

Experimenting With Written Words as Prayer

*When we really need to think through something deeply,
When we need to focus,
When we need to choose each word carefully,
When we need to say something really important—
So important we need to be able to read and re-read it
again and again—
When this is what we need,
We don't just speak words; we write them down.*

Why not apply this insight to your communications with God? In the exercises on this page, we invite you to discover the power of written prayers to connect you even more deeply to God, while giving profound flashes of spiritual insight.

Exercise One: Exchanging Letters With God

1. Find a quiet place, take out pen and paper, and calm yourself. (Some may choose to compose on the computer instead. Whatever works best for you.)
2. Think about one of the most challenging issues in your life right now. Write a letter to God about that issue. Describe the issue and how you feel about it. State the questions you would like God to reply to. Humbly ask for a reply.
3. Over the next several days, listen carefully with your heart for what God might want to say. As you get flashes of insight, jot a few notes to yourself. Keep praying for God's response to your letter.
4. When we sincerely pray and seek understanding from God, the Bible promises God will speak to us through the Holy Spirit inside of us. *John 14:26; Proverbs 2:1-5* Does that mean we'll get God's response right 100% of the time? No, but we will take giant leaps toward better understanding God's wisdom for our lives.
5. So, after you've sent your letter to God and have had adequate time to ponder what God might want to say, when the time feels right in your heart, sit down and write God's response to your letter. In other words, write down your best understanding of what you sense God wants to say to you about the issues you have raised. You will be amazed at the wisdom that is revealed to you.
6. Treasure those words. Read and re-read them, allowing them to guide you.

7. As a last step, you may want to write a third letter—to yourself. In this third letter, you should reflect on what God has said to you and write down what you need to do to respond faithfully to what God has said.

Note: If this letter-writing exercise works well for you, you may want to establish a regular pattern. For example, you may decide to exchange letters with God at least twice a year—perhaps on your birthday and at Thanksgiving time, for example. Alternatively, you may decide to be less structured and to simply exchange letters on those occasions when you face really big issues in life.

Exercise Two: Journaling With God

The previous exercise is meant for times when we face major issues in life. This second exercise can be more routine, something we can do everyday if we wish.

1. Purchase a notebook or create a virtual notebook space on your computer. This is your prayer journal. Often ancient Christians would participate in “morning” and “evening” prayers at appointed times. They would start their day with prayer and end with prayer, as a way of wrapping every day of their lives in God's Spirit. A prayer journal can be used this way.
2. When you get up in the morning, before you get busy and distracted, find five minutes to sit down with your journal. In just a few lines, record some thoughts about the day that lies ahead. Sometimes you may be moved to say something to God; other times to yourself; and yet other times you may be moved to record something God is saying to you. Let the Spirit lead.
3. At the end of the day, shortly before bedtime, sit down and re-read what you wrote that morning. Add a few lines reflecting on your day. (Some people may choose to skip the evening step, simply journaling each morning. In this case, each morning you would evaluate the prior day before turning your thoughts to the present day.)

Note: Journaling is a great way to live deliberately. It slows us down long enough to anticipate and evaluate the treasure of each day God gives us. It is a tangible way of welcoming God into each day.