

Roodling Around

If you can't pray as you want to, pray as you can. God knows what you mean. —Vance Havner

May I suggest that prayer has an image problem? People think it is an exclusive language reserved for holy men and women clothed in velvet robes and large hats, intoning grand words in powerful voices. Or we imagine black-clad nuns taking vows of poverty and celibacy, kneeling by candlelight in austere surroundings. We think of prayer as serious and solemn. Formal. Many pray in King James English rather than the English we use every day. *Lord, God, Thou art holy. I besech Thee.*...

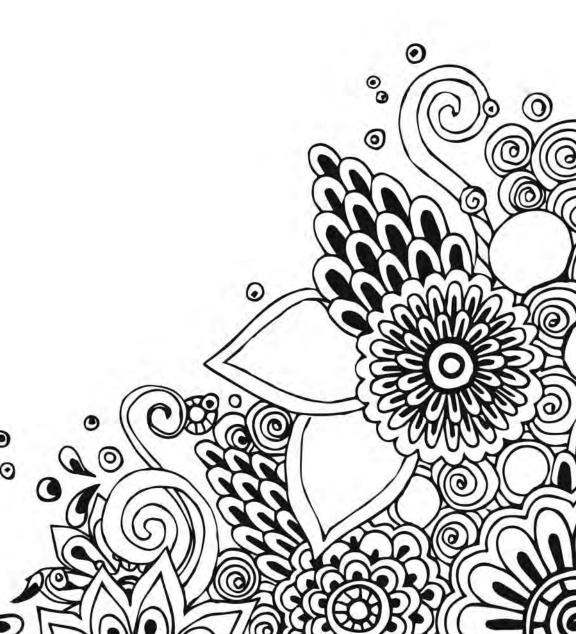
If that's the way you speak, more power to you. But I'm more of a slang kind of girl. I've been known to laugh while I pray. I make fun of myself. And, occasionally, I say things people think might not belong in prayer.

If I could rebrand prayer, I'd position it as approachable and rejuvenating. Informal. And yes, even fun. Approaching God with a light heart isn't irreverent. It's just being real.

So today, I want you to doodle your prayers.

DIRECTIONS: Write names or situations in the shapes already drawn on the page, and then fill in the rest of the space with curlicues and spirals, hearts and flowers, zigzags and stripes. Add more prayers. Write your name. Get out your markers and color. All you have to do to turn your doodles into prayer is to mentally offer them up to God. "As I write and draw, hear the desires of my heart and accept this as my prayer. Amen."





WEEK 1 | DAY 3



DIRECTIONS: Create individual "rays" in the accompanying sun graphic, formed by words or phrases describing something you are thankful for. And feel the warmth of living life with gratitude.

DIRECTIONS: Think about your current prayer requests. On the left side of the chart, write what it would look like to dwell on fear, and on the right, describe what it would look like to focus instead on faith. Ask God to help you with your choices and to strengthen your faith in each situation.

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a place of Refuge

Do not be afraid, for I am with you. —ISAIAH 43:5

When I was a little girl, there was a space in the cornfield by my house where the seed had washed away in the heavy spring rains and nothing grew. A small round patch of nothingness, bordered by cornstalks that were about half grown. If I squeezed between the tight rows, in just a few steps I could be in that private space, and when I knelt down, the corn surrounded me on all sides. I was only twenty or thirty feet in, but nobody outside the field could tell I was there. I felt invisible. And invincible. Because I was hiding in a safe place.

You don't need a field to find the same security.

DIRECTIONS: In your mind, go to a quiet space. Picture yourself being embraced by God. Close your eyes and simply breathe Him in. Sit in the solitude. He is with us. Not just us collectively, but with each of us, personally, individually, exactly the way we need Him to be. Right now. And when we are with Him, we are in the safest of all possible places. Whether anyone can see us or not. Thank Him by coloring in the next page.



DIRECTIONS: Start by asking God to show you who He is, what He has done for you, and where you have seen Him. Then write down five things you want to remember about God next to the thumb and fingers on the handprint below. Many believe that in the Bible the number five symbolizes God's grace. As you read over what you've written, remind yourself that these are your personal representations of God's grace and goodness, foundational truths you can lean on when you're afraid or uneasy or worried.







DIRECTIONS: Ask God to call to mind certain people or problems you can pray about; then under each letter, write a word or phrase starting with that letter. As you write the names and situations, pray about each. Alternatively, you could fill in the blanks with people and things for which you are grateful.

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(DAY OF REST)

a Jather's Love

If you took the love of all the best mothers and fathers who have lived in the course of human history, all their goodness, kindness, patience, fidelity, wisdom, tenderness, strength, and love and united all those qualities in a single person, that person's love would only be a faint shadow of the furious love and mercy in the heart of God the Father addressed to you and me. —BRENNAN MANNING, THE FURIOUS LONGING OF GOD

DIRECTIONS: As you color in the verse on the adjacent page, soak in this truth: God loves you more than you can imagine. Dwell in this place of awareness. Allow yourself to be overcome with gratitude for the God whose love is so strong and glorious, for the Father who loves you with a fullness you can only begin to comprehend. Let yourself feel small and vulnerable, and know that Daddy is in control.

Reflect: What has getting to know God taught you about being a parent (whether you are one or not)?



DIRECTIONS: Read and reflect on the meaning of the following names for God, and then think through your prayer list. Match each person to the facet of God that most meets his or her needs and write the person's name on the line. Mention the facet of God as you pray for him or her.

ABBA	God our Father, our dearest Daddy (<i>Romans 8:15</i>)	
EL-SHADDAI	Praying for The Almighty, All-Sufficient God (Genesis 17:1; Revelation 1:8) Praying for	
JEHOVAH JIREH	The Provider (Genesis 22:14) Praying for	
JEHOVAH SHALOM	The God of Peace (Psalm 29:11) Praying for	
JEHOVAH ROPHI	The Lord our Physician (Psalm 103:3) Praying for	
JEHOVAH ROHI	The Lord, my Shepherd (<i>Psalm 23:1</i>) <i>Praying for</i>	
MELEKH HAGOYIM	King of the nations (Jeremiah 10:7) Praying for	



Color Palette of Prayer

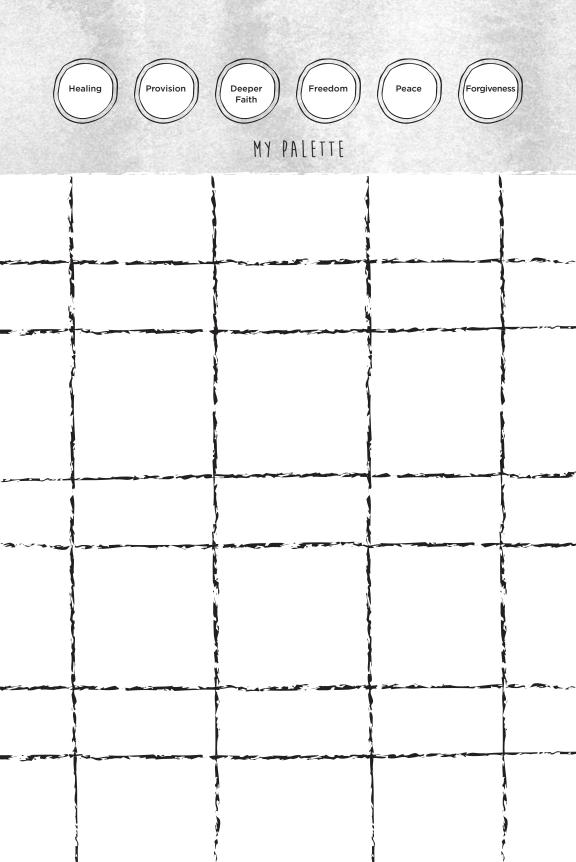
Colors speak all languages. —Joseph Addison

The rainbow symbolized God's promise made to Noah in the book of Genesis, at the beginning of the Bible—and is seen again at the other end, in the book of Revelation, when the glow that encircles God's throne is like a rainbow.

In other words, these colors represent His promises-made visible.

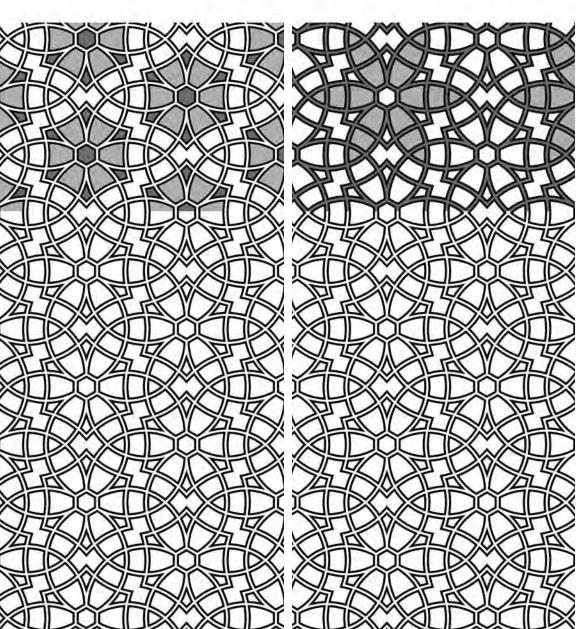
Colors often portray specific concepts. Green relates to money. Red often suggests an emergency. Blue calls to mind a tranquil waterscape or vast sky—safety and stability. Purple indicates royalty. Yellow represents sunshine and happiness while orange makes us think of fire. Connect the colors of your choice to each of your needs.

DIRECTIONS: Select a color for each heading—Healing, Provision, Deeper Faith, Freedom (from temptation, from crisis, from addiction), Peace, Forgiveness—a color to represent each need listed. Then, in the open spaces on the grid, write the names of every person and set of circumstances you can think of. Use your color palette to fill in the spaces with the color representing the types of prayers you're offering for that person.



DIRECTIONS: As you color the designs on these pages, create various patterns. Consider using mostly light colors on one set of shapes and dark on the other, or lots of green in one and mostly purple in the other. Visually create a larger shape—see how different you can make it. Or design it to look like stained glass, with transparent colors that overlap. Where you place the colors determines what shapes emerge and which recede.

While you're coloring, think about a time when you felt as though God didn't answer you (or didn't answer in the way you wanted Him to). Ask Him to help you see another perspective. If you look for the beauty in a situation, you will find it.





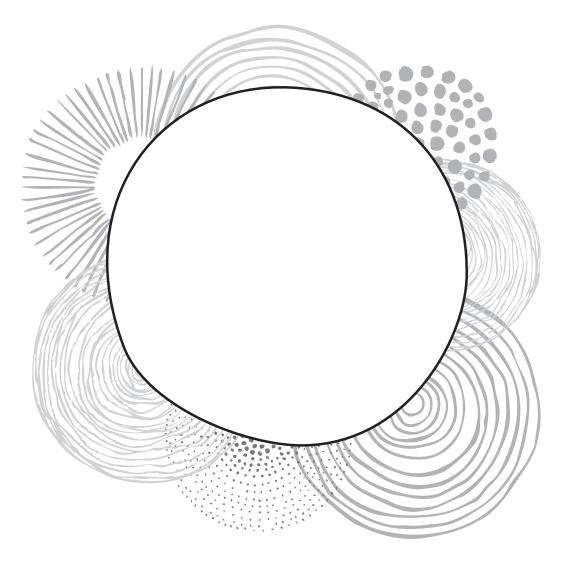
Most of us probably already connect certain objects with a friend, child, spouse, or parent. Using these symbols as prayer markers is just taking those passing impressions to the next level—elevating them from a fleeting thought to a God-bound prayer. The idea is to choose something that reminds you of the person you want to pray for, something you're likely to see or hear during the week. You can choose a sound (a teakettle whistling or a specific song), a person (real, fictional, or cartoon), a color (the choices are endless), or an object (a Harley, a commuter train, a certain tree or flower). You can pray for each of your family members as you fold their laundry.

DIRECTIONS: In the following chart, list important people in your life along the left-hand side. In the center column, brainstorm words and concepts that you connect to those people, and then in the third column, write (or draw) your final selection. As you go through your days, watch for these symbols—and pray.

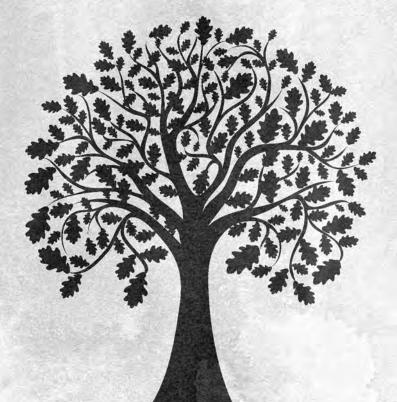


IMPORTANT PEOPLE	WORDS/CONCEPTS I CONNECT WITH THEM	FINAL WORD/SYMBOL I CONNECT WITH THEM

DIRECTIONS: Ask God to open your heart and show you whom you can pray for today. There's no formula for this—just talk to God, but do it in writing. After you've written it in the circle, snap a picture to send by text or e-mail, or copy it onto a notecard to mail. You don't need to give a lengthy explanation about why you're sending it. Just say something like "You're on my mind today, and this is what I'm praying for you." And then pray. Let them see this evidence of your love for them. It's a beautiful gift that only you can give.

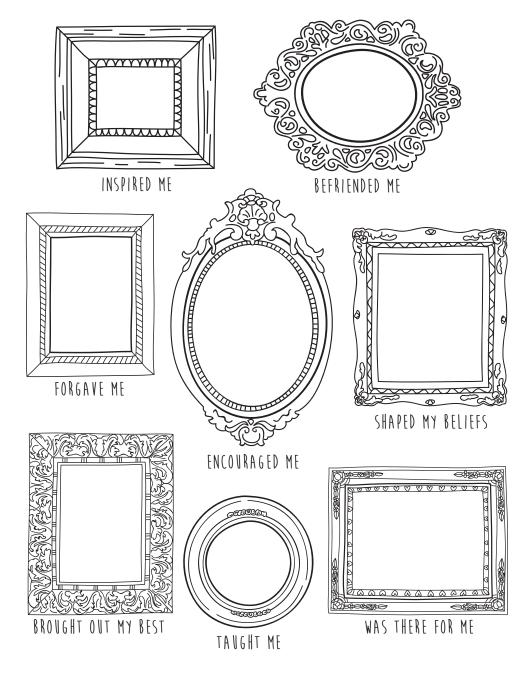


DIRECTIONS: Inside the roots, write the names of family members (or others who are like family) who have influenced your life and are dear to you. As you write each name, offer up a brief prayer for that person, and don't forget to give thanks for those who helped establish the roots of your faith.

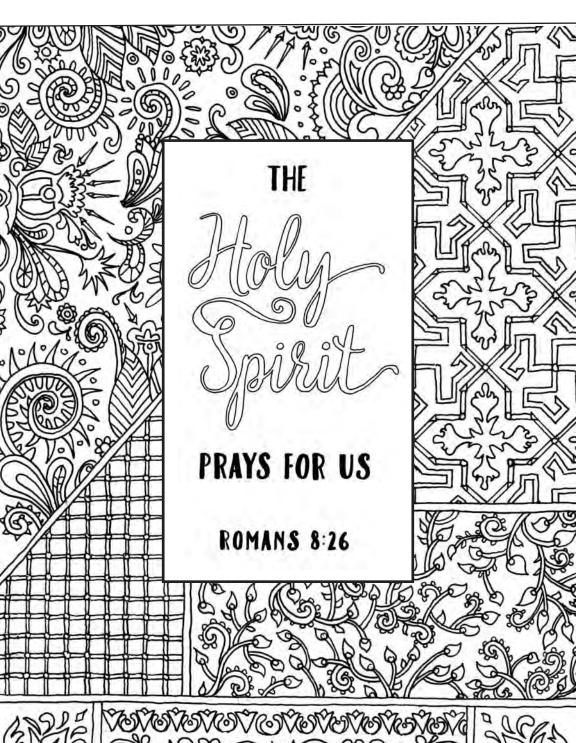




DIRECTIONS: Scroll through the gallery of your mind, jotting down names (or drawing portraits) in each frame. Color them if you wish. As you think about each person, lift him or her up in prayer. Give thanks, ask forgiveness, pray for healing—or go with whatever comes to mind.



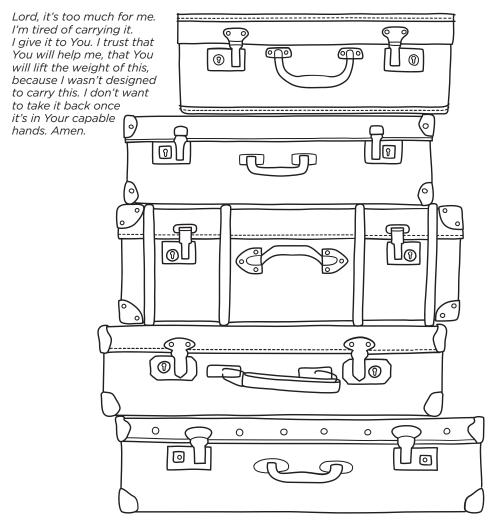
DIRECTIONS: Read the related Bible verses on the previous page and then go to God. Expectantly. Trust that God knows what you need and that He will pray even when you can't. Color in the verse below.



come through, for the marriage to work out. Or are you angry because your parent, spouse, or child died? Because your best friend betrayed you? Because your son can't overcome his addiction?

What is it that you would like to run away from? What baggage do you drag around, making it hard to forget or let go?

DIRECTIONS: Pack away your burdens, large or small, inside these suitcases. You may draw them or jot down words. Whatever you carry that slows you down, that cripples you, hand it to God to carry. For each weight, ponder its importance and then repeat after me:



WEEK 5 | DAY 4

DIRECTIONS: Reflect on the turning points in your life and what you believed, saw, knew, learned, or felt about God. Include moments like your baptism, giving birth, getting married, losing a parent—or otherwise ordinary moments in which your awareness of God changed. Within the center of the photo frames, sketch these pivotal scenes or write about the aspect of God you experienced at that moment in time. If possible, write the approximate date of the memory along the edge of the photos.

After you finish, close your eyes and imagine the God you know right now. The sum total of all the individual moments you just drew. Write a prayer of thanks to Him for being all that He is. armor. This armor is for protection, a means of defense, not attack. This includes the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. In other words, we should wrap ourselves in the traits and goodness of God, relying on His strength and trusting in His protection.

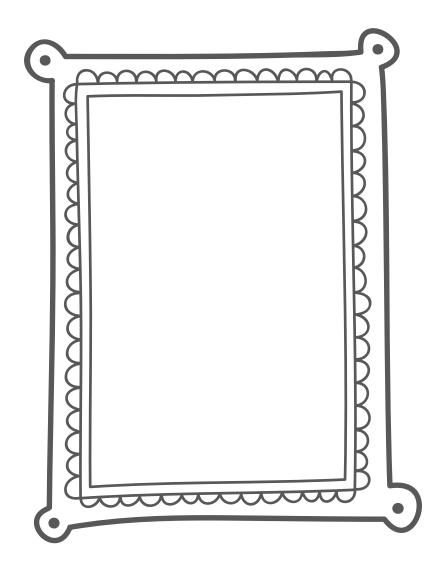
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St. Patrick's poem memorably portrays a fundamental truth about God—He is present and available to us everywhere at all times. That gave the Irish saint comfort and strength. What gives *you* confidence and peace?

DIRECTIONS: As you ask God to cover you with His goodness and righteousness, decorate your own pieces of armor. Use symbols that represent what you are counting on—peace,

hope, light, healing, the Holy Spiritor that connect to one or more aspects of God (Father, King, Alpha and Omega). While you draw, thank God for all the ways He has protected you.

DIRECTIONS: Ask God what He sees when He looks at you. Find a large mirror and as you look at your reflection, write or draw on the mirror with a dry erase marker (or even lipstick), focusing on seeing yourself as God might. For example, outline your lips on the mirror and write "speaks encouragement" or "friendly smile." You might draw around your hand and write "gives willingly" or "takes care of family." Add some of your self-discoveries to the mirror below.





(DAY OF REST)

Inscribed on His Hand

Fince we can't literally see God, it can be difficult to believe that we—individually, personally—matter to Him. The Bible is full of people begging God to show them that He was there, that He remembered them. When Isaiah declared that Israel—God's chosen people—had been hidden in the shadow of the hand of the Lord, God responded that He would never forget Israel and would always protect them. As proof, He said, "See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands" (Isaiah 49:16).

DIRECTIONS: Accept this promise for yourself today as you doodle your name all over this hand. What does it mean to you to place your life into His almighty hands?

SEE, I HAVE WRITTEN YOUR NAME ON THE PALMS OF MY HANDS. ISAIAH 49:16



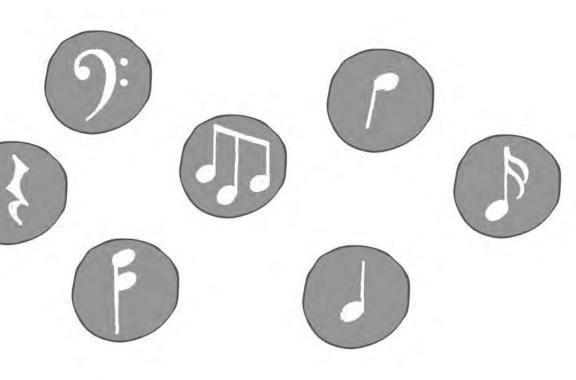


Singing His Praises

Sing a new song to the LORD! Let the whole earth sing to the LORD!

—PSALM 96:1

DIRECTIONS: Put together a playlist of songs containing each word from this verse. You can search your own music, look through a streaming service, or browse YouTube or Google. Write your song titles on the lines provided, circling the key words. As you listen to music, open your heart to new revelations and insights about God and faith and prayer. Let this exercise be your song of praise today. Save your playlist and listen to it when you sit down to pray.



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(DAY OF REST)

a Blank Canvas

Every day is an opportunity to be creative—the canvas is your mind, the brushes and colours are your thoughts and feelings, the panorama is your story, the complete picture is a work of art called 'my life.' Be careful what you put on the canvas of your mind today—it matters. —INNERSPACE

*Q*II too easily our thoughts are waylaid. We start to notice the things that are wrong rather than what is right. We become critical, jealous, discontent. But there's a simple way to turn your thoughts upside down—focus on something new. Something lovely. Something pure.

DIRECTIONS: Fill your mind today with only that which is beautiful. Uplifting. Enlightening. Holy. If you'd like to draw or paint it, grab a canvas or draw on the canvas on the next page.





How to Pray When You Want to Lo Deeper

My three prayers are variations on Help, Thanks, Wow. That's all I ever need, besides the silence, the pain, and the pause sufficient for me to stop, close my eyes, and turn inward. —ANNE LAMOTT, HELP, THANKS, WOW

Many prayers can be simplified into one word or thought. Anne Lamott believes those three words are *help, thanks*, and *wow*. One of my most ubiquitous prayers is along those same lines—*please*. Just because the need prompting it can be simplified does not mean the prayer is shallow. Your one word can be your whole prayer—or just the beginning. If you start there and explore, you can add layers and depths of color—like a detailed painting versus a quick, scribbled sketch.

DIRECTIONS: Think of what you need to pray about today, then ask God to help you sum that up in one word. It can be *help, thanks,* or *wow,* or one of your own—*healing, hope, support, life, justice, peace, love, comfort.*

Write or doodle your word here: ____

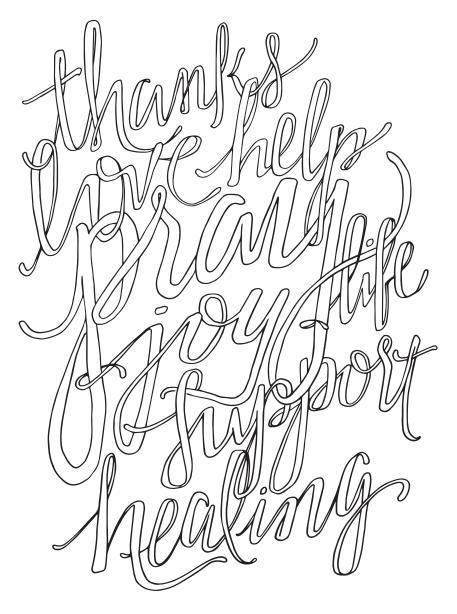
Now we're going to explore—and discover—the power behind that one word.

Look up a definition of your word, and write it here.

What other words come to mind when you think of it?

If your Bible has an index in the back, see if the word is listed there, or search a Bible website for instances of that word. Jot down some of the verses that relate to it. Look them up and read any accompanying notes. Mark any that seem to apply to your situation.

Now, using one of those verses, pray. Remind God of the time in the Bible when He said this, or when Jesus did that, or when someone else drew near to Him. Ask Him to do the same for you. As you color in the words below, consider each one prayerfully.



In life, even if we stand in exactly the same spot, our experiences, backgrounds, and personalities will cause us to see the same situation in a different way. It's why Steve Jobs envisioned sleek, simple designs while others didn't. It's why a Picasso painting looks very different from a Rembrandt. In prayer, it can be helpful to try to look at your need from someone else's point of view. It may help you notice an answer you'd missed or see a possibility you hadn't recognized.

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the chart on the next page, beginning with your need at the top. On the left side, add the names of a variety of people, and then in the space to the right, jot down how each of them might see your situation. When you're done, close your eyes and pray ... as yourself ... now that you've looked at it in new ways.





(DAY OF REST)

How to Pray When You're Tired

Be still, and know that I am God! —PSALM 46:10

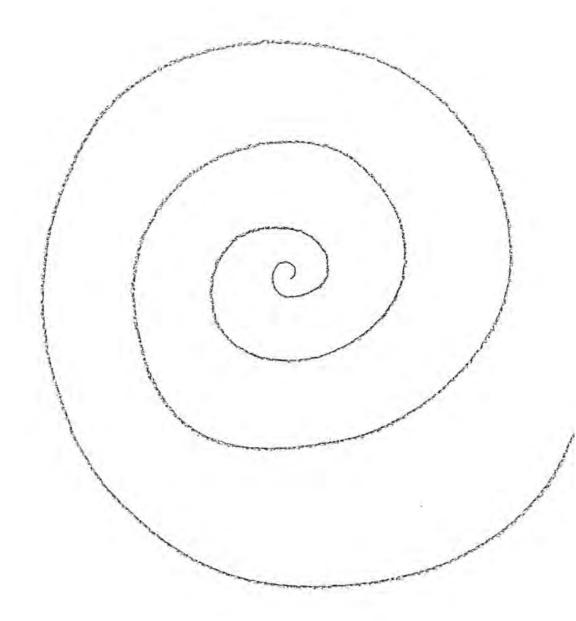
Distraught, I stood in the receiving line following my mom's memorial service. She died after fighting small-cell lung cancer for three years, and I suppose it goes without saying that knowing it was coming didn't make it any easier. I'd lost my mom, and I didn't think anything would ever be right again. Even through my fog of grief, though, one moment stands out in its beauty. Gary Mosbaugh, a former (and favorite) teacher who had worked with Mom, stood before me. He looked me in the eyes and gave me a long hug. He pulled back, not saying a word, and looked at me again before moving on. It was one of the most meaningful, pure, and quiet conversations I've ever had.

DIRECTIONS: Psalm 46:10 says to be still. So today, let this awareness fill the air around you. Close your eyes and simply breathe Him in. He's right there. Right now. The NASB translates "Be still" as "Cease striving." In other words, stop working. You don't have to earn His love. You can't. You already have it. Simply rest in the knowledge that He is God, and let yourself feel whatever that makes you feel. It may be the most beautiful conversation you've ever had with Him. Then color the following page in your favorite hues.

WEEK 7 | DAY 7



DIRECTIONS: Joy seems to radiate outward, just as the sun's light reaches far and wide to illuminate everything around it. Today, let gratitude prevail, and write on the spiral the things in your life that bring you joy.



WEEK 8 | DAY 4

feeling frantic, frazzled—You designed me to live in peace, and instead I'm filling my days with busyness. But when I slow my breathing, when I calm my mind, I find that You are right there. In that place, that serene place, I discover peace. I find You. Power and authority. The deepest of loves, the purest of hopes, the epitome of balance. Today, let me feel Your presence washing over me in long, slow waves—drowning out uncertainty, washing away worries, flooding me with peace. Amen.

DIRECTIONS: As you color this abstract image in shades of blue, reflect on the peace that comes from following God and respecting His boundaries.

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DIRECTIONS: What are your dreams? What do you want to accomplish? Draw, write, sketch, plan, or diagram some of your thoughts. Use additional pages if you wish—don't be afraid to dream big!





(DAY OF REST)

Color Wheel of Prayer

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. —John 10:10, esv

Imagine how boring it would be if we only had one crayon to color with. Fortunately for us, Jesus came so that we could have abundant life—everything we need, all found within Him. He brings fullness of color, newness of life, passion, and energy to our days.

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the sections of the color wheel with the right colors. Then walk through the steps of the prayer wheel, dwelling on putting each color's meaning to use as you approach God. When you reach the last color, purple, ask God for your heart's desire.

WEEK 8 | DAY 7

