

## HOW TO PRAY FOR THE SOUL (YOURS OR ANOTHER'S)

(from John Piper, *Taste and See: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All of Life*)

Here is the way I pray for my soul. I use these prayers over and over again—for myself and my children and wife and for our pastoral staff and elders and for all my church. This is the meat and potatoes of my prayer life.

1. The first thing my soul needs is an *inclination* to God and his Word. Without that, nothing else will happen of any value in my life. I must *want* to know God and read his Word and draw near to him. Where does that “want to” come from? It comes from God. So Psalm 119:36 teaches us to pray, “*Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to gain*”
2. Next I need to have *the eyes of my heart opened* so that when my inclination leads me to the Word, I see what is really there and not just my own ideas. Who opens the eyes of the heart? God does. So Psalm 119:18 teaches us to pray, “*Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law*”
3. Then I need for my *heart to be enlightened* with these “wonders.” I need to perceive glory in them and not just interesting facts. Who enlightens the heart? God does. So Ephesians 1:18 teaches us to pray “*that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened*”
4. Then I am concerned that my heart is badly fragmented and that parts of it might remain in the dark while other parts are enlightened. So I *long for my heart to be united* for God. Where does that wholeness and unity come from? From God. So Psalm 86:11 teaches us to pray, “*O LORD, I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name*”
5. What I really want from all this engagement with the Word of God and the work of his Spirit in answer to my prayers is *that my heart will be satisfied with God* and not with the world. Where does that satisfaction come from? It comes from God. So Psalm 90:14 teaches us to pray, “*Satisfy us in the morning with Thy steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days*”
6. But I don’t want my happiness to be fragile or weak, but to be strong and durable in the face of the worst adversities. I want to be *strong in joy*, and persevering during the dark seasons. Where does that strength and durability come from? It comes from God. So Ephesians 3:16 teaches us to pray, “*That [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man*”
7. I do not want my strength in Christ to simply be fruitful for me, but for others. Clearly “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). So I want to *produce good deeds and works of love* for others, so that the glory of God will be seen in my life, and others will taste and see that the Lord is good. Who produces these good deeds of love? God does. So Colossians 1:10 teaches us to pray, “*That [we] will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord ... bearing fruit in every good work*”
8. Finally, lest the ultimate aim of it all be missed, I pray day after day—as a kind of banner flying over all my prayers—“*Hallowed be Thy name*” (M 6:9). Lord, cause your name to be known and feared and loved and cherished and admired and praised and trusted because of my life and ministry.