

PRAYING
the
NAMES
of
JESUS

A DAILY GUIDE

PRAYING
the
NAMES
of
JESUS

ANN
SPANGLER

ZONDERVAN[®]

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Praying the Names of Jesus

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To Katie and Luci Spangler

*May you know Jesus so completely that neither death nor life,
neither the present nor the future, neither height nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation, will ever separate you from him.*

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PRONUNCIATION GUIDE TO THE NAMES OF JESUS

<i>Akrogoniaios Lithos</i>	ah-kro-go-nee-EYE-os LI-thos
<i>Alpha kai Omega</i>	AL-fah kai oh-MAY-gah
<i>Arnion, Amnos tou Theou</i>	ar-NEE-on, am-NOS tou the-OU
<i>Aryeh Lammatteh Yehudah, Leon ek tou Phyles Iouda</i>	ar-YEH la-mat-TEH ye-hou-DAH, LE-own ek tou fu-LAYS YOU-dah
<i>Artos Zoes</i>	AR-tos zo-ASE
<i>Aster Lampros Proinos</i>	as-TAIR lam-PROS pro-i-NOS
<i>Basileus Basileon</i>	bs-si-LEUS ba-si-LE-own
<i>Christos, Mashiach</i>	KRIS-tos, ma-SHEE-ach
<i>Ebed, Pais tou Theou, Ish Makoboth</i>	E-bed, PAIS tou the-OU, ISH mak-uh-BOTH
<i>Ego Eimi</i>	e-GO ay-MEE
<i>Ga'al, Lytron</i>	ga-AL, LU-tron
<i>Hiereus, Prophetes</i>	hee-uh-REUS, pro-PHAY-tays
<i>Huios David</i>	hui-OS da-WEED
<i>Huios tou Theou, Huios tou Anthropou</i>	hui-OS tou the-OU, hui-OS tou an-THROW-pou
<i>Iatros</i>	ee-a-TROS
<i>Iesous Soter</i>	yay-SOUS so-TAIR
<i>Immanu-el, Emmanouel</i>	im-ma-nu-AIL, em-man-ou-AIL
<i>Kyrios</i>	KU-ree-os
<i>Logos</i>	LO-gos

PRAYING THE NAMES OF JESUS

<i>Lytron</i>	lou-TRONE
<i>Nymphios, Aner</i>	Num-FEE-os, an-AIR
<i>Philos</i>	FEE-los
<i>To Phos tou Kosmou</i>	to FOHS tou KOS-mou
<i>Poimen Kalos</i>	poi-MAIN ka-LOS
<i>Sar Shalom</i>	SAR sha-LOME
<i>Rhabbi, Rhabbouni</i>	ra-BEE, ra-BOU-nee
<i>Yeled, Pais</i>	YEL-ed, PICE

INTRODUCTION

I had little idea when I first began working on this book that the world would soon be in the throes of some of the worst natural disasters in living memory. In the midst of the chaos of hurricanes and earthquakes and the heartbreak of people across the earth so compellingly portrayed in the media, I hunkered down to the work, wondering what God might reveal about himself at such a time. It went well at first, until unexpectedly my own personal hurricane hit, a turbulent time in which I began to question God's love. It became difficult to focus on the writing. But as I kept seeking God, kept reading and praying about the various names and titles of Jesus, I discovered not a God who is far from my troubles or who disdains my questions but Immanuel, a God who lives in the same world I inhabit, a God who has entered my suffering, holding nothing of himself back. I found a God whose forgiveness, love, and determination to help and to save is utterly consistent. As I researched name after name, praying for insight, I began to realize more deeply that the face of God comes into clearest focus in the life and person of Jesus Christ.

That is the premise behind *Praying the Names of Jesus*—that we can experience God more deeply by focusing on the names and titles of the man who was known by his contemporaries as *Yeshua*. His many titles, including such rich descriptions as the “Good Shepherd,” “Bread of Life,” “Light of the World,” “Prince of Peace,” and “Bright Morning Star,” reveal who Jesus is and why he came into this world. They also show us something about God's intentions and plans for our own lives.

Praying the Names of Jesus is the companion volume to *Praying the Names of God*. Unlike its predecessor, which focused primarily on the names and titles of God in the Hebrew Scriptures, this book focuses

on the key names and titles of Jesus, particularly as they are found in the New Testament. Generally these names are recorded in Greek. As in the previous volume, many of what I call “names” are more properly called titles. Most often I refer to them as names for the sake of simplicity. Because the New Testament does not reveal any kind of logical sequence regarding the names of Jesus, I have not attempted to present them here in any particular order.

As in *Praying the Names of God*, this book is divided into twenty-six weeks. Each week is devoted to studying and praying a particular name of Jesus. Here’s how each week unfolds:

- *Monday* is devoted to reading and study. It provides a key Scripture passage that reveals the name, background information, and a brief Bible study to help you understand the name.
- *Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday* contain devotional readings to help you pray specific Scripture passages that contain the name or relate closely to it. The devotional readings are meant as a springboard for your own prayer life. It will be helpful to keep your Bible handy while reflecting on the relevant Scripture passages.
- *Friday* helps you reflect on how the name connects to God’s promises in Scripture. It offers key Bible passages that can be read, reflected on, or even memorized. A section entitled “Continued Prayer and Praise” lists additional passages related to the name that can be studied on the weekend.

Though not every title of Jesus is included in this volume, I have tried my best to include the most significant ones. At the end of twenty-six weeks, I hope you will have a much deeper understanding of who Jesus is and of the remarkable way in which he has loved you.

I have done my best to carefully research the material in this book, and I know that it is a much better book than it would have been because of the help and support of several people. Particular thanks are due to senior editor Verlyn Verbrugge, who did his best to make sure that this non-scholar, non-theologian presented the material in a way consistent with both solid scholarship and sound theology. To

associate publisher and longtime editor and friend Sandy VanderZicht are due thanks for her enthusiastic support, careful review of the manuscript, seasoned wisdom, unflagging prayers, and steady patience as she listened to my ongoing complaints about how slowly the writing was progressing. Thanks to Sue Brower and Sherry Guzy and the other members of marketing and publicity as well as to the dedicated sales team at Zondervan for believing in this book and enthusiastically supporting it. Thanks to creative director Cindy Davis for lending her considerable talent to the book jacket and the interior design.

Thanks also go to my assistant, Lucinda Poel, for carefully making corrections to the manuscript, and to my agent, Linda Kenney, whose advice I greatly value. Her friendship, encouragement, and insight have buoyed me up more than once.

Finally, but importantly, I am grateful to those who have prayed for me and for the book, especially at times when I felt discouraged—Linda Bieze, Leslie Dennis, Joan Huyser-Honig, Nancy Sabbag, and Patti Swets. To say thank you doesn't do justice to your unflagging support. Your prayers have made an incalculable difference. And thank you, Kathy High, for supporting me and my family on the home front during the long months when I was working on the book. As always, you have been flexible, patient, faithful, and kind. You continue to be an answer to prayer.

Despite its many shortcomings, I hope that God will use this book to reveal the beauty, the power, and the grace of Jesus Christ in your life. As you learn about his names and titles, may your confidence in his love and your grasp of his mercy grow strong, enabling you to reproduce his character so that others may recognize his goodness and encounter his love.

I

IMMANUEL

עִמָּנוּ אֵל Ἐμμανουήλ

IMMANU-EL, EMMANOUEL

The Name

The name “Immanuel” appears twice in the Hebrew Scriptures and once in the New Testament. One of the most comforting of all the names and titles of Jesus, it is literally translated “with us is God” or, as Matthew’s Gospel puts it, “God with us.” When our sins made it impossible for us to come to him, God took the outrageous step of coming to us, of making himself susceptible to sorrow, familiar with temptation, and vulnerable to sin’s disruptive power, in order to cancel its claim. In Jesus we see how extreme God’s love is. Remember this the next time you feel discouraged, abandoned, or too timid to undertake some new endeavor. For Jesus is still Immanuel—he is still “God with us.”

Key Scripture

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” —which means, “God with us.”

MATTHEW 1:22–23

Monday

HIS NAME REVEALED

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” — which means, “God with us.”

MATTHEW 1:18–23

Immanuel, I praise you for your faithful love—drawing near when I was far from you. Instead of casting me away from your presence, you came to call me home. Instead of punishing me for my sins, you came to free me from them. Immanuel, my God, you are here with me today. Live in me and glorify your name, I pray.

Understanding the Name

The name “Immanuel” (im-ma-nu-AIL) first appears in Isaiah 7:14 as part of a prophetic word that Isaiah spoke to King Ahaz of Judah (the southern kingdom) at a time when Syria and Israel (the northern kingdom) had formed a coalition against Assyria. The prophet Isaiah counseled Ahaz not to join in their uprising against Assyria, the region’s greatest power, assuring him it would not succeed. He urged Ahaz to trust in the Lord rather than to appeal to Assyria for help against Syria and Israel, who were threatening to invade Judah for not joining their uprising. Then he invited Ahaz to ask the Lord for a sign to confirm

the prophetic word, but the unfaithful king refused, having already decided to place his trust not in the Lord but in Assyria.

In response to Ahaz's refusal to trust God, Isaiah proclaimed: "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of human beings? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

Shortly after that Syria and Israel were soundly defeated, exactly as Isaiah had prophesied. Many years later the southern kingdom of Judah was destroyed by Babylon, its people taken captive.

Matthew's Gospel recalls Isaiah's prophecy, applying it to the child who would be born of Mary, the virgin betrothed to Joseph. The sign given hundreds of years earlier to an apostate king was meant for all God's people. In fact the Bible is nothing if not the story of God's persistent desire to dwell with his people. In Jesus, God would succeed in a unique way, becoming a man in order to save the world not from the outside, but from the inside. *Immanuel*, *God with us*, to rescue, redeem, and restore our relationship with him.

Studying the Name

1. How have you experienced "Immanuel"—God being with you, in your life thus far?
2. Matthew begins and ends his Gospel (see Matthew 28:20) with the promises that God is with us. How would your life be different if you began and ended each day with the firm belief that God is with you?
3. What does this title of Jesus reveal about his nature?

Tuesday

PRAYING THE NAME

“Go away, Lord; I am a sinful man!”

LUKE 5:8

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

*If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

*If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.*

PSALM 139:7–10

Reflect On: Psalm 139:7–10.

Praise God: For his promise to be with you.

Offer Thanks: For God's persistence in pursuing you.

Confess: Any pattern of sin in your life.

Ask God: To increase your confidence in his desire to be with you.



One of the greatest of all the promises in the Bible is this: *I am with you.* Jesus said it to his disciples (and to us) at the end of Matthew's Gospel: "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." If the Lord is with us, what do we have to fear? What do we lack? How can we lose? The same Lord who walked on water, healed the sick, and rose from the dead is saving us, watching over us, guiding our steps. Knowing this, why don't we dance in the streets and throw more parties? Why do we sometimes act as though God is not only *not* with us but that he is nowhere in the vicinity?

There may be many reasons why we feel God's absence in our lives. One of these is surely that our "spiritual sensors" often don't work very well. We are like malfunctioning radar that can't spot a supersonic jet flying straight overhead. But another common reason is that we are the ones who go AWOL, not God.

Consider Peter. One day Jesus climbed into Peter's boat, telling him to row out into the lake and cast his nets out despite the fact that Peter had been up all night fishing with nothing to show for it. But this time when Peter threw out the nets, he caught so many fish that his boat began to sink. Instead of jumping with joy, Peter fell down and implored Jesus to leave him, saying, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

There's something right about Peter's response. Jesus is holy and sin is his implacable enemy. Still the Lord didn't leave Peter. Instead he stayed and transformed his life. And that's what Jesus wants to do with our lives. We make a mistake when we let our sin drag us down and away from the One who has promised to be with us. Instead of running to him, we let a cloud settle over us. Finding it hard to pray, we move farther away. In a thousand different ways, we say, "Depart from me, O Lord!"

At times like this we need to recall the words of Psalm 139:11–12:

*If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.*

If you are troubled by some persistent failing, by some entrenched sin, don't run away from Jesus. Instead express your sorrow and ask for his forgiveness—and then receive it. After that try praying this famous fourth-century prayer known as St. Patrick's Breastplate:

*Christ be beside me, Christ be before me,
Christ be behind me, King of my heart;
Christ be within me, Christ be below me,
Christ be above me, never to part.*

IMMANUEL

*Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand,
Christ all around me, shield in the strife;
Christ in my sleeping, Christ in my sitting,
Christ in my rising, light of my life.*

*Christ be beside me, Christ be before me,
Christ be behind me, King of my heart;
Christ be within me, Christ be below me,
Christ be above me, never to part.*

Wednesday

PRAYING THE NAME

“I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

GENESIS 28:15

*You have been a refuge for the poor,
a refuge for the needy in his distress,
a shelter from the storm
and a shade from the heat.*

ISAIAH 25:4

Reflect On: Genesis 28:15 and Isaiah 25:4.

Praise God: Because he is present, even in the midst of great suffering.

Offer Thanks: For all the ways the Lord has watched over you.

Confess: Your inability to reflect Christ’s presence without his grace.

Ask God: To open your eyes to the ways he is at work in the world and in your own life.



What if God had jurisdiction only in your city, county, or state? Leaving the area would mean leaving behind his protection and care, putting yourself outside the circle of his influence. At such times you wouldn’t even bother praying to him because he could neither hear nor help you. Odd as it sounds, that’s precisely how many ancient people thought about their gods. They believed in gods whose power was limited to a particular region or locality.

But listen to what God said to Jacob when he was on the run from Esau, the brother whose birthright he had stolen: “I will watch over you

wherever you go.” Clearly, this God was not confined to a particular territory or region. His protection and power were available wherever his people went. Indeed, as they were to discover, his power extended over the whole earth.

Many of us are taught this truth as little children, barely able to mouth the bulky words—God is omnipresent and omnipotent, everywhere and all-powerful. Yet as we grow older, some of us find ourselves restricting him, shrinking him down, setting boundaries around his ability and his love. I caught myself doing this as I listened to media reports of a tropical storm that slammed into Haiti a few days ago. More than 1,500 people drowned, and another 1,300 were missing, many of them swept out to sea or buried beneath debris. Of those who survived, many of the 300,000 homeless were perching on rooftops or living on debris-strewn sidewalks where the water had subsided.

But it got worse. Unburied bodies, raw sewage, and animal carcasses were everywhere, and there was not enough food to feed the living. Without adequate roads and supplies, relief efforts seemed like Band-Aids pasted over gaping wounds. How could anyone, I wondered, solve Haiti’s intractable problems? It seemed like such a God-forsaken place.

As I prayed, I began to realize that God isn’t the one who is absent in Haiti or in any other part of the world. It may only seem that way because so many of us are absent, withholding our prayers because of our little faith, withholding our gifts because of our little love. True, we can’t do everything, but we can do something. We can tackle the problem that is in front of us, helping to bring God’s presence to those who suffer.

If we want to experience Immanuel, “God with us,” we need to be where he is, to do what his love compels, to reflect his image to the rest of the world. Today, I pray that Christ will pierce my heart with the things that pierce his. I ask for the grace to look for him in the midst of the world’s suffering, whether close to home or far away. I pray that he will give you and me the faith to join him there, transforming our prayers, our time, our talents, and our financial resources into evidence of his presence in the world—Immanuel, a God who is truly with us.

Thursday

PRAYING THE NAME

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

JOHN 15:9–12

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16

Reflect On: John 15:9–12 and 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Praise God: For calling you to be his image bearer.

Offer Thanks: That God lives in you.

Confess: Any failures that mar the image of God in you.

Ask God: To show you how to bear his image, to magnify him by expressing his love to others.



Randy Frame was part of a team of journalists and business leaders invited to Haiti in the mid-1990s to view its problems close up. Trained as a reporter to maintain his distance, Randy wasn't prepared for what happened on the last day of his trip.

That day the group visited *La Cay Espwa*, the “House of Hope,” a refuge for starving children cared for by a small group of nuns. As soon as Randy entered the two-room structure, a nun by the name of Sister Conchita approached, offering him the child she cradled in her arms. Reluctant at first to take the child lest he violate his role as an objective observer, he finally gave in, deciding it would be rude to refuse.

“Her name Maria,” the Sister said with broken English and a quiet smile.

Frame writes:

I took Maria into my arms, gingerly at first. She seemed so fragile: I could practically see the skeleton beneath her skin. Only her eyes seemed to have escaped the circumstances of her young life. Her eyes were deep brown and as shiny as any healthy child's ought to be. She focused them not on me, but on Sister Conchita. It was clear I was "second string." Perhaps my arms were not as soft or comfortable. Yet she didn't cry. Maybe she was too weak to protest being held by a stranger. Or perhaps she was glad to be in anyone's arms. How could I tell?

After they left, Randy's tour guide explained that on average one in four of the children in the House of Hope die because their internal organs are too damaged by the time they arrive. You can spot the ones who won't make it. Lethargic, with pale, rigid skin, their hair has a reddish hue. She could have been describing Maria.

Despite being warned about the danger of venturing out alone in Port-au-Prince, Randy left the security of his hotel that night to make the two-mile trek back to the House of Hope. When he found Sister Conchita, she was still sitting on her rocker with Maria in her arms.

As I approach Sister Conchita, she stands, sensing exactly why I have returned. She says nothing, but offers me the child. And also her chair. . . . I have arrived at the place where I want to be. And as I live out what I'd earlier in the day envisioned, I am suddenly and fully aware of my weaknesses, my limitations. And aware also of the limitations and shortcomings of humanity, which has somehow failed this child and many others like her. . . .

I am utterly powerless to determine whether this child, who bears the image of God, will live or die this night. But I do have power—complete power—to make certain that if and when her frail body finally yields, she has felt the security, the comfort, of someone's loving arms. Tonight they are my arms. It's the least I can do for her, and also, perhaps, the most. Her weak but gracious eyes look up to mine. And hold their gaze. And in the sacred silence of this moment, there is no other power I crave, no other purpose I desire.

Randy's story made me sad—and happy. God's love is so evident. It is "God with us," "God with Randy," "God with Maria"—the Lord expressing himself to and through human beings. Like Randy, we are called to be Christ-bearers, to reflect God to others. Today let us ask for the grace to make Immanuel known, to allow his light and his life to shine through us.

Friday

PROMISES ASSOCIATED WITH HIS NAME

What does it mean to say that God is with us? Surely it doesn't mean our lives will be easy. It doesn't mean we will be insulated from failure or doubt or that God will take our side in every argument. But it does mean we will never face even a single struggle alone. It means the Lord will never withhold the help we need to do his will. It means that ultimately we will come out on top even if we feel we're living most of our life on the bottom.

What difficulties are you facing? Chronic illness? Troubled children? A broken marriage? Financial hardship? Take a moment today to stop imagining yourself surrounded by all your difficulties and instead begin to envision yourself as you really are—surrounded by the presence of your faithful God. Invoke his name—Immanuel. Decide today to do everything in your power to follow him. Then ask for his peace, pray for his protection, and open your life to his power.

Promises in Scripture

But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

And God said, “I will be with you.”

EXODUS 3:11–12

“I will never leave you nor forsake you. . . . Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

JOSHUA 1:5, 9

*When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.*

*When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.
For I am the LORD, your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.*

ISAIAH 43:2–3

Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

MATTHEW 28:20

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

*“Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you.”*

So we say with confidence,

*“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can human beings do to me?”*

HEBREWS 13:5–6

Continued Prayer and Praise

Pray this verse when you are afraid. (Joshua 1:9)

Be encouraged because no one can prevail against you if God is with you. (Isaiah 8:10)

Remember that Jesus will not leave us orphans. He will show himself to those who love him. (John 14:15–21)