

## DAILY PRAYER POINTS

**SUNDAY** – There is a reason the Lord has brought you to this new week. Pray that He will shine brightly through you so that everyone that comes across you this week may know His presence in you and be blessed by your words and actions.

**MONDAY** – Thank God for the strength and ability to serve Him each day through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Spirit. Pray that we'll all know God's blessing and strength in serving the Lord with joy and thankfulness.

**TUESDAY** – Ask God to help us not to give up truly meeting with others and as we engage with one another in church, we would be encouraged and encourage others. (Heb.10:25)

**WEDNESDAY** – Ask God to help Session and the Committee of Management as we prayerfully plan for the future of St Andrew's during an uncertain time within the PCQ and Australia, as a whole.

**THURSDAY** – Pray for **Joyce Ross & Liz Edwards**

**FRIDAY** – Continue to pray for those in need of God's healing and comforting hand: Belinda Birch, Edith Collins, John Donnell, Jane Kippin, Kevin Petrofski Jr and Margaret Petrofski, and Dawn Robinson. **Pray also for blessings on those who can't get to church:** Audrey Armstrong, Del Finn, Carol Gillett, Joey Kelly, Gladys Marnock, Millie McCarthy, Heather McGaw, Marie McKee, Mavis Smith, and David Valintine.

**SATURDAY** – Give thanks that in all circumstances our Heavenly Father knows our needs and supplies them richly to us in His Son and His Spirit.

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# THE ANCHOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE ST ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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DAILY PRAYER POINTS

## IT MATTERS HOW

By **HANNAH LE CRAS**

**M**Y ALARM WENT OFF. I SQUINTED AT THE TIME: 6:25AM. IT WAS COLD AND DARK AND MY BODY WAS BEING UNCOOPERATIVE. It screamed at me to roll over and get some more sleep. I was seriously tempted. There was another voice though, albeit a quieter one. It simply said you need to do it. I felt the internal struggle, amazed at how quickly the war had begun once again. Then—though my

body reeled at the betrayal—the covers were off and my feet were on the ground. The hardest part was over.

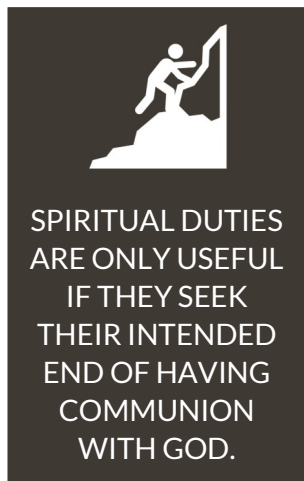
Or so I thought.

5 minutes later with my face washed and my dressing gown on, I was in my lounge room with my Bible and my phone. I opened my reading plan, skipped over the prayer section, and went straight to the readings for that day. Three chapters of Jeremiah, I thought, that isn't so bad. It took me about 15 minutes. I wondered over the Israelites' unfaithfulness, noted a prophecy that I remembered had been fulfilled in the New Testament and prayed briefly to be forgiven of my own sin of faithlessness. Then I moved to writing my shopping list—it was grocery day.

The memory faded as I blinked at the words I had just read:

*And this is the reason why professors thrive so little under the performance of a multitude of duties. They attend not unto them in a due manner, their minds being drawn off from their circumspect watch; and so they have little or no communion with God in them, which is the end whereunto they are designed, and by which alone they become useful and profitable unto themselves.*

John Owen and his “untos”! My 21st century mind translated it:



*This is why people who profess to be Christians don't get much benefit from reading their Bibles, praying, listening to sermons and the like. They only worry about doing these things—not how they are doing them. But spiritual duties are only useful if they seek their intended end of having communion with God. If they don't help with this, they are worthless.*

Well, that explained a lot. I had often wondered why reading my Bible and praying hadn't helped me more in my daily struggle against sin. Having read the first nine chapters of John Owen's book

them), we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9).

Someone once said that when he read the prayers of the Puritans he came to the conclusion that either they were much more sinful than he was, or that they held a much higher view of the holiness of God than he did, and he suspected the latter! (I love quoting this, and if anyone could enlighten me as to who it was who said it I would be most grateful!)

– Bruce Christian

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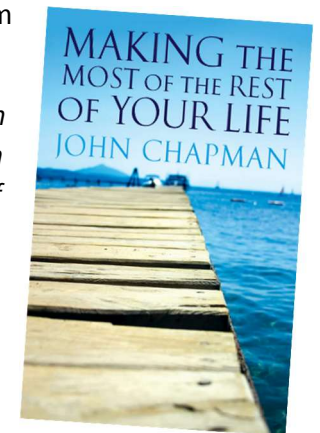
## MAKING THE MOST OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

by John Chapman

Writing as a 'senior', John Chapman challenges other seniors to think about the rest of their life, and what comes next. A challenging gospel book to give to older non-Christians.

Simon van Bruchem, a Presbyterian pastor from Western Australia, says

*'Retirement doesn't need to be the selfish extended holiday many expect it to be. It can be a time of real Christian growth, the use of the experience and gifts God gave you, and a strong finish to a faithful life.'*



Copies are available from Damon for \$10.

## QUESTION 98.

**What is prayer?**

A. Prayer is offering up our desires to God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and with thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

## QUESTION 99.

**What rule has God given for our direction in prayer?**

A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is the form of prayer that Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the *Lord's prayer*.

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## REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

**Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: “Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips.” Hosea 14:2**

It is much easier to FEEL sorry for something we've done than to LOOK the person we've offended in the eye and SAY, “I'm sorry.”

Being sorry is only the first step; and it has little value if it is not followed up with a clear expression of our repentance and a genuine desire for forgiveness and reconciliation. The people of Israel were good at FEELING sorry. Hosea has been reminding them of God's repeated love and compassion in spite of their rebellious ways, but now the time has come for them to face their Maker/Shepherd and confess their guilt honestly and squarely with words that own the sin and reflect true contrition in their hearts.



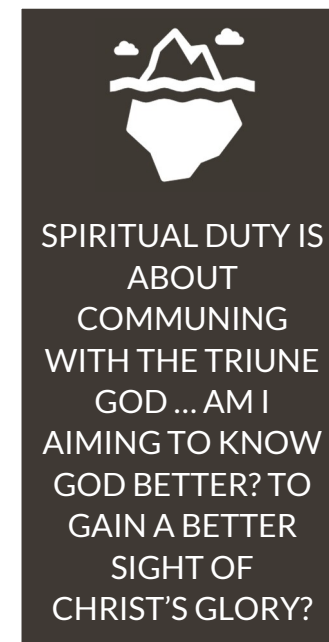
When we pray, do we use words that identify specific sins and that indicate a real desire to change our ways? King David puts it like this: “Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’ – and you forgave the guilt of my sin” (Psalm 32:5); and the Apostle John like this: “If we claim to be without sin (which we can imply by never being specific about particular sins by naming

on **Indwelling Sin in Believers**, I was starting to realise just how sly and powerful an enemy it was, but somehow I hadn't seen this move coming. I thought that the battle was simply to overcome my internal resistance to start on a spiritual duty: get out of bed to read my Bible; hit play on the sermon recording; get in the car to go to Bible study group. Once started, I felt I could relax—spiritual growth was bound to happen.

Now a light was dawning. My sin was far more persistent—“importunate” is the lovely word Owen used—than I thought. Not only did it attempt to distract me from starting on any spiritual duty, but the entire time I was doing it, it was trying to prevent me from doing it in the way that would benefit me.

**It matters how**, I realised. Up until now, I had thought of spiritual growth taking place in a similar way to osmosis. I thought it didn't matter how I did it—I'd absorb godliness through the very act of reading my Bible, or hearing the Word preached at church, or attending a study group. It was only about being in the right place and doing the right thing. Yet the way Owen explained it, it seemed that the spiritual duties themselves weren't necessarily the agents of change. Communion with God as a result of performing spiritual duties, was.

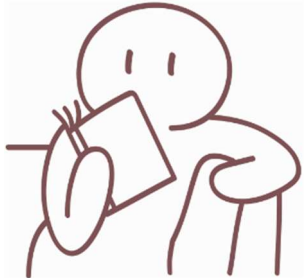
But what was this communion? I went looking for an answer and found *John Piper's* explanation: “*Communion refers to God's communication and presentation of himself to us, together with our proper response to him with joy.*” In other words, God shows us his glory, and we joyfully respond. This experience is what transforms us, bringing forth godly fruit and causing sin to wither and die each time we have it (2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Peter 1:3, 1 John 3:2, John 1:14-16). That is probably why spiritual duties have also been referred to as means of grace. It's because they are simply means to this end. But it is possible to use the



means without seeking the end—and this is what sin aims to do.

I tried to pull it all together in my mind. I knew that the sin within me wanted nothing to do with God, and so there was always a struggle to get myself started on those duties that may give me communion with him. I knew that the first step of sin was having my mind drawn away from said duties—sin could then build on this by laying a trap of deception while I was distracted

But now I knew that my mind could be drawn away even as I performed them. This happened whenever I used the means of grace without seeking communion with God. All I was likely to achieve in that case was a self-righteous feeling of pleasure that I had ticked my spiritual box for the day.



So then, a spiritual duty isn't primarily about reading the Bible, or saying a prayer, or meditating on a theological truth. A spiritual duty is about communing with the triune God. It's about how I read the Bible, how I pray, how I meditate. Am I aiming to know God better? To gain a better sight of Christ's glory? To have my heart affected with

what I know to be true? And to continue with the duty until God is gracious to give me those things? If not, sin wins.

So plead with the Lord, beg him to change your heart and help you to see him in a new way as you do any of the duties he has appointed for your growth. Trust that he can and will do it. Struggle out of bed at 6:30am to read your Bible, by all means—it matters that you start on it. But remember it isn't over.

It matters how too..



### GIFTS AND OFFERINGS

**Bank:** Bendigo Bank

**Account Name:** St Andrew's Presbyterian Church

**BSB Number:** 633000

**Account Number:** 129166906

## PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE

### TWO WEEKS ON... BIBLE READING PLAN

TWO WEEKS ON PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE

As Christians, we are given the privilege and responsibility of communicating with the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, that intimate communication with God is at the heart of our relationship with Him. Through Christ, we are accepted by God and enabled to call upon Him as our Lord and Father.

**WEEK 1** |  Day 1, **Genesis 18** - Abraham's plea for Sodom.  Day 2, **Exodus 15** - Moses' song to the Lord.  Day 3, **Exodus 33** - Moses meets with God.  Day 4, **2 Samuel 7** - David's response to God's promises.  Day 5, **1 Kings 8** - Solomon's dedication of the temple.  Day 6, **2 Chronicles 20** - Jehoshaphat prays for victory.  Day 7, **Ezra 9** - Ezra's prayer for the people's sins.

### WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

The Westminster catechisms begin with the language of glorifying and enjoying God. *These Standards exist to explain in doctrinal terms how Scripture directs us to glorify and enjoy God in all we think, do, and say.* - Burk Parsons

#### QUESTION 97.

**What is required for receiving the Lord's supper in a worthy manner?**

A. Those who would partake of the Lord's supper in a worthy manner are required to examine themselves to be aware of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed on him, and of their repentance, love, and new obedience. They do this so that they do not eat and drink judgment to themselves by coming unworthily.