showed you something through a sermon, or in a song, or from a friend. Talk about a time when you know that God was leading you.
1. Scripture shows again and again how hard times can make us stronger and bring us closer to God. Describe a time when you experienced something difficult and yet recognized God’s goodness was with you in the trial.

2. In chapter 2, we looked at 1 Corinthians 11:24, which says, “When [Jesus] had given thanks, he broke [the bread] and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” If you have been around church, you may have experienced Communion or the Lord’s Supper. What does this sacrament mean to you? Describe.

3. Some might say that inviting God to “break them” is the most scary of the three dangerous prayers. If you had the courage to ask God to break you, what are you afraid he might do? If your fears actually came to pass, how do you think God would show himself to you?

4. Who do you know that has experienced deep pain and is stronger spiritually on the other side of the brokenness? How is God using them now?

5. If you took time to invite God to break you, what do you think he’d want to remove from your life first? Would he break you of selfishness? Of pride? Of self-sufficiency? Or of something else? Talk about it and explain why.
1. In this chapter, we looked at the prayer of Isaiah when he said, “Here I am. Send me!” (Isa. 6:8). I am sometimes nervous to pray this prayer because of fear of where God might send me or what he’ll ask me to do. Can you relate?

2. Are you surrendered—completely available—to God right now? Are you doing everything he is leading you to do? Or are you guarded? Resisting? Please discuss openly. Encourage each other toward deeper connection with God.

3. In the sixth chapter of Isaiah, the prophet experienced the presence of God in a way he never had before. When you think of experiencing God’s presence, what comes to mind? Have you ever sensed that God was with you? Is it a rare experience? Or is it often? How or when do you experience God best?

4. In this chapter, we looked at the principle, “what you feed grows and what you starve dies.” Can you describe a time when feeding your spirit with truth helped you grow? How did God give you the ability to overcome doing something wrong and grow closer to him? Describe.

5. Any act of faith can help you grow closer to God. Talk about the last thing that you did that required faith in God on your part. What happened? What did you learn? Are you ready to let God “send you” no matter where it leads?
CONCLUSION

1. If God said yes to every prayer you prayed in the last week, what would be different in this world today? Be specific.

2. In the conclusion we looked at a prayer attributed to Sir Francis Drake. He asked God to “disturb him.” How has God disturbed you as a result of listening to this book? What is God showing you about your prayer life? About your faith?

3. Of the three prayers—search me, break me, and send me—which one is the most difficult for you to pray and why?

4. Of the three prayers—search me, break me, and send me—which one are you most ready to pray and why?

5. We looked at three dangerous prayers. If you think about it, I’m sure there are dozens of others that come to mind. If you added a fourth dangerous prayer, what would it be and why?
The Bible is full of dangerous prayers. King David, the apostle Paul, and even Jesus all prayed their own versions of dangerous prayers. As we learned in the introduction to this book, they prayed honest prayers—desperate, fiery, gutsy, real prayers.

In their own words they said *search me, break me, and send me*.

The dangerous prayers of the Bible can be the fuel for your dangerous prayers today. Isaiah’s voice might help you find yours. Esther’s words might help you discover fresh words for yourself.

What follows is a brief list of the dangerous prayers found in the Bible. If you are having trouble praying, then start with these. Read through them and adapt them to fit your situation. Allow the words of the followers of God who have gone before you to inspire you, and to help you find words of your own.
Getting Started with Prayer

Jesus taught his disciples to pray by providing them with an example, a passage now widely called the Lord’s Prayer. You can pray the exact words of these verses as your own. Meditate on them. Memorize them. You’ll probably recognize much of this prayer already.

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”

—MATTHEW 6:9–13

Something great about this prayer is that it doesn’t have an “amen” ending. It feels open-ended. You can pray these words, then share with God a sentence or two from your heart before saying amen.

“Search Me” Prayers

Psalm 139 is an open and honest prayer before God about how nothing is hidden from him. Open your heart to God. Pray it as your own.
You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

—PSALM 139:1–6, 23–24

Pray this short psalm from David that screams “search me!” during a time of stress and danger.

How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Look on me and answer, LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the LORD’s praise, for he has been good to me.

—PSALM 13
“Break Me” Prayers

Jesus set the example for us of what it means to pray “break me.”

When [Jesus] had given thanks, he broke [the bread] and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

—1 CORINTHIANS 11:24, PRAYED DURING THE LAST SUPPER

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

—LUKE 22:42, PRAYED ON THE NIGHT JESUS WAS ARRESTED

“Send Me” Prayers

Pray the prophet Isaiah’s dangerous, vulnerable words to God:

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

—ISAIAH 6:8
Pray like Esther, a young woman who was willing to put her own life on the line in order to protect God’s people:

“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

—ESTHER 4:15–16

Read and pray all of Psalm 40 if you can. This is an incredible chapter in the Bible. Pray out loud the verses that connect with your circumstances. David said, “Send me!”

I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, LORD, as you know. I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly.

—PSALM 40:9–10

Confession Prayers

Psalm 32 is a classic prayer of confession. When we don’t confess our sins, it’s like our “bones waste away.” But God loves you with an “unfailing love.” If there is sin in your life that
you haven’t confessed to God, pray the words of this psalm.
Confess. No matter what you’ve done, you can believe that he
“surrounds the one who trusts him.”

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the
LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no
deceit.

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through
my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was
heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of
summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover
up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the
LORD.” And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may
be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not
reach them. You are my hiding place; you will protect me
from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should
go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Do not be
like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but
must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to
you. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD’s unfail-
ing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.
Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!

—PSALM 32

I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble.

When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who watch over my way. In the path where I walk people have hidden a snare for me. Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life.

I cry to you, LORD; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.”

Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

—PSALM 142

Some of King David’s worst moments are recorded in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. His sins took the lives of others and broke one family apart. Psalm 51 records his confession after those events. No matter what you’ve done, use the words of this psalm and go to God in prayer.
Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

—PSALM 51:1–12

When Life Is Unbearable

This psalm will give words to your pain and your waiting and remind you of God’s incredible power and love.
Hear my prayer, LORD; let my cry for help come to you. Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly.

For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers. My heart is blighted and withered like grass; I forget to eat my food. In my distress I groan aloud and am reduced to skin and bones. I am like a desert owl, like an owl among the ruins. I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof. All day long my enemies taunt me; those who rail against me use my name as a curse. For I eat ashes as my food and mingle my drink with tears because of your great wrath, for you have taken me up and thrown me aside. My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass.

—PSALM 102:1–11

Did you know that Jesus also prayed with the words of Scripture? He prayed parts of the Psalms as he hung on the cross. When life is unbearable, pray as Jesus prayed: voice your honest feelings before God, then commit your spirit—your life, your heart, your worries—to him.

About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

—MATTHEW 27:46
Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.

—LUKE 23:46

Prayers for Healing

When you or someone you know is sick or struggling physically, you can cry out to God and ask for healing. Consider praying the words of this psalm.

Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am faint; heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony. My soul is in deep anguish. How long, LORD, how long?

Turn, LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love. Among the dead no one proclaims your name. Who praises you from the grave?

I am worn out from my groaning.

All night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. My eyes grow weak with sorrow; they fail because of all my foes.

Away from me, all you who do evil, for the LORD has heard my weeping. The LORD has heard my cry for mercy; the LORD accepts my prayer.

—PSALM 6:2–9
Paul knew what it was like to suffer physically. The Bible records that he was flogged, stoned, shipwrecked, and threatened on multiple occasions. Pray his words and find renewal in God’s Holy Spirit.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

— ROMANS 15:13

Prayers of Praise

Pray these words in the sunshine. Pray them in a storm. Pray them on bad days and good days. Pray them to remember that “you are his” no matter what your days are like.

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

— PSALM 100
Sometimes the circumstances of life are so ugly that we must look outside ourselves in order to praise God. Pray the words of this psalm to be drawn into the natural world and back into God’s Word.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.

The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.

They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful
sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

—PSALM 19

**Prayer for Unity**

Did you know that Jesus prayed for you? John 17 records a prayer of Jesus that includes “all who will believe in me.” It’s a prayer for unity of spirit and purpose.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

—JOHN 17:20–23
Purposeful Prayers

When Paul prays, he prays on purpose. Notice in his prayers how often he uses or implies the words “so that.”

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every 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, 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 Lord’s holy people, 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.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

—EPHESIANS 3:14–21

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowl-
edge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

—COLOSSIANS 1:9–12

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

—PHILIPPIANS 1:9–11

Prayers of Blessing

Our God is a kind, gracious, and loving heavenly Father who delights in blessing his children. As you spend time talking to God, you can ask him to bless you and those you love.

“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

—NUMBERS 6:24–26
Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” And God granted his request.

—1 CHRONICLES 4:10

Prayers of Guidance

Sometimes knowing the next best step to take is incredibly challenging. Pray these words of David when you aren’t sure what God would have you do.

In you, LORD my God, I put my trust. I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. . . .

Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.

—PSALM 25:1–2, 4–6

If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you.

—EXODUS 33:13
Prayer for Boldness

Though we may truly love God, sometimes we hesitate to share our faith with others. We don’t want to offend them or fear that we don’t know enough to answer all of their spiritual questions. When we feel timid or afraid, we can ask God to give us the boldness to share with others.

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”
—ACTS 4:29–30

Prayer for Salvation and Help

If you know the story of Jonah at all, then you know this prayer speaks volumes. Praise God today with these words. He has saved you. Salvation comes from the Lord! Shout it from the rooftops.

“In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about
me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. I said, ‘I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.’ The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit.

“When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

“Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God’s love for them. But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the LORD.’”

—JONAH 2:2–9