

FORMING A HOLY CHARACTER THROUGH PRAYER



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by [Kim Butts](#)

Andrew Murray stated, "When God gives the Holy Spirit, His great object is the formation of a holy character. It is a gift of a holy mind and spiritual disposition, and what we need above everything else is to say: 'I must have the Holy Spirit sanctifying my whole inner life if I am really to live for God's glory.'"

Every morning my prayer is, "Father, show me how to be more like Jesus Christ today so that You will be glorified!"

Knowing that every day I will fall short of this goal, I take joy in the smallest victories to this end! My flesh loves to be in control, and stubbornly clings to sinful things like anxiety and pride. However, God's word faithfully restores my confidence in His ability to transform my heart and life day by day.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the voice of Christ within me speaks. Moment by moment in my every day ordinary life, I must bring my sinful thoughts, actions and words to Him as quickly as they arise so that gradually they will give way to His thoughts, actions and words. I pray to be less, even though everything prideful in me seeks attention and recognition. This is not an easy struggle, but growing up in Christ is a narrow path strewn with worldly distractions and insidious idolatry that sets itself up against the transformational work of God. It is a battle that can only be won in the spiritual realm – not by my own determination and desire.

Without dying to my flesh, the formation of this holy character cannot be made manifest in me. Paul recognized that God's children are susceptible to the deception of darkness without complete faith and trust in the One who created us and knows us best. Therefore, in his letter to "God's holy people" in the city of Colosse, he shares a powerful prayer that, prayed for our lives and the lives of others, will transform us more and more into the image of Jesus Christ:

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has

qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light” (Colossians 1:9-12).

There is much to be gleaned from the purposes of Paul’s prayer for our every day lives. How we, God’s people, need to be filled with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. So often we struggle in the flesh to know the will of God, yet do we ever ask to be filled with the knowledge of His will? What a powerful prayer request! “Father, fill me with the knowledge of Your will for my life through all spiritual wisdom and understanding!”

Still, it is important to recognize that the term “spiritual wisdom” has often become twisted in our culture. Not everything with this label is Christian in nature. We must be vigilant to ask the Father to fill us, and those for whom we are interceding, with Holy Spirit wisdom through the very mind of Christ, so that we may have a clear and perfect understanding of His will for us! The result? We and others for whom we pray will begin to live lives worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in every way by bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, and being strengthened with all power according to the glorious might of God! Here we will begin to see the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit moving within and throughout our day to day lives. Is there anyone who would not want such a prayer of blessing and power?

Paul prays for the believers to be strengthened so that they might have great endurance and patience to withstand whatever struggles, trials or persecutions might come and so that they might be enabled to joyfully give thanks to God in the midst of their day to day lives – whatever may come! I am eager to give thanks to the Father when I am comfortable and life is going well; however, only His supernatural strength upholds my joy when that is not the case! How many do you know who need the courage of God in their lives right now to endure a trial? Maybe you need that in your own life. Isn’t it a powerful encouragement to see those saints who are able to live in full

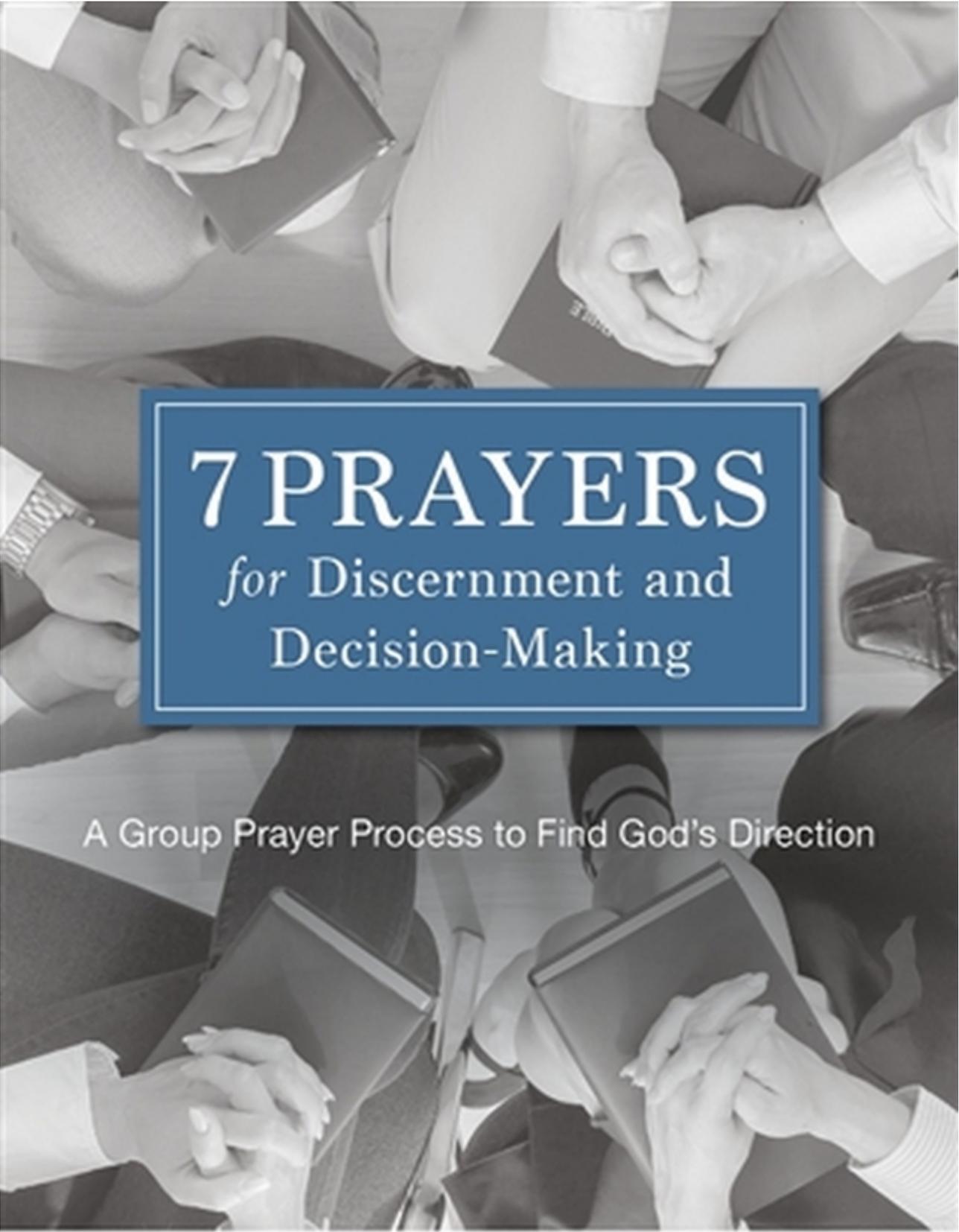
joy and confidence in the midst of pain or difficulty? Today, as we face the distinct likelihood of the end of days and the potential suffering that may take place, we must be prepared to endure with the strength of the Spirit, and to live out holy and victorious lives in the midst of it. Pray that God will give you and other believers such strength, so that we may joyfully give thanks to God, who has qualified us “to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.”

The way of holiness is to walk in the way of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we pray the powerful word of God into our everyday lives, and crucify our fleshly desires to lean into the desires of our Father, we will live more fully within the kingdom of His light. We will know the will of God for our lives, and please Him in every way. We will be given His strength and be sustained by joy and thanksgiving! May the formation of a holy character continue in us all for the glory of God!

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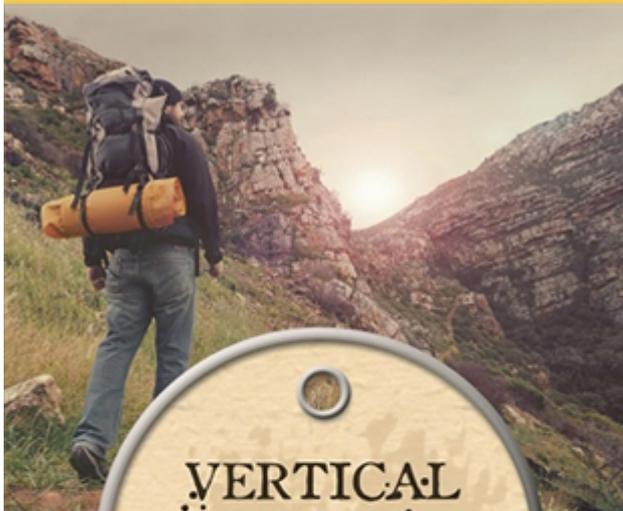
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