

A Simple Way to Pray

MARTIN LUTHER'S PRAYER TOOL

Of all the things Martin Luther is known for, among the foremost is his dedication to prayer. He is famous for commenting, "I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." And he wasn't exaggerating, either. Many of his friends and students attested that he would spend several hours on his knees in fervent, daily prayer—often at seemingly inopportune times in the middle of the day. At one point, Luther's longtime friend, asked if he would teach him how to pray. Luther responded by writing a letter which he called, "A Simple Way to Pray."

Luther would meditate on a portion of Scripture and then think of it as a garland of four strands: instruction, thanksgiving, confession, and prayer. Thus, every biblical text became a "school text, a song book, a penitential book, and a prayer book. Take 10 minutes on your own to read through whatever passage you want. As God speaks to you by his Word and stirs your affections, fill in the chart with any thoughts that are prompted. Then simply respond in prayer.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Instruction: The teaching of the text in a nutshell

Thanksgiving: How does this lead me to thank and praise God?

Confession: How does this lead me to confess sin and repent?

Prayer: How does this lead me to pray for others, the world, or myself?