

**5 WAYS**  
**YOU CAN PRAY FOR**  
**AMERICA**



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**H**ave you ever had a season in life when everything went wrong at the same time—health, relationships, finances, family, work, church? What do you fix first? Where do you start? Sometimes, you feel so overwhelmed that you can only cry out, “God, help!” Well, that’s always a good place to start!

It’s the same with America today. What needs fixing first? Where do we start? Is it the government? The family? The church? The economy? The education system? The media?

What about the great divisions in our country today? What about our carnality and immorality? What about our superficiality? What about all the violence? What about social inequality?

In turbulent times like this, it’s not a bad idea to start with one of those desperate cries, as in, “God, have mercy on America!”

But we shouldn’t stop there. God’s Word gives us clear guidelines for prayer, and with these in mind, we can pray in a more focused and effective way.

Here are five ways that you can pray for America.

I.



IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
THE LORD'S PRAYER,  
PRAY THAT HIS NAME  
WILL BE HALLOWED  
IN OUR LAND.

What exactly does this mean? What would it look like if God answered this prayer? It would mean that the people of America would honor and respect and fear and revere the name of the Lord, which refers to his character as much as to his identification. It would mean that we would revere God for who he is; that the name of Jesus would be considered sacred; that we would become conscious of God as a nation.

Several years ago, my good friend Rabbi Shmuley Boteach proposed that we have a debate on the subject, “Is Homosexuality America’s Greatest Moral Crisis.” As an Orthodox rabbi, he believed that homosexual practice was wrong but felt that evangelical Christians tended to blame homosexuality for all the problems in our nations, as if it was the ultimate, evil bogeyman.

I told him I was happy to participate in the debate, but I didn’t agree with the title, since I felt that it was *the lack of consciousness of God* which was (and is) our greatest moral crisis. When I mentioned the proposed title of the debate to my wife, Nancy, she immediately said to me, “But that’s not our greatest moral crisis. The lack of God-consciousness is our greatest moral crisis.” We were in total harmony!

This, then, is a good place to start. “Father, open the hearts and minds of our nation again. Make us aware of who you are—your greatness and majesty and power and beauty and love—and that one day, we will all stand before you and give account. Restore the fear of the Lord to America!”

There was a time in our history when we were a much more God-conscious, God-fearing nation, and we cannot underestimate how much the attacks of aggressive atheism, pluralistic religions, and plain old worldliness have robbed us of much of that reverence.

There was a time in our history (and this was not so long ago) when ministers of the gospel were highly respected, but our turning away from God, coupled with our many ministry scandals, have brought us ridicule rather than respect.

When the fear of the Lord increases in the land, so also will respect for the gospel and even gospel ministers. (And as the church has more of the fear of the Lord, we will conduct ourselves in a way that will bring more respect.)



IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
THE LORD'S PRAYER,  
PRAY THAT GOD'S KINGDOM  
COMES TO AMERICA AND  
THAT HIS WILL BE DONE ON  
EARTH AS IT IN HEAVEN.

Obviously, these prayers will not be completely answered until Jesus returns and sets up his kingdom on the earth. And, to be clear, we are *not* trying to set up that kingdom now by our own power or domination. That would be a disaster.

At the same time, we know that Jesus announced the arrival of God's kingdom when he began his ministry, and every day that the gospel is declared and sinners are saved and captives are set free, that holy kingdom is advancing. Light is shining in the darkness!

As Prof. Craig Keener explained in his commentary on Matthew, “If the kingdom were wholly future, one might despair of accomplishing any justice now; if one supposed that it were wholly present, the realities of this age would quickly terminate disciples’ illusive utopianism. But because the Gospels affirm that in Jesus the kingdom is present in a hidden way, believers in him can begin to make a difference in their world now, contending for the reality to be consummated at Christ’s return . . .” (*A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], p. 200, n. 172)

How, then, do we pray? “Lord, your kingdom come to America! Lord, your will be done in America! Cause the people of this nation to turn to you, to receive you, to obey you. May we recognize that your ways are best, that they are ways of life and blessing. Help us to turn from the ways of death.”

As you continue to pray, you can get more focused, praying for these first two things—for the hallowing of God’s name and for the coming of his kingdom and will—in more specific ways. “Father, may your name be hallowed in the White House and in the Halls of Congress and in the Supreme Court. May your kingdom come to our schools and places of business. May your will be done in our military and economy.”

You get the picture. It’s a rich way to pray and it’s an encouraging way to pray. Surely we are praying in accordance with God’s will, and we can be confident that he is paying attention to our prayers.



**PRAY FOR THE SALVATION  
OF GOVERNMENT LEADERS  
AND OF PEOPLE IN  
AUTHORITY, REMEMBERING  
ALSO TO GIVE  
THANKS FOR THEM.**

**P**aul gives these instructions in 1 Timothy 2, writing, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-4 esv).

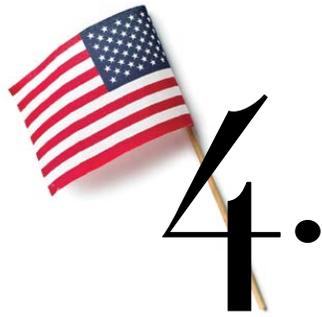
It's interesting that he tells us to give thanks for those we pray for, since many times, we have a bad attitude toward them, as in, "It's all Obama's fault!" or, "It's all Trump's fault!" It's better to find something to be thankful for, after which we can pray for positive things in our leaders' lives rather than cursing them for their faults.

I had many issues with the policies of President Obama, but I was thankful that he was committed to his wife and children, that he had never been divorced, that he overcame being raised without a father, and that we had an African American family in the White House, among other things. And whenever I would take issue with him on the radio, I would preface it by saying, "I'm praying that he will become the greatest president in our history, but right now, I have serious concerns."

In fact, whenever I pray for someone, I pray in such a way that they would not be offended if they were in the same room listening to me, since I don't attack or accuse in any ugly way. Rather, in love, I pray for God's best for their lives. Let our prayers bless rather than bash!

Jonathan Edwards once wrote, "If some Christians who have been complaining of their ministers had said and acted less before men and had applied themselves with all their might to cry to God for their ministers—had, as it were, risen and stormed heaven with their humble, fervent, and incessant prayers for them—they would have been much more in the way of success."

Let's apply this to our government leaders, praying for them rather than constantly complaining about them, asking God to save them and bring them into the knowledge of the truth. In this way, we can more readily lead "peaceful and quiet [lives], godly and dignified in every way."



# PRAY FOR AWAKENING IN THE CHURCH.

**A**s I've said many times, I'm more concerned with the absence of light than with the presence of darkness. And so, rather than get exasperated with the darkness, we should fix the light. Faulty lights (or nonexistent lights) are the problem.

America is walking in darkness because we are not shining brightly. (Remember that Jesus said that we, his people, "are the light of the world." Matt. 5:14 esv)

America has lost its sense of right and wrong because we have failed to be the moral conscience of the nation. (Remember that Jesus said that we, his people, "are the salt of the earth." Matt. 5:13 esv)

America has lost her way because we have lost our way, forgetting our principle mission, namely, to be disciples and to make disciples, to know God and to make him known.

In short, America is messed up because much of the church is messed up—so many of us are compromised and worldly and carnal—which means that America can be restored if the church is revived.

Revival in the church would mean awaking in the society.

Revival in the church would mean the salvation of many sinners and the restoration of many backsliders.

Revival in the church would mean blessing for the nation!

Back in 1989, in my book *The End of the American Gospel Enterprise*, I wrote, “America has been indelibly marked by its revivals. The significant outpourings of the Spirit which occurred here over the last three hundred years have deeply altered our history. Every major, positive, national change in our society can be traced back to the influence of revival, and *our steady moral decline in the twentieth century is a direct result of the absence of any large-scale revival.*” How much more does this apply to us now in the twenty-first century!

Pray for God to awaken and revive church leaders, that we would return to our first love and walk in purity, holiness, faith, courage, and the power of the Spirit.

Pray for God to stir the hearts of all his people, to light a fresh fire in our hearts, to renew our passion for the Word and prayer, to deepen our burden for the lost, to touch our families and our congregations, and that Jesus would become our all in all.

*America’s wounds will be healed as the Church rises up in the fullness of the gospel—not just talking about the gospel but living it out.*

And when you’re praying for revival in the church, don’t forget to pray for revival in your own soul.

An old evangelist was once asked how to pray for revival. To paraphrase his response, he said, “Go to your house, draw a circle on the ground, get in that circle, and pray for God to send revival to everything inside that circle!”

Yes, revival starts with you and with me, which means that God’s answer for America starts with you and me.

In the house we lived in a few years ago, my study had a wood floor, with only one small carpet in the room. Some nights, I would stand on that piece of carpet—I don’t think you could fit two people on it; it was that small—and I would pray, *God, revive everything on this carpet!*

America is a massive country, with more than 330 million people living here, and our problems are just as massive. That’s why our problems can seem so overwhelming. Who can heal our land?

Only the Lord can, but he does it one life at a time. Even if he touches ten million lives at the same time, he touches each one individually and personally.

Pray great prayers for yourself—scriptural prayers, God-glorifying prayers, prayers that only he can answer.

Who knows what he wants to do in your life? Who knows how your life can affect another life, then another, then another, before there is a chain reaction that spreads across the land. Who knows?

Who knows the impact you can have on your children or your neighbors? Who knows if your testimony won’t lead to the conversion of someone who will end up in the White House one day. God knows!

We’re talking about the Almighty King, and all things are possible with him. I believe God!

The people who led me to the Lord in 1971 were praying people, but they were not highly educated. In fact, some of them probably didn't even graduate from high school, let alone go to college, and none of them knew the original Hebrew and Greek of the Bible. But they knew the Lord, and they prayed for me and put up with me until Jesus saved me. (To be honest, they had to put up with me for a while after that. I did not instantly become a perfect saint.)

By God's grace, our ministry has been able to touch people around the world, and I have even debated leading intellectuals at some of the most prestigious universities in the world. I can assure you that those uneducated, praying saints played a direct role in this, and I have no doubt that they will share in the reward.

But what would have happened if they weren't right with God? What would have happened if they weren't diligent in prayer? What if they weren't filled with love for a rebellious teenager like me? Perhaps God would have used someone else, but I'm profoundly grateful these dear saints responded to his call.

Every day, ask God to use you and to make you fully usable. Ask him to open your eyes to his love and his reality, to remind you of who he is and of who you are in him, and to help you serve him with all your heart and soul.

Let the words of D. L. Moody become your words as well: "I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And that which I can do, by the grace of God, I will do."



**PRAY FOR THE RADICAL  
CONVERSION OF SINNERS  
AND THAT THOSE WHO ARE  
SAVED WILL FULFILL THEIR  
HOLY CALLINGS IN GOD.**

**P**aul gives these instructions in 1 Timothy 2, writing, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-4 esv).

In 1987, I was ministering at some churches in England, going from city to city and staying in the pastor's home wherever I went. Some of the pastors had excellent libraries in their houses, so in the few days I was with them, I did some extra reading.

It was on that trip that I discovered a classic book on prayer by the Scandinavian scholar Ole Hallesby, simply titled *Prayer*. (The English translation was published in the States in 1931 by Augsburg Publishing House.)

Hallesby shared this striking story which I have told many times since reading it, sometimes with tears, since it deeply touches my heart. He wrote:

Finally, we should on bended knee pray for the evangelists who go about preaching the Word of God. However, we neglect this work of prayer, too. The result is that we have evangelists who never should travel and preach. They are not sent by God, but by men.

At the same time we have farmers, fishermen, craftsmen and business men who have been chosen of God to be preachers, but whom He cannot send forth into the great harvest, because we do not pray forth these gifts of grace.

In this connection permit me to mention what an ordinary country girl, Bolette Hinderli, was able to accomplish for the great preacher of God, Lars Olsen Skrefsrud.

In a vision she saw a prisoner in a prison cell. She saw plainly his face and his whole form. And a voice said to her, "This man will share the same fate as other criminals if no one takes up the work of praying for him. Pray for him, and I will send him out to proclaim my praises among the heathen."

She was obedient unto the heavenly vision; she suffered and prayed and fought for this prisoner, although she did not know him. She waited longingly, too, to hear of a convict who had become converted and called to missionary work.

Finally, during a visit in Stavenger, Norway, she heard that an ex-convict who had been converted was to preach in the city that evening. When Skrefsrud stepped up to the speaker's stand, she recognized him immediately as the one she had seen in her vision.

This woman had learned the meaning of Jesus' words about praying forth the gifts of grace.

As far as I am able to understand the Word of God, and as far as I can learn from the history of the kingdom of God, no prayer-task is more important than this. If the right man gets into the right place, there is almost no end to what he can do. Think of men like Martin Luther, Hans Nielsen Hauge, Lars Olsen Skrefsrud, Hans Peter Borresen, William Carey, Hudson Taylor.

What an inspirational account! Does it encourage you to pray with renewed faith and hope?

One of my closest friends in ministry, now with the Lord, was a hopeless drug addict, destined for a life of crime and addiction. Faithful believers prayed him into the family of God, and he became one of the most powerfully-used evangelists of the last fifty years.

Another dear friend of mine is an Indian, born into an untouchable family. He so hated the caste system that at the age of eleven, he joined the radical Communist movement, signing his commitment with his own blood. He became an atheist, an alcoholic, and a violent man, guilty of terrible acts against the rich.

Then, in answer to the prayers of others, Jesus revealed himself to this man, and he has become one of the most respected Christian leaders in India, not only bringing the gospel to outlying, unreached tribal regions, but feeding the hungry, educating the needy, building hospitals for the sick and homes for the elderly and starting programs for the handicapped.

A few years ago, when he turned sixty, government officials came to honor him. That's the transforming power of the gospel, and that power is released in conjunction with our prayers.

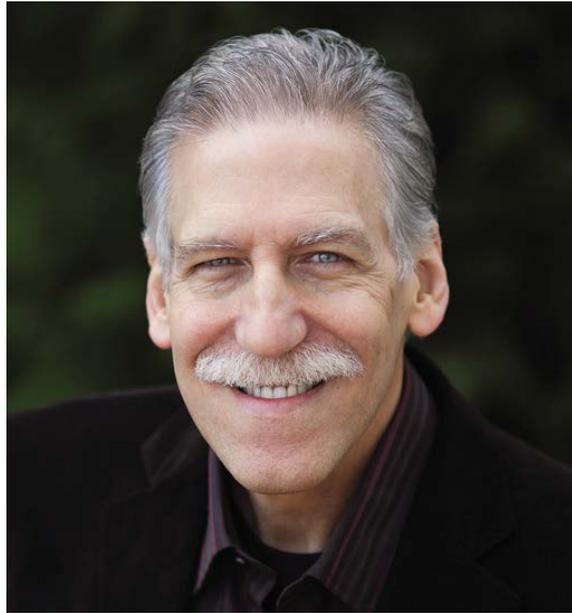
Ask the Lord to lead you to pray for specific individuals, that God will truly save them and that he will use them for his purposes. And pray for those in the body of Christ that are out of alignment, that our Father would place them where they are most needed and that they will fulfill their callings in him.

It's possible that no one will ever know your name but that your prayers could help rock the entire nation. To say it again, all things are possible with God!

And so, as bleak as things look in America right now, I am full of hope and expectation. The God who revived us in the past can revive us again today—and he will do so through our prayers.

If you feel a fresh stirring to pray, that's a sign that he's already at work.





## ABOUT DR. MICHAEL L. BROWN

Dr. Michael L. Brown holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures from New York University and has served as a visiting or adjunct professor at seven top seminaries. The author of more than twenty-five books, Brown also leads a ministry school that specializes in world missions and has preached and taught across America and around the world. He hosts the Line of Fire radio program, two hours daily and syndicated on several networks, including Salem, Truth, and AFR, as well as an apologetics TV program that airs on NRBTv. Michael has appeared often on secular and Christian media (including Piers Morgan, Tyra Banks, Phil Donahue, 700 Club, and Daystar) and has conducted debates or outreach lectures on major campuses, including Oxford University, the Hebrew University (Jerusalem), Ohio State University, Yale, and USC. Michael and his wife, Nancy, have two children and four grandchildren. They live near Charlotte, NC.

