

“Simple, warm, and profound! Each prayer in Bill Henderson’s book allows me to begin the day knowing that God’s love is real and present in this moment. They are tangible prayers written from real-life experience. Bill captures the life-giving message of the gospel and dispenses it in a daily format that speaks to your soul. His daily prayer allows me to carry that blessing into my day and all of the relationships in my life. They are a balm for the soul, especially in these uncertain, stressful times!”

—*Mary Katherine Robinson, Presbyterian Minister*

“Every day I receive a fresh, earthy prayer that helps me wrestle with the stuff of life—good and bad, delightful and depressing, hopeful and hurtful. Now here they are, collected in one place, ready to use at a moment’s notice. Who does not need such help when it’s time to pray?”

—*Dwight A. Moody, Host*  
*www.themeetinghouse.net*

“Paul the Apostle wrote, ‘Pray without ceasing.’ To some this is a monumental task: What do I pray? Bill Henderson’s prayers are conversations with God and a help on our journey with Jesus. His prayers are intimate, relational, and relevant and provide the reader with an opportunity to escape again to that place of prayer with the Lord.”

—*Dave Gittings, Chaplain*  
*Virginia Tech Football Team*

“I eagerly await Bill Henderson’s “Daily Prayers” each morning as a part of my quiet time. These prayers/conversations with God give a fresh, personal focus on faith. What a blessing!”

—*Bill Walker, Former Principal*  
*Asheville (N.C.) School for Developmentally Disabled*

“Bill’s prayers meet my needs each day, reflecting the presence of God in circumstances major and minor. Praying with him begins in the physicality of life as well as interacting within God’s presence. What a good way to begin a day ... or maybe even close it.”

—*Gail Coulter, Coordinator,*  
*Western North Carolina Baptist Fellowship*

“I recommend Dr. Henderson’s book on prayer. As many of us have come to know, the most vital of all conversations is with our God. It’s our source of power and our purpose in the daily living of our days.”

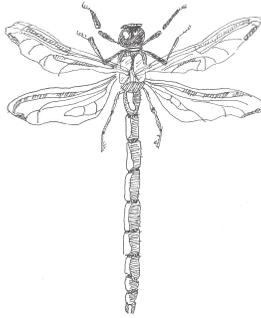
—*Buddy Corbin, Chaplain*  
*Mission Hospital, Asheville, North Carolina*

“Henderson’s prayers are heartfelt, thought-provoking, and down to earth. You will be blessed by them.”

—*Anne Ownbey, Author, Liturgist*

# A Daily Prayer, Short and Sweet

*Real Conversations with God*



W.G. (BILL) HENDERSON JR.

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## PREFACE

I have known all my life about prayer. Like breathing in and breathing out, it is just a natural part of moment-by-moment living—every hour, every day. I can remember my mother praying over me at the crib. I can feel her face next to mine, and I knew she was talking to God about me. It was a while before I heard the words, but I remember them like yesterday.

My father prayed for me at the dinner table—long, eloquent, and sincere talks with God, often reminding God of what had been promised, not demanding, just celebrating the unshakeable foundation that had been laid through the generations. Then he prayed at church where prayers are supposed to be spoken—also long, elegant, and sincere while breathing deeply like he was reaching deep into his own soul, the archives of generations of prayers, hurts, cries, along with joys.

My father-in-law prays and admonishes us to pray about everything. He has emblazoned on my mind one well-worn phrase when I have shared my personal struggles or trying times. He has said it often: “Trust your prayers!” Since he talks so much about prayer, I asked him when and how and in what ways he prays. I expected an elaborate scheme of times and means. He rambled around, and I cannot tell you any answers he really offered. My prayers are like that, too. That is part of the motivation for these daily writings: to shape them, sharpen them, and be specific while speaking honestly through love and unbelievably devoted humility.

My folks prayed because they needed a “bulwark never failing.” Both of my parents came from good, sweet homes, but had just enough natural difficulties to make a child shiver with uncertainty and learn at church to pray. That’s where they learned about prayer. But in their breathing in and breathing out, they learned about the sighs too deep for words—those groanings for which the scriptures say the Spirit finds words.

Then I learned to pray, and as a child it was so natural, so personal, so easy. Until, I must confess, I found it awkward at times as I grew up, even silly to have to put words up in the air for the God who already knew my thoughts, my motives, my heart, my deceit but mostly my genuine desire to please God.

But praying made me reach higher and made me be articulate about feelings that needed expression, thoughts that needed reshaping into higher thoughts, and ultimately random heart firings that needed sensible shaping into life-affirming connections and then real commitments.

So that is where all my real conversations with God are going, headed straight for commitments that I believe and cannot avoid doing something about. In attempting to explain this daily prayer experience with a neighbor who protested that he had, indeed, been reading them daily, I wondered what he did with all this heart-rambling nakedness before God. He said, “Well, these aren’t really prayers. They are more like devotionals—no, like blogs with God!” I gulped, then chuckled, then grimaced at the thought.

Here is my final explanation. Like my mother’s prayers so early in my life, prayer is my constant thought with God and constant reflection with the one who is said to be always with us, waking, sleeping. I have only sporadically held specific devotional hours or quiet time or regular prayer times. This is just not my style, my discipline. I am at it all the time. So, the words you’ll read in the following pages capture only moments with my constant real conversations with God. I pray that these words may stimulate for you reinvigorated conversations with the God who hears and—by grace—answers.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book of prayers begins in September right when I began them. I hope that does not confuse you! A typical sequence might be expected on the usual annual calendar starting from January, yet still those pesky fifth weeks come along in their own time. Proper scheduling for devotional reading has eluded me. My excuses are as follows.

These prayers began as the outgrowth of real experience, while caring for an element of homebound members whom I could not see as often as the contact they needed. I greatly revered these whose lives had been living and serving examples among their own church family, whose new retirement residence had isolated them from their church friends. As I visited them, they continually asked for more contact: "Please come visit me more often!" My anxiety was growing in proportion to my love and admiration for these special, aging saints.

"Aha! I can send you a daily contact, a word for reflection. How about a prayer?" Thus, these "contacts" were born. Not long into this experiment, I heard many requests that I might publish and make them available to others. These special folks imagined sharing my daily prayers with their families and closest friends. The email list began to grow.

I learned how important simple contact could be, but much more I saw how the sharing of an open prayer to the Lord opened the door that many people are too humble, too respectful, or too unskilled to open for themselves. These prayers explored avenues that were apparently on the minds and hearts of others, but were never thought to warrant being aired before our Almighty Creator. Are they? Are these too open, too raw to preserve the dignity, the wealth of a relationship with a loving yet mighty Creator? Only time will tell.

If you have the time, you, too, may sense a freedom never allowed before in the context of an open relationship of communication called prayer. If so, may the words of your mouths and the meditations of my heart alongside of yours be acceptable, O Lord, the strength of my life and my prayers and the redeemer of all I attempt. Read on... and pray along with me!

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These prayers are scheduled according to the seasons in which they were written, from September 2019 through August 2020, and based on those months having five Sundays. Readers may alter the schedule as necessary.