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How to Pray Using Scripture

Sometimes it's the simplest things that make the biggest difference. For many years I've used the 3 R's I learned from Ben Patterson to pray through Scripture. This simple tool has helped me pray the Bible more than any other single strategy. I've used it in my devotional times and have employed it often in leading others in prayer.

1. Rejoice
2. Repent
3. Request

With every verse in the Bible we can do one (or more likely, all three) of these things. We can rejoice and thank God for his character and blessings. We can repent of our mistakes and sins. We can request new mercies and help.

Right now I just flipped open my Bible and landed at Psalm 104. Verse 1 says "Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty." How might you pray through this verse? Well, at first blush you might see nothing more to do than praise God. "Dear Lord, you are very great. You are clothed with splendor and majesty. Amen." But try that again with the 3 R's.

Rejoice – O Lord, you have richly blessed me more than I deserve. What a privilege that I can call you my God. Thank you for making me a little lower than the angels and crowning me with glory and honor too.

Repent – Forgive me for being blind to your splendor and majesty. Though you are very great, my circumstances and disappointments often feel greater. I'm sorry for being so ungrateful and taking your blessings for granted.

Request – Give me eyes to see as you are. Tune my heart to sing your praise. Help me see your glory in the world you've created, in the people around me, and in the face of Christ.

Obviously, some verse lend themselves to prayer more easily than others. The Psalms are particularly prayer-worthy. But with the simple strategy of Rejoice, Repent, Request there shouldn't be a verse in the Bible that can't be used as a prompt to pray.

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