

# Prayer as a Way of Walking in Love- My Journey

by Francis Chan

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*Francis Chan shares his personal journey of prayer as a transformative way to walk in love and experience God's presence.*

**Duration:** 27:06

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:17, Jeremiah 33:3, Matthew 21:22, Luke 11:9, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6-7, James 5:16, 1 John 5:14

**Topics:** "Prayer Life", "Divine Love"

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## Description

This sermon by Francis Chan focuses on the power of prayer as a way of walking in love, sharing personal experiences of answered prayers and divine interventions. Chan emphasizes the deep connection with God through prayer, highlighting how God's responses to prayers have stirred his affections and revealed God's love in tangible ways. He reflects on the supernatural occurrences and prophetic dreams that have shaped his faith journey, showcasing the transformative impact of prayer in his life and ministry.

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## Transcript

Okay, it's my job now to really make you be quiet and to gather your attention because in 60 seconds Francis Chan is going to be out here and it would be good for you to be ready to listen to him. Francis Chan was the founding pastor, is the founding pastor, is the founding founder of Cornerstone Church. For 16 years he was there and founded Eternity Bible College.

Stepped back from that ministry last April and is moving into partly an unknown and partly a known dream of ministering and discipleship and mentoring in an urban center. Maybe he'll tell you more. Traveled with his family overseas to be exposed to God's work in the lives of people in other places.

He's now in San Francisco and most of you perhaps know him in large measure because of the book Crazy Love which has been of course crazy successful and which probably has made him crazy frightened because success of that nature is a dangerous thing. He's married to Lisa and has four children and you can pray about an adoption that's in the offing. I'm sure he would appreciate and the reason he's here is because, at least from my side, it's because last fall at our Desiring God National Conference in his talk, which may be one of the most listened to, watched talks Desiring God has ever put up, he alluded to

and gave some expression of his own personal prayer, walk, meaning walking daily in a helpless cry to God.

And this gave an experience or two and I wrote him and I said, you just want to flesh that out for us? Want to finish that talk? And so whatever he wants to do with that will be okay with me as long as God is in it and I'm sure he will be. So welcome Francis Chan to speak to us. Pastor John gave me the topic of prayer as a way of walking in love, a personal journey, and I love that topic.

Prayer as a way of walking in love. I love it because prayer rivals, I want to be careful how I say this, in my life prayer has even rivaled the scriptures in stirring my affections toward God. The way God answers my prayers.

You know as a kid I sang that song, Jesus loves me, this I know, because the Bible tells me so, and still absolutely does that happen. Yeah, there are days I'll read something and I'll say, I can't believe that. You like me that much? You love me that much? Are you kidding me? And I'll get that and I know Jesus loves me because the Bible tells me so.

But I gotta say, there's, at this point in my life I could also sing Jesus loves me because the way he answers my prayers just, it shows me so. I've seen it, there's so many times when I'll just break down and cry. I mean just five minutes ago, I'm just back there as I'm getting ready to talk to you guys.

I'm going, God is there any way I can communicate what we've had for these 40 years or you know that I've been alive. I feel like ever since I was a kid, the way you listen to me, the way you hear me, it's unreal. I love you so much and I just want these guys, I want anyone who doesn't experience that or know that, I want them to have that.

But how can I share this personal journey? How can I share everything that God and I have been through together for all of these years? I mean, there are times I really question and I look, I go, God do you love everyone this much? I mean, the way you answer my prayers, this is unbelievable. I love you, I love you, I love you. I don't know what more you could do to show me your love.

I see it in the scriptures, but I've also seen in the way you answer my prayers. I mean, silly things, little things, the tiny things. You know, times when my wife and I will just look at each other and we'll just start crying because we're going, God, how can you care about even that? I understand the big things, I understand the spiritual things, but sometimes it's even little silly things.

I remember one time just driving and just talking to the Lord, you know, just silently in my mind, I'm going, God, I'm struggling with something right now. I go, there's no answer to it. I'm just telling you my struggle.

I said, every time we have money in the bank, I want to just give it to someone who's in greater need than we are. And I go, I'm struggling because I kind of want to take my family on vacation, but every time I think about that, I think, I can't spend it on a vacation. You know, there are people who are in need.

I give it to them. And I told God, God, I'm not complaining. I'm not, I'm not even asking for anything.

I just, you just tell me to tell you my desires. That's just what I'm feeling right now. A few days later, my wife calls me, you know, I'm in the office and she just says, hey, honey, we got this weird check in the mail.

And I go, really? Why? She goes, it's a cashier's check. A cashier's check has been sent to us and for \$2,000. I'm like, really? Yeah, that's a lot of money.

\$2,000. We don't know who it came from. I go, there's no letter with it.

There's no explanation. She goes, yeah, there's a sticky note. And it's taped to it.

And it just says, Francis, spend this on your family. And I go, honey, you know, I'm in my office, just go, you know, beside myself, go, honey, you don't even know what I prayed a few days ago. I go, honey, I just prayed.

I go, God, there's no answer to this one. Because there was no physical answer. Like, no, no, if you give me money, I'm gonna spend it on someone else.

But no, God said, no, I'm gonna give you a check and you'll feel guilty if you don't spend it on your family. Because that's what this note will say. And I just go, honey, why does he even care about that? Just the little things, the silly things.

I shared at the Desiring God conference about the time I was just bothered because I was playing golf with my friends and they were out driving me because they all got new drivers, those big ones. And I hated that. I had this little tiny thing.

And even my friends that were terrible were out driving me. And I thought, I'm gonna buy a driver. I'm gonna, I gotta buy one.

I gotta save up money. I gotta ask for it for Christmas. I can't do that.

No, Lord, you know, that's a waste. Not that if you did that, that was wrong of you. But, you know, I was just like, Lord, I don't feel good about that, you know.

Oh man. But, oh well. The next morning I'm speaking at a church, this little church plant, and they said, you know, we heard that, you know, a lot of times you won't take an honorarium, you know, if it's a little church.

I mean, I'll take one from this. But, you know, and, but, so he said, so this is what the guy says. He goes, so we didn't get you an honorarium.

We bought you this driver. The very next morning, I mean, I'm driving home. I still remember that ride home, just laughing.

Like, God, this is, this is silliness. This is ridiculous. You don't get a driver for an honorarium the day after, the day after you just struggled with all of these thoughts.

I mean, it's just everything in our lives just, just this crazy supernatural. I don't know. I mean, my life just does not make any, any sense.

And even a few years ago, my wife looked at me. She goes, honey, you know, I love my life. She goes, I'd love being married to you.

I love the simplicity of our lives. She goes, I'm happy living off of whatever God gives me, gives us. You know, I'm happy to live humbly.

I'm happy to have nothing. She goes, the one thing I always wish, though, she goes, I always wish we were generous. I always wish we could be generous.

Ever since I was a kid, I thought, gosh, I would love to be the person that could just write checks. You know, like, oh, you're neat. Here, let me write you something.

I go, well, that's, that's awesome, honey, but that'll never be us, you know. But that's a, that's a great desire, you know, but that's, that's gonna be for other people. I mean, I'm a pastor, you know, and, and this is the way we're gonna live, and that's just awesome that you think that way.

And then even a couple years ago, I, I prayed, and I, I was praying for the wealthy. And I said, Lord, you know, I got a lot of wealthy people in the church. I have wealthy friends.

And God, I, I pray that somehow, like, I, I see them give, but I think, man, they got a lot. And, and, you know, they're, they're 10%. I don't know, just, just in my mind, I go, God, could you just raise up some new wealthy people, you know, people that, that really don't care about their stuff, you know.

I mean, it's like, it's one thing to have a little and say, I'll give it all to the Lord, but God, raise up people who have a lot, and go, I really don't care. I just love Jesus. And, and so the stuff here, just have it all.

And, and God, I said, I said, God, and if you're not going to do that, make me rich. Make me rich, seriously. You know, make my friends rich that, that, that, that don't care about stuff.

Having no clue what God was going to do, as, as Pastor John said, yeah, crazy love has been crazy successful. And I had no idea, no desire to make money off of it. And so even said, you know what, I don't even want to touch the money.

If it comes in, it goes straight into a charitable gift fund. And I, I don't want that temptation in my life. And so if it comes in, then I can write checks to charities, but I can't touch it myself.

And, and man, just last year, we made about \$2 million off the thing. And I'm just looking at my wife going, are you kidding me? This is what you always wanted to do, wasn't it? Just to be able to write checks and, oh, you're in need here. This, this ministry's in need here.

I go, God, this is, this is ridiculous. My life is ridiculous. You, the way you answer these prayers.

God, my life makes, it makes no sense. I'm coming on the stage. I'm just thinking through my childhood.

I'm thinking about everything in my life. I go, none of this makes sense. Why am I walking on this stage? Why are people listening to me? Why are you just showering me with all of this stuff and all of these opportunities and just your presence, the way you answer my prayers.

And so prayer is a way of walking in love. Man, I love God so much more because of these, these prayers. Answered prayers, some prayers, you know, he, he didn't answer.

You know, like Joel said last night, how God will give us, you know, exactly what we pray for, exactly what we should have prayed for. At the times when we pray the wrong thing. In fact, my wife, we, you know, we recently moved to San Francisco.

And so, you know, we pack everything up and we're cleaning up these boxes. And, and she finds this old journal of mine from when I was in high school. And she's bursting in laughter in the other room.

It was a prayer journal. My youth pastor taught me, you know, just, just write down your prayers on one side and then write down when he answers them. And then you have something to look back on and go, no way, because you'll forget.

You just forget. You know, I'm just throwing out a few things I remember, but you just do forget. But my wife was just laughing hysterically.

She even calls my oldest daughter, come in here, look at what dad prayed when he was your age. And I am kind of embarrassed to even share what some of that was. But, but we do, we thank God, right? We thank God he didn't answer some of those prayers.

Or a lot of us would have married Farrah Fawcett. We just, just, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's that growing though, as a, as a child, like, oh, okay, that's not really what you asked for. You know, there's different things.

But isn't, when you look at scripture, isn't, isn't prayer the thing that differentiates us from the rest of the world, right? Our God listens to us, right? Wasn't that the story of Elijah where he could just mock the prophets of Baal? Go ahead, cut yourselves, scream out. No one's listening. No one answers.

Now watch what happens when I pray. Let me show you what happens when I pray. It's always so, look, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, he's the one that listens.

He's the living God. He's not a block of wood that you made up that's not going to answer you. My God answers me.

He listens to me. I was telling you about that prayer journal, but actually my very first prayer, you know, was, was for this, you know, I told the Lord I was going to start going to church early. I was, I was like 15 years old.

I go, there's a park across the street. I just want to tell these people about Jesus. And, and so, you know, let me, let me share with some people, you know, as I go out there and play basketball and, and just hang out with them.

And, you know, and then I wrote down, I met this guy named Squeaky, you know, that's the name he went by, you know, I'm praying for Squeaky, you know, save him, Lord, save him, Lord, use me to, you know, and then, and then I, and then I look on the answered prayer and, and on the answered prayer, it talks about how, yeah, weird thing. I was walking up to the youth group today and I, I heard a bunch of screaming and swearing downstairs. So I look over the edge and there's Squeaky and he's surrounded by these guys and they're about to get into this, you know, big old gang fight thing.

And I go running down the stairs and I just, you know, just, this kid going, Squeaky, what are you doing, man? And he goes, man, this guy said this about my brother, I'm gonna tear him up, you know, and all these people around, I'm like, just, just, let's just leave all of this. Forget all this. Come upstairs with me.

We're having a Bible study. We're having a youth group. You know, let's, let's go.

And, and he literally does. He walks up the steps with me, goes to this Bible study, youth pastor speaking, gives his life to the Lord. And I just write that down on my prayer list, you know, and, and just, just, just

thinking through the prayers as I prayed for people in ministry.

I remember one time just praying for this gal because I was leading a college ministry and, and, and we had this gathering on a Friday night and, and there was this one gal that wasn't there. And I just thought, oh man, I think she's drifting away from you, God. And I just, I just remember leaving the gathering and just walking around the block to pray for her.

I go, God, you know, I, I just lift her up to you. I lift up Jen to you right now. Would you, would you just get her attention somehow right now? Right now, God, right now get her attention because I want her to love you.

I get a phone call the next morning. Jen's in the hospital. She goes, Francis, you'll never guess what happened.

She's, I've been praying all night. She goes, I was driving. I was driving last night, you know, and, and suddenly my gas pedal got stuck.

I don't know why. It just, the accelerator got stuck and I ended up running into a house, into the living room of a house. And, and, and I, and I, I, I lived, but all night I kept thinking, I kept thinking, God, man, I heard these messages and I, I just don't know if I had died.

I don't know if I would have gone to heaven. I don't know if you really, I've never really followed you as the Lord of my life. She goes, I'm so scared.

I've just been praying all night, all night, all night. I don't even know what happened. How could my gas pedal get stuck? I go, Jen, um, and I prayed for you last night right then.

And she goes, she goes, well, it works. She goes, all I've been doing is praying all night long here in the hospital bed. I go, man, that's awesome.

Then her mom called me and yelled at me. She did. She got so mad.

How do you pray that? And I was just learning my theology. I go, well, I don't think he would do it unless it was right. I mean, you know, I mean, he's sovereign, he's in control, but it was, it was that same thing you were talking about last night.

It's almost like, wow, this, this is, this is, this is a serious power we have here. A serious, serious power here. I mean, times I remember being in Colorado and I had to rent a car.

I was at a, you know, at a friend's house. And so I'm looking through the phone book and, and I don't know if it was Enterprise or someone that they send a guy out. And, and I said, oh, great.

Could you send him over to my house? I put the phone down. I said, Lord, I just got on my knees. Like, I don't know who this guy is coming to pick me up to take me to the car lot.

Would you just amaze him with your grace? Would you just show him your power? Would you just give me an opportunity to tell him how great you are? Comes, picks me up at this house. No exaggeration. I would say within one minute, this man was bawling his eyes out.

Just weeping. Just looked at him and said, how are you doing? He just started crying and telling me about his life falling apart. And I go, let's sit down.

Let's forget about the car. And I'm going to coffee the next day, hanging out with him, talking about a relationship with God. Took him to a church service the very next day at just some local church that I found out there.

I said, God, see, this is, this is the stuff that's got to happen. I remember cleaning out my garage one day and going, Lord, this is not eternal. There's nothing eternal about cleaning my garage.

I hate that. I'm going to be spending like two hours doing something that has no eternal value, but I feel like I got to do it. Otherwise, I'm a bad testimony or something.

You know, I just got to just, just, but I want to do something eternal. I don't want to just sweep and clean and move boxes. And as I'm doing it, my neighbor across the street comes over with tears in his eyes, just going, God, I've been wanting to talk to you for so long.

And, and he just says, will you pray for me? I'm going, God, this is, this is ridiculous. It's just the ministry opportunities. Everything I, I ask for, just, just, can I, can I be a part of something that you're doing? Maybe the, the, the craziest one, there's all so many, but there's this one time, you ever, you ever dream about someone and you have a bad dream? Like you got in a fight with them or, and then you see them in the morning and you're like angry with them and you're not even sure why, and then it occurs to you.

See, it happened to me at my church one time with, with one of my staff. I, I saw him one morning, walked by the office and I just had these negative feelings toward him. And I was like, Lord, what was that? Why am I bothered? What, what, what happened yesterday? What did we do? Then I realized, oh, it was just a dream.

And so I go over to him, you know, I go, wow, weirdest thing just happened. You know, when you walk by my office, I was like, totally angry at you. And I'm thinking, God, why, why am I angry at him? And I go, I realized, I go, I had a dream about you last night.

I dreamt that you were a homosexual and that you were arguing for it and you were fighting against me. And you're trying to persuade people to go that direction. I mean, that's the stupidest thing.

And so when I saw your face, I was just mad. That was so weird. And he just kind of, and he just walks away.

He comes back the next week and he goes, remember that dream you had? That was from God. I said, what do you mean? I said, no. He goes, Francis, you scared me so bad when you, when you said those words to me.

I knew at that moment. Okay, God, you're trying to say something to me. He says, you had no clue.

I had no clue whatsoever. It would be like me coming up to any one of you. I mean, it was the farthest thing from truth.

That's why I could joke about it and bring it before you. And he goes, that is the struggle of my life. And I feel like I'm going to head the other direction.

And I was just about to enter into this. He goes, that was a prophecy. And I remember just walking, you know, just, just, just stunned by what he said in the office and going home and just looking at my wife going, honey, you'll never believe what just happened.

You know, those moments where you just go, God, I thought, I know, I know you're a powerful God. But every time I experienced that answered prayer, it just makes me in awe of you again. And I go, God, what is, why do I do anything other than pray? You know, I just, just in awe going, God, what are you doing? These, these supernatural things.

Then I, then after a while, I'm like, you know, because my wife is stunned, I'm stunned. And then I go, gosh, what is, what is that verse? It says, the old men will dream dreams, the young men will have visions. I go, wait, wait, which one is it? Is it the old men have visions? Wait, is it, was that a dream or a vision then? You know, we got all off track, but, but it's, it's still, it's just this, see, when I, when I share with someone, every time I share with someone and, and, you know, a stranger on the plane or whatever, I say to God, I go, God, the only thing that's going to differentiate me from the Jehovah's Witness or the Mormon or the Unitarian or the, you know, the Muslim or whoever it is, it's, it's, it's this time right now.

Man, I got to pray, you got to do something. Otherwise I'm going to sound like just some other, some religious freak, some, some fanatic, some cult leader, like you've got to make it known to them that, that, that, that my God is you are the real God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Peter, Paul, Jesus, that Jesus is Lord. Somehow you've got to do that in their lives.

And so I depend on this for every time I talk, I go, God, you got to speak to them or they're going to walk away and go, oh, it sounds like that guy or that guy or that guy. No, God, when I speak, there better be a power. It's not my job to convince them.

It's not, I can't change their heart. It's, it's like going to a cemetery and say, come on, get up, get up, get up. It's just, it's just pointless.

No speech is going to do that. God, you have to do something. You got to show them your power.

You know, as I, as I present the gospel to them, there needs to be a power in that where they hear that message and go, well, that's like nothing I've ever heard. I mean, think about this. When unbelievers come to your service, picture someone, try to put yourself in this, in the shoes of a, of an unbeliever who's, who's maybe seeking or something.

And he comes to one of your services. What, what, what's he looking for? What do you think he wants to see up there on the stage? Does he want to see a, you know, a polished speech, maybe, you know, and that's helpful. You know, a, a brainiac that just can, can just, you know, show him that you're more intelligent than him.

You know, a comedian to show him, man, look, look, I got a great personality. I mean, what, what does that person want to see? Don't, don't, don't they want to walk in and, and hear a guy and go, man, that, that, that person's connected to God. He has something I don't have.

It's like God listens to him. God doesn't listen to me like that. There's something about that guy.

I can't explain it, but he had a connection with God and I want that. He knows this God that I don't know. I know there's something there, but man, when I heard that guy speak, I was convinced he knows this God

and I want that.

I mean, isn't that what they're after? And, and when they hear you teaching up there, is that what they see is there's this jealousy of, oh man, see that guy. I want what he has. I've been, um, attending different services on Sunday mornings and I, I, or just throughout the week, just going to different churches, different services, and, and, and sometimes I sit there and just try to imagine myself as an unbeliever.

And I try to think, okay, if I was searching for God, would I find him here? You know, what would be my impression here? When I, when I look up there and go, oh my gosh, that guy, that guy knows him. I, I got to get with him. Ooh, these people here in this room, they know this God, they have something that I don't have.

And I understand the gospel is powerful and God could use an unbeliever to preach the gospel because there's power in the gospel itself. I understand that. And I understand God is a sovereign God and he is going to draw people to himself.

But I also see in

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