

Praying Through the Bible

James 2:1-13

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(Please See the **Note to Teachers** Below)

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, the gift you freely gave to me as I heard the truth of your Word and your Spirit worked in my life. Help me to show by what I do and by what I will not do that my faith in you is true. Help me to see others as people created in your image so I do not show favoritism toward rich or poor. Help me to act in such a way that no one would ever see me showing preference for a rich person over a poor person. Help me to avoid evil thoughts that might lead me to judge others by appearances. Father, I thank you for all who live rich in faith even though they are poor or in spite of being wealthy. Rich and poor have different and varied needs at times, meet their needs and give them assurance each day of their place in your kingdom. Fill them with your love and peace even as your love overflows in their lives and enables them to love you and others. Protect the poor from dishonor, oppression, and the dishonesty of others. Lead those who are rich, but not rich toward you, to repent of their sins and treat others right. Teach me how to respond when I hear your name misused by others or your Word twisted to mislead the uninformed. Give me wisdom to see how I can truly love my neighbor whether rich or poor, and keep me from the sin of partiality. Reveal to me any intentional or unintentional sins that I may commit or practice so I can repent and do right in the future with the guidance and power your Spirit gives me. Father, I have violated your holy law of love in many ways, forgive me and show me the loving things to say and do in every situation. Fill me with your Spirit that I might fulfill your law of love in the liberty you gave me when you freed me from the law of sin and death. Grant me mercy and forgiveness, O Lord, and help me to show mercy and forgiveness toward others so they can see you and your character in your life lived through me. In Jesus's name and for His sake, I pray. Amen.

Note to Teachers on Teaching How to Pray Through the Bible

Many years ago I learned how to pray through the Bible from Edith Schaeffer. Her husband, Francis Schaeffer, said that he did not pray in this way. You may find this way helpful, and perhaps a helpful way to teach your students more about how to pray or a new way of praying. When praying through the Bible, we use the ideas and sometimes the words in the Bible verse-by-verse to pray to God, and we pray for the Holy Spirit to help us do this type of praying. From time to time, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the Providence of God (or the way of God working in our personal lives) will

combine so we know that God is speaking to us directly in answer to our prayers as we pray through the Bible. For example, as Edith Schaeffer was praying through the Bible one day, God spoke to her through the Bible in a way that convinced her that God wanted their family to begin L'Abri in the mountains of Switzerland. To pray through the Bible, try first to pray something related to each verse that you read. Sometimes this will not work well because of the type of text you are reading. For example, the Psalms are easier to pray through than some genealogical and historical texts. When teaching your class the Bible and also how to pray more effectively, you may want to teach your class how to pray through each verse of your Bible Lesson for that day. You might want to assign each student in class one verse from the lesson to write a prayer on that verse. I will be putting some of my prayers based on the weekly *International Bible Lesson* on the commentary website as examples or for you to use during your class time. You may want to close your class with one of my prayers, or with one of your prayers as the teacher, or with a prayer of one or more of your students, or with a combined prayer using each student's assigned verse. If time permits, at the end of your class you may want your students to write their own prayers based on the entire Scripture lesson, with the understanding that they will not need to share their prayers with others unless they would like to do so. Teachers need to be careful not to use praying through the Bible as a way to simply summarize a Bible lesson or to make a moral or spiritual application for the students in your class, because then your prayer becomes more of a prayer to your students than a prayer to God. If you would like to learn more about prayer, I would recommend ***How God Teaches Us to Pray: Lessons from the Life of Francis and Edith Schaeffer***.