

ELIZABETH
GEORGE

15 Verses
TO PRAY FOR
Your
Husband



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON

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15 VERSES TO PRAY FOR YOUR HUSBAND

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Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

George, Elizabeth, 1944-

15 verses to pray for your husband / Elizabeth George.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-7369-2677-5 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-7369-4493-9 (eBook)

1. Husbands—Prayers and devotions. 2. Marriage—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

II. Title: Fifteen verses to pray for your husband.

BV283.H8G38 2015

242'.8435—dc23

2015010135

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Printed in the United States of America

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 / BP-JH / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Answering God's Call to Pray

Lord, teach us to pray...

LUKE 11:1

On any journey, like that of becoming a faithful prayer warrior for your husband, a first step must always be taken. I remember when I took my first step toward seriously learning how to pray. It was on Mother's Day, May 8, 1983. My daughter Katherine (age 13) gave me the gift of a tiny wordless book. It was purple (Kath's favorite color)...and I still have it because it's a real keepsake to me. One reason it's so special is because my precious daughter gave it to me!

Katherine came up with the idea for the gift and arranged with Jim (my husband and Kath's dad) to do extra chores so she could earn the money to purchase something for me for Mother's Day. Then the two of them went off together to shop for just the right present for Mom. The little treasure was then inscribed by Katherine on the bookplate in her careful handwriting, lovingly gift-wrapped, and proudly given to me on that Sunday morning so many years ago.

Oh, believe me, I screamed! I squealed! I did everything but turn cartwheels to express my thanks to my sweet daughter. But then I faced a problem—what to do with a wordless book? For several months I let the small book lie on the coffee table so my dear Katherine would know how much I truly appreciated it. Then one day, not knowing exactly what to do with it, I moved it into the bookcase...and it was gone...

...until September 12, four months later. That day was my tenth birthday in the Lord. As I sat alone before God, I looked back over my first ten years as God's child. Of course, that led to a time of thanking Him for His mercy, His grace, His care, His guidance, His wisdom, my salvation through Christ, and so much more.

On and on my prayers of appreciation to God gushed. Then after dabbing my eyes with a tissue, I turned my thoughts forward and I prayed, "Lord, as I start a new decade with You, is there anything missing from my Christian life?"

Oh, dear friend, I can only report to you that before I put the question mark on the question, I knew in my heart what the answer was: prayer. God was calling me to pray. To make prayer a priority. To pay serious attention to prayer. To become a woman of prayer.

And just as suddenly, I knew what to do with that tiny purple wordless book. I ran to the bookcase and pulled out that little treasure. "There you are!" I cried, acknowledging that it had been waiting for four months for that very day and this very use. Thrilled, I opened it up and wrote on the very first page:

I dedicate and purpose to spend the next ten years in the Lord, Lord willing, developing a meaningful prayer life.

Making a Commitment

Why did I pick ten years for my commitment to develop a meaningful prayer life? Probably because it was my tenth birthday in Christ. Today, as I am telling this story, those ten years have come and gone. And I want to tell you right now—I am still learning how to pray!

As you probably already know, you and I won't ever wake up one day at a point where we can mark "Learn to pray" off of our to-do list. No, no one prays enough. And no one prays as passionately as she would like to pray or should pray. And no one prays for as many people as need to be prayed for.

And so we must continue on our journey into prayer until we "get it," until we can say that we've begun to know even a little bit about prayer. And until that happens, a lot of Christians pray what I call "Christopher Robin" prayers. He's the boy in A.A. Milne's classic book *When We Were Very Young*. Little Christopher Robin struggled with his evening "vespers."¹ He became so distracted by anything and everything—you name it—that he couldn't remember who or what to pray for. So he ended up praying "God bless _____" prayers, filling in the blank with the names of family members and friends, his nanny and pets...until he got distracted all over again.

I can relate to Christopher Robin's "prayer" experience. And maybe you can too. That's exactly how I prayed...up until I made my commitment to answer God's call to pray. Like Christopher Robin, my mind wandered. I didn't know who to pray for, or how to pray for them. So my prayers basically consisted of lame efforts, until they finally wound down to a muttered "God bless me and my family today."

Getting Organized—Taking a Step

And so I started writing out prayer requests in that little purple book. But it became apparent very quickly that I was going to run out of blank pages—they measured only 3 x 5 inches each! Can you imagine trying to fit in every area of your life, all the people you know, all the decisions you need to make, and all the commitments, goals, and resolutions for spiritual growth and change in a miniature journal?

I realized if I was going to be a faithful prayer warrior, I was going to have to do something. So I went to our bookcase and grabbed an empty three-ring binder, and then searched for some lined notebook paper. I had prayed enough days using that sweet little book to realize I wanted to pray through the areas and issues in my daily life in priority order.

Next task? To create a tab for each section of my new prayer notebook. My first tab was “God” for my relationship with Him. My next most-important priority was my husband, who received my next tab—“Jim”—and a bunch of lined pages. From that day onward, Jim received my almost-daily prayers for his upcoming day as well as anything and everything he was experiencing or would be facing in the future.

Maybe you can guess the progression of my tabs in that battered binder that would change my prayer life—and my life! “Katherine” and “Courtney” each got a tab. So did my “Home.” Next I created the tab “Self” for my prayer needs for growth and goals for improvement. And “Ministry” completed my initial setup.

Back then I didn’t have this book you are reading, but knowing now what I experienced with my Jim and his life, and as I talk to and read letters and emails from wives around the world, I urge you to set up some kind of system for prayer. It can be a

notebook or a journal, a phone app or a personal file you create on your computer.

Whatever you do, try to incorporate the 15 areas of your husband's life that are presented in this book. You can start right now—today—by deciding to make a new page for your husband as you read each chapter. Whether you want to pray all of the prayers in this book each day, or focus on just one each day, use the prayer provided there to pray for your husband.

Praying for Your Husband

Hopefully you've already had your husband as a key focal point of your prayers up to now. If so, your husband is a blessed man to have you as his wife! To make him your special "prayer project" for life, here are a few suggestions and even cautions to keep in mind.

Pray without expecting instant results. God is always at work. As the psalmist wrote, "He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:3-4).

God doesn't work according to your timetable. I'm sure you know this from firsthand experience. For instance, God has been patient with you so far, hasn't He? And yet He has been at work in your life. You're not where you need to be or where you're going to be, but you also aren't where you used to be!

Now you must apply this knowledge of God to your husband. And so you pray faithfully and forever for your husband. That's your commitment of love. And, as you pray for your husband, don't expect or look for any overnight miracles. Learn a lesson from Monica, the mother of Augustine, one of the early church fathers. This devout believer and devoted mother prayed for

decades before God opened her son's heart and he embraced Christ at age 31.

First Corinthians 13 tells us that “love suffers long...[and] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (verses 4 and 7). That, my praying sister-in-Christ, is to be our approach to praying for our husbands. We pray no matter what. We pray—and suffer long, patient while we bear and endure all things, always believing and never losing hope.

Don't get discouraged in the course of your prayer journey. It's exactly that—a journey! That means it involves time and takes time, even a lifetime. Be persistent yet patient as you pray. God's “ears are open” to your prayers and your cries; He sees you in secret, and acts when and how He chooses (1 Peter 3:12; Matthew 6:6).

Pray, even when you don't feel like it. When you are discouraged or frustrated with what is or isn't happening in your marriage, pray! God knows your heart, your dreams and desires, and your sorrows. Begin your time of prayer telling your heavenly Father all about what is and isn't happening in your marriage, your home, and your life—and your husband's too.

But also do as the writer of Psalm 77 did. For ten verses, Asaph lamented to God about his grim situation. Then he had a “Wait a minute!” wake-up call, and acknowledged, “‘This is my anguish; but I will remember the years at the right hand of the Most High.’ I will remember the works of the LORD; surely I will remember Your wonders of old” (verses 10-11).

Asaph turned a corner in his thoughts and changed his thinking pattern. He resolutely stated “but I will” and then praised God and affirmed that God is, has been, and always will be faithful and good, never wrong in what He is doing.

Pray, expecting to do battle. All through the entire chapter of John 17 we see Jesus, the Son of God, in prayer to His Father in

heaven. In what is often called Jesus' high-priestly prayer, you will learn that the world is a battleground in which the forces of evil are at war with those under God's loving authority. Satan and the evil system he has established are constantly attacking God's people. With that in mind, Jesus prayed in John 17 for His 12 disciples, and by extension, He prayed for all His followers, including you and your husband.

What did Jesus pray for? That the Father would keep all believers for all time, including you and your husband, safe from Satan's power and keep you set apart, holy, and pure. Hopefully your husband is praying for you, but even if he isn't, you must embrace your role as a prayer warrior. It's vital that you see yourself as a soldier doing battle when you pray for your beloved husband. Isn't it encouraging to know that Jesus is in heaven also interceding on your husband's behalf? What a team!

Pray, knowing the Holy Spirit is interceding as well. Sometimes we as wives don't know how to pray for our husbands. If you are even a little like me, you are so close to your husband's struggles that you are often frozen in fear or bewilderment. It is during these times of desperation that you and I can count on the Holy Spirit along with God, the Father, and Jesus, His Son. When you don't know what to think or how to pray for your husband, you can know that the Holy Spirit knows, and is making intercession on his behalf.

Romans 8:26 says, "The Spirit...helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." We know we are in good hands because the next verse says that such intervention is always in harmony with God's will: "He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (verse 27). Be encouraged as you pray that it is not only you praying, but Jesus is interceding at the right hand

of the Father, and the Spirit is involved as well. The whole Trinity is joining you in prayers for your husband!

Pray, leaving the results to God. God tells His people to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). And so you do as He asks and pray! But the real comfort in praying for your husband is leaving your requests in God's lap, so to speak. Yes, you pray. And yes, you watch and wait for results. And yes, you may pray and watch and wait for decades. But each day—and every time you experience even a hint of anxiety or frustration—you lay your concerns into God's hands to do *as He wills* and *when He wills*. Philippians 4:6 tells you to “let your requests be made known to God.” And afterward? You experience “the peace of God” (verse 7).

Focus on Your Blessings

In one of his many psalms, David gave us some practical instruction when he wrote, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits” (Psalm 103:2). When you are praying and storming the gates of heaven on behalf of your husband, it's easy to focus on what you don't have, or on what it doesn't seem like God is doing. It's easy to question God and start asking Him, “Why isn't anything changing? Why aren't You fixing this? Why aren't You answering my prayers? What am I doing wrong?” But in the midst of all our asking, David nudges us to remember and notice all of God's blessings, all His “benefits.”

A true confession—I love Psalm 103:2 and took seriously its exhortation to “forget not” the many ways God blesses me. So on Day One of using my little purple wordless book for prayer, I set up a page entitled “Blessings” and dove in to list all of the blessings that had occurred in my day—and it was only 10:00 a.m.

What was I thinking? Can you imagine—a single page for

tracking *all* of God's blessings to you as His child, especially on a 3 x 5-inch page? Within minutes that page was full, and I wasn't even finished! Jesus' words leapt into my mind: "How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him" (Matthew 7:11). Oh, does He ever!

Needless to say, when I made my large loose-leaf notebook, I created an individual tab marked "Blessings" to make a record of the multitude of ways God was blessing and encouraging me. (And in no time at all, page after page became filled with evidence of God's blessings, to the point of filling up a file folder in our file cabinet.)

Don't forget each day—and multiple times during your day—to at least acknowledge God's blessings. Keeping a record of His benefits makes you ultra-aware of God's presence in your days, hours, and minutes. Then when you run up against an exceptionally down day and you are especially discouraged, maybe even depressed, pull your lists out, review them, and praise God for His past blessings. Your spirit will be revived.

Looking Forward

Prayer is truly the queen of all the habits you could desire as a woman of faith. As you make your way through this book and discover the different ways you can be praying for your husband, I want you to take this thought with you:

He who has learned how to pray
has learned the greatest secret
of a holy and a happy life.²

I'm sure you caught the word *learned*. All of your learning and efforts in prayer will help lead you to "a holy and happy

life.” And the beautiful miracle is that a holy and a happy life can be yours each day...every day...as you answer God’s call to pray. So let the outpouring of your heart for your husband begin now—today! The opportunity and privilege of talking to God through prayer is yours.

As you step into deepening your prayer life and praying for your husband, you will be placing his name in 15 prayers to pray for him. But before you launch your prayer project for your husband, there’s one place I hope you will write *your* name. The declaration that follows was made by George Müller. This man was a persistent, relentless pray-er. Without asking a single person for help or even sharing about his needs, he prayed to God to provide daily for the many orphaned children he took in. Through fervent prayer, he was able to care for all the needs—food, clothing, health, and education—of more than 10,000 children during his lifetime.

Wouldn’t you like to have Müller’s unrelenting faith and the same kinds of answers to your prayers for your husband? You can! Especially if you develop George Müller’s degree of resolve as you pray for your husband:

I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk about, when I lie down and when I rise up. And the answers are always coming. Thousand and tens of thousands of times have my prayers been answered. When once I am persuaded that a thing is right and for the glory of God, I go on praying for it until the answer comes. George Müller never gives up!³

_____ never gives up!
(Your name here)



Chapter 1

Praying for Your Husband's Spiritual Growth

We also...do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.

COLOSSIANS 1:9-11

Every marriage has its beginning. For Jim and me, that beginning was on the campus of the University of Oklahoma. With my new fall schedule, my path to my ballet class brought me face-to-face every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with a very cute and friendly guy. To this day I'm so glad I enrolled in that ballet class to fulfill my need for fine arts credits.

The very cute and friendly guy was known on the campus as

Smilin' Jim George, which fit perfectly as he smiled and laughed and greeted everyone on his way—which included me. Three times a week we were smiling and saying “Hi” to each other. Then a friend of Jim's arranged a blind date for us—and we were married eight months later! He, the scientist and pharmacy major, married the ballerina-English major. What a match...or was it a mismatch?

More of our story will come a little later, but let me just say that Jim and I spent the next five years basically doing everything wrong in our marriage. Then we added two little girls to the mix and spent another three years floundering and doing everything wrong as parents. You see, we had no foundation, no guidelines, no principles to show us the way to a happy, fulfilling marriage and family.

But miracle of miracles and by God's grace, we became a Christian couple! (Thank You, Lord!) That's when we began to grow in Christ. And on Day One at church we realized when the pastor said, “Turn in your Bibles to...” that we needed two Bibles pronto. Easy enough! We took care of that need immediately after the church service and purchased matching Bibles.

And best of all, we began reading our Bibles the very next day. The next Sunday we joined a class for young marrieds. During our class we also signed up for a Friday night couples' Bible study. We were sponges! Everything that came along, we got on board. We also began memorizing Scripture. And we enrolled in an evening Bible class at a local Bible institute.

After being in the world for so long, we were hungry—starving!—for something of substance, for something meaningful, for something that gave us answers to our many questions, such as, What is the purpose of our lives? How could we have a meaningful marriage? Where could we get help with raising our two toddlers?

If you have read any of the books Jim and I have written, you may have been tempted to think, *Wow, what a wonderful life Jim and Elizabeth have.* Well, let me quickly tell you that it wasn't that way in the beginning. After eight years of marriage and three of those years as parents, we were soooo lost and confused—and miserable! For almost a decade we had little or no peace in our home. Arguments abounded. We disagreed on just about everything.

One thing led to another until we were truly each going our own way. Jim was deeply consumed with his job as a pharmaceutical salesman. And I was attending classes day and night to earn a master's degree and obtain a license in marriage and family counseling. (Can you hear me laughing? I think I hear you laughing!) We each admit we entertained thoughts of divorce. We were the proverbial flailing couple who was going down for the third time...and taking two little girls with us.

And along came Jesus. How we loved and embraced the good news of the gospel! With Jesus came new life. We were new creatures in Christ. Old things passed away. Behold, all things became new! We were stunned by the truths of the new birth and the complete forgiveness of our past and sins. Our minds reeled from the knowledge that our slates of sins were wiped clean by Jesus' death. In Christ, we had a second chance. A new beginning.

As we grew spiritually, we learned about the presence of the Holy Spirit in us—and every believer. We tasted firsthand the amazing transformation that occurs as followers of Jesus feed on the Word of God and commit to obeying what the Bible reveals about the behaviors God desires in His people. We still failed often...but we were definitely growing.

These same experiences are available to you too—and to your husband—as you commit to following Christ and growing

spiritually mature. So while you are growing in the Lord, you can—and should—pray for your husband’s spiritual growth. Here are two scenarios to consider in your marriage and as you pray.

What If My Husband Is Not a Christian?

If your husband is not a Christian, then your first and foremost assignment is to pray daily for God to draw your beloved to Himself. I cannot urge you strongly enough to pray faithfully. It is entirely possible that you are the only person on the face of the earth praying for him. That means if you don’t pray for him, then probably no one is! The Bible says, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). And the same is true of the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous *wife*. It avails and accomplishes much! Your assignment from God is to pray, to keep on praying no matter what, and to trust God.

And while you are praying for your husband, pray for God to send people to share their faith with him. Pray for someone to give him a book that shows him the way to Christ. That’s how Jim and I became a Christian couple. One of the doctors Jim called on each month was a vibrant Christian, and he gave Jim a copy of a Christian book. (And, by the way, this doctor purchased this one book title by the hundreds and gave one to every person who entered his offices!) Well, Jim read the book for all the wrong reasons—he read it so *if* the doctor asked him about the book on his next sales visit, Jim could smile and say yes, he had read it and then politely and knowledgeably discuss it.

Who knew that book would turn Jim’s world upside down?! Like the apostle Paul in Philippians 3, God “apprehended” or laid hold upon Jim through the scriptures and truths presented in that book.

Well, as with all good things, Jim wanted to share it with his spouse—that's me! Immediately he asked me to read the book. In all honesty I told him, "Of course I'll read it." After all, reading books for my studies and papers was about all I did (and my messy house was proof of that!). Unfortunately that book ended up getting lost in my bookcase for the next two years. And, like Jim, the day I picked it up and began reading it was the day my life changed forever. Suddenly God turned my life upside-down too—and we became a couple after God's own heart. That's when we wholeheartedly and in perfect unity jumped into the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1).

I cannot encourage you enough to pray for your unbelieving husband. God can turn your husband upside-down and inside-out. God is able to break through the hardest of hearts. He delights in showing people the way to know Him and experience His love and forgiveness. And prayer is your direct avenue to God. Each prayer you utter is from your heart to His. Praying for your husband is your supreme act of love. As a famous theologian noted, "There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him."¹

What If My Husband Is a Christian?

If your husband is a believer, then don't forget to pray for God to move him to *want* to grow as a Christian.

Maybe this is a good time for us to remind ourselves that we are not called to nag our husbands to read their Bibles and be more committed to their spiritual growth. As a mentor told me when I was still a new believer, I am not to attempt to take on the role the Holy Spirit has in prompting and convicting my husband of his need to be growing in Christ.

And it's true. As a wife, I am not responsible for my husband's

spiritual growth. But I *am* responsible to grow myself and to fulfill God's commands to me to love and respect my husband, to be his helper and his number one encourager in all things.²

So What's a Wife to Do?

Number one on your "To-Do List for Wives" is to pray, pray, pray! Instead of unleashing or dumping your frustrations and disappointments in your husband on him, pray! Let God know all about your concerns. When you tell God the desires of your heart, and pray for something that you *know* God wants to occur in your husband's life—like grow in Christ, you are most definitely telling the right person!

And go ahead and give God the reasons you are asking for what you are praying. First on that list should be your husband's spiritual growth because that is something God wants for him. Praying in this way centers your prayers on God—not on yourself or on something that makes your life easier or better.

You can also ask God to plant within your husband's heart a desire to grow in the knowledge of God because that growth will make your husband a godly man and a better spiritual leader for you and any children you have. These are roles God lays out for all Christian husbands. To pray for this is not self-serving. No, this request also lines up with *God's will* for husbands to lead those in the home (1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 3:5).

Here's another way you can love your husband: Pray for a spiritual mentor to take your husband under his wing. This too is a request that is biblical and pleases God. Paul had his Timothy to nurture and train. Joshua had his Moses to watch and learn from. Barnabas took his nephew John Mark and taught him everything he knew about serving God. That, dear fellow

wife, is what God wants for your husband—to be mentored, and to one day mentor others.

When it comes to our prayers, God gives us these guidelines—and measuring sticks—to help us check our motives. They come from James 4:2-3:

- “You do not have because you do not ask.” God’s message? Make sure you are praying and asking God to work in your husband’s heart.
- “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” Remember you are not asking for anything for yourself, but for what you know God wants from and for your husband.

The first of these two guidelines on prayer from James 4 tells us that just maybe the reason we aren’t seeing God at work in our lives and marriages and families is because of our own neglect to pray. Therefore, we don’t have what we and our spouse and children need because we haven’t asked God for it. God’s word to us is to start asking—and keep asking.

The second teaching warns us that once we start asking, we are to check our heart. So we start praying and asking...and maybe we are still not receiving or seeing what we’re asking for. We wonder, *What’s wrong?* God says it is possible that we are not receiving answers because we are asking “amiss.” We are asking for the wrong things or for the wrong reasons or motives.

One study Bible helps us understand these two principles from James 4:2-3 with these words:

Do you talk to God at all? When you do, what do you talk about? Do you ask only to satisfy your desires? Do you seek God’s approval for what you already plan to do? Our prayers will become

powerful when we allow God to change our desires so that they perfectly correspond to his will for us (1 John 3:21,22).³

A Prayer to Pray

Here is a perfect prayer to pray for your husband's spiritual growth and maturity. And yes, I can say it's perfect because it is right out of the Bible—God's Word straight from His heart! I have tweaked these verses to be prayed to God as your personal prayer for your husband. Pray these verses fervently and passionately—and often!—from your heart to God's heart and put your beloved's name in the blanks. Before you read on, read the passage that makes up the heart of this prayer. You will find it at the top of the first page of this chapter.

My Prayer for My Husband

Colossians 1:9-11

Father God, I do not cease to pray for _____, and to ask that _____ may be filled with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that _____ may walk worthy of You, Lord, fully pleasing You, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in his knowledge of You, God; that _____ may be strengthened with all might, according to Your glorious power. Amen.

Isn't this a great prayer?! This and every prayer in the Bible

was uttered for a purpose. So let's discover the purpose and reason for this exquisite prayer we are praying for our husbands.

When the apostle Paul prayed and wrote this prayer, he was far away from people he loved in the church at Colosse. In fact, he was imprisoned in Rome, more than 1000 miles away. One day, Epaphras, the pastor of the church in Colosse, showed up to visit Paul. This faithful pastor poured out to Paul his grave concerns for the spiritual conditions in the Colossian church.

The result of this man's loving concern for the spiritual condition of his friends was the book of Colossians. With a heavy heart filled with love, Paul then wrote a "letter" to the people in the church at Colosse. In it, Paul shared God's answers and solutions to the people's problems.

As we unpack the three verses of the soaring, heartfelt prayer in Colossians 1:9-11, think about how significant the implications of this prayer are in the spiritual life of your husband.

Pray for your husband fervently and without ceasing (Colossians 1:9). Like Paul, your prayers for your partner's spiritual growth should be frequent—and forever! As Paul wrote, "We do not cease to pray." This is a good reminder for all wives that your prayers for your husband are not to be a one-time event. When your husband has an issue, need, or crisis, or you have a concern regarding him, you can offer up a quick prayer anytime and anywhere, regardless of what you are doing.

However, you cannot be satisfied with random "arrow" prayers shot up to heaven from here and there, now and then. Yes, there is a place for quickly sharing your heart with God as you go through your day and think about someone, or your heart is breaking, or you need some on-the-spot wisdom. But prayer is also doing business with God. It's sort of like preparing a presentation to share at work or to a committee or to a board.

You have some idea or change or improvement that you think would better your employer's business or will improve the work you are involved in. So you create, and edit, and change, and fine-tune, and polish a presentation to give before the powers-that-be for their consideration—and hopefully, their approval.

Your formal prayers to God are like a presentation. There is something you want desperately. You want your husband to become a Christian. Or you want your husband to desire to grow as a Christian. This is serious business—which you present to God. You pour out your heart to God and your reasons for what you are asking.

I love the picture—and prayer—presented in 2 Kings 19:14-18. When King Hezekiah received a threatening letter demanding that he surrender to an opposing army, what did he do?

Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. Then Hezekiah prayed before the Lord...(verses 14-15).

Hezekiah went to the temple, laid the letter before the Lord, and prayed, appealed, and presented his problem and his requests and his reasons to God.

King Hezekiah shows us how to come before God with something that is vital to us and to Him. And so does the apostle Paul. His prayers were “always” (Philippians 1:4), “without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and he prayed “constantly” (2 Timothy 1:3 NASB).

Now, what is it you should be praying for?

Pray that your husband will grow in the knowledge of God's will (Colossians 1:9). The focus of your prayer is that your husband “may be filled with the knowledge of His will.” The Bible says that “if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14). So praying that your husband knows and lives and acts according to God's will is extremely important.

How is your husband (and you too) to identify God's will? God's will is not a mystery that is unknowable, so what else is needed for knowing it? The next phrase in Colossians 1:9 gives you the answer: “all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

You are to pray for *wisdom* for your husband. “Wisdom” is the ability to gather and organize principles from Scripture. And you are also to pray for your husband's *spiritual understanding*—that he will understand what he reads and studies in God's Word. That's because “understanding” is the application of those principles in your husband's daily life. That is the essence of God's will!

Pray that your husband will please God (Colossians 1:10). As I said, this is a marvelous and beautiful prayer to pray—that your husband will please God! Pleasing God occurs when your husband obeys God's commands—when he does God's will. You are praying that your husband will follow and obey God by walking in a worthy manner, which will result in bearing the fruit of the Spirit in his life—the fruit of love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Pleasing God also occurs when your husband grows in his knowledge of God.

Colossians 1:10 sums up how your husband can please God—in a Spirit-controlled walk, in godly actions, and in the diligent study of God's Word. And you are privileged to pray for him to do just that!

Pray that your husband will be strengthened by God (Colossians 1:11). You are probably familiar with Paul’s powerful statement, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). Similarly Paul focused on God’s strength in his prayer in Colossians 1:11, that believers would be “strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power.”

Let’s follow the path of Paul’s prayer: In prayer, you, dear praying wife, ask Christ to enable your husband with His power to be God’s man. You ask God to infuse your husband with His strength to love you and his children and to lead your family unit through the pressures and adversities of daily living. And you pray fervently for your husband to be strengthened with all might, “according to His glorious power.” You ask God that your husband would be made strong with God’s glorious power, with God’s incredible strength—so your husband can have “all patience and longsuffering with joy.”

Reflecting on God’s glorious power and strength, devotional Bible commentator Matthew Henry wrote:

To be strengthened is to be furnished by the grace of God for every good work, and fortified by that grace against every evil [work]: it is to be enabled to do our duty, and still to hold fast our integrity.⁴

And here’s the ultimate blessing of God’s glorious power: When your husband is strengthened by that power, there will be only one way to explain his life and character, and that is God! And because there is no human explanation for your husband’s walk and the fruit in his life, God Himself will receive all the glory. God will be glorified, which is every Christian’s highest goal and purpose—“to do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Beyond Prayer, What Can You Do?

1. *Decide to be growing spiritually yourself.* This is the most important decision you need to be making each day. Put the Lord first in your heart each day, and He will give you the wisdom to be the kind of wife your husband needs. Realize that the time you spend reading and studying God's Word and bending your soul in devoted prayer are holy times of preparation, not only for your day and your responsibilities and your walk with God, but to prepare yourself for ministry to your husband and family and to others. The spiritual impact you have on your husband and children will be in direct proportion to the time you spend away from people and with God in a daily quiet time of preparation.

2. *Accept the life God has given you.* Every woman has dreams of how perfect their marriage will be. But sadly, real life doesn't always turn out as desired. Maybe your dreams are all coming true. If so, be thankful—extremely thankful!—and pray for your husband's continued growth and maturity. Or maybe you are waiting for something positive to happen in your husband and your marriage. Life has a way of putting up detours, roadblocks, and immovable barriers in your path. But rather than having a pity party or giving in to anger or giving up in hopelessness, chose to always give thanks. I know this is the opposite of what you are feeling and thinking, but it is God's prescription for maintaining Christlike behavior. It is God's will: "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). "Everything" means exactly that. Everything even includes the way your husband does or does not respond to God. Remember, *your* job is to love your husband

and to pray to God to change his heart. *God's* job is to do the changing—in His time and in His way.

3. *Acknowledge the sufficiency of God.* Problems and disappointment are means God uses to give you opportunities to live out His will even though life isn't going exactly the way you had hoped. God is always at work in you. So don't allow sorrow or regret to drag you down. Refuse to give in or give up. Instead, acknowledge God's promise: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Reach out and take hold of God's grace and let Him pull you up from your anxiety and despair. Don't look down at your problems—look up at your all-powerful God. Focus on Him "who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that [you] ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20).



A Benediction from the Heart of Paul

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.