



ENOUGH TO SAY THANK YOU

The Penitent Petitioner



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To my children

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Foreword

These prayers come from a place I did not invent.

They are original — not translations, not paraphrases of scripture — written inside a contemplative devotional discipline that shaped their restraint, their cadence, and their seriousness. They do not borrow from a formal liturgy.

Prayer, in that discipline, is not performance.

It is posture.

These prayers keep that posture: direct address, humility, gratitude, patience, trust. They avoid ornament. They avoid instruction. They avoid naming more than is necessary.

This is not a doctrinal treatise. The particulars belong to the speaker. The posture — humility before what is greater, trust in what sustains, gratitude for what is given — belongs to anyone who has stood in it. These prayers arise from one person's faith while leaving room for the reader's own.

The book is not built to be read straight through.

It is thirty-three prayers, each addressing one internal state.

One prayer for fear.

One for patience.

One for loss.

One for the day you return after being away.

You return to what you need, when you need it. Read one a day for a month, or one a week for most of a year, or read the prayer that names what you are carrying today. They may be read aloud, silently, or simply returned to.

The prayers do not build on each other. Each stands alone. Each ends quietly.

If something here holds, keep it.

If it does not, leave it without resentment.

That, too, is part of the discipline.

Enough

I have asked for more than I need.

I have asked when I already had what would sustain me.

I have named need when I meant comfort, and comfort when I meant control.

Teach me what is enough.

Not as deprivation, not as settling, but as the end of reaching.

Let me feel the weight of what I carry and see that it is sufficient.

The coffee is hot. The rent is paid. There is bread on the counter.

I do not ask to want less.

I ask to see clearly what I already hold.

Let me stop before I am full and call it care, not sacrifice.

If this is all You give today, let it be enough.

If this is all You give tomorrow, let me receive it the same way.

Teach me to stop asking.

Gratitude Without Noise

I thank You not because it feels good, not because I have been told to, but because You have given and I have received.

Let my thanks be simple.

Free of performance. Free of audience. Free of the need to prove I am grateful enough.

I do not need to announce what You have done.

I do not need to list Your gifts as if gratitude were accounting.

You know what You have given.

I know what I hold.

Let that be enough.

If my thanks are quiet, let them still be heard.

If my thanks are small, let them still be true.

I am not writing a testimony.

I am not building a case.

I am saying: Thank You.

Let it be that simple.

What Is Withheld

I have asked for what You did not give.

I do not know why. I will not pretend to know.

But I know that You give and You withhold, and both come from the same hand.

Teach me to receive Your refusal as I receive Your gifts: with trust, with humility, without demanding explanation.

Let me not call denial neglect.

Let me not call limit punishment.

If what I wanted would have harmed me, I may never know.

If what I wanted would have turned me from what matters, the knowing may come late, or not at all.

Let that be acceptable.

I do not ask You to give me what You have withheld.

I ask You to steady me in the space between asking and receiving, where Your answer is also care, even when the answer is no.

Keep me from bitterness.

Patience in the Middle

I am waiting for what has not come.

I do not see the end. I cannot return to the beginning.

I wake to the same unfinished thing.

I go to sleep with it still unresolved.

The calendar is full of crossed-out dates.

The phone does not ring.

The door stays closed.

How long?

I am tired of being told to wait.

I am tired of trusting what I cannot see.

I am tired of the answers that are not answers: soon, in time,
when it is right.

I have been patient.

And nothing has moved.

Teach me to wait without urgency, without despair, without counting the days.

You have not promised speed.

You have not promised to show me when.

Let me stay here when here is all I have.

I do not ask for the end to come sooner.

I do not ask to understand the delay.

I ask to remain without collapsing, without running ahead.

Keep me here, in the middle, until the middle is done.

Being Carried

I have pretended to stand on my own.

I have counted my strength and forgotten Yours.

Every breath I did not earn.

Every step You upheld.

Teach me to let myself be held without shame.

This is not failure.

This is the truth beneath the pretending.

I do not ask for independence.

I ask to see my dependence and stop calling it defeat.

Attention

I have looked without seeing.

The weight of the cup I hold.

The sound of water running.

The way light falls differently each hour.

Teach me to notice.

Not as a practice to perfect, but as presence before what is.

Let me receive these without grasping and notice without needing to keep.

If all I do today is notice, let that be enough.

Steadiness

Nothing has changed.

I have prayed, I have waited, I have done what was before me.

And still: nothing has changed.

Let me not mistake steadiness for failure.

Let me remain upright when there is no movement to confirm me, no outcome to justify the standing, no resolution to mark the end.

You have not promised transformation.

You have promised to hold what would otherwise fall.

Let that be enough.

I stand because You steady what I cannot steady myself.

Let faithfulness be this: remaining, when remaining is all there is.

Keep me upright.

Not unmoved, but unshaken.

Fear, Named

I am afraid.

I do not know if the fear is reasonable. I do not know if it will come true.

But the fear is here, and pretending otherwise has not helped.

Let me name it without feeding it.

Let me say it plainly:

I am afraid of loss, afraid of pain, afraid of being left with nothing, afraid I will not be enough when it matters.

I am afraid of the test results.

I am afraid of the email I have not opened.

I am afraid of the conversation I keep postponing.

I am afraid of what I will find if I look closely at what I have been avoiding.

I bring this fear to You not because You will take it away, but because I cannot carry it alone.

Teach me to hold fear without letting it decide for me.

Let me acknowledge what frightens me and still move forward.

I do not ask for fearlessness.

I ask for steadiness in the presence of what I cannot control.

Keep me from pretending.

Keep me from collapsing.

Let the fear be real, and let me be held anyway.

Trust Without Proof

I have no proof that You are listening.

No sign that what I ask will be given.

No confirmation that this trust is warranted.

And yet I trust You.

Not because I feel certain, not because I have been shown, but because trust is what I offer when I have nothing else to give.

The unanswered prayer sits on my desk like unopened mail.

I keep coming back to it.

Teach me to trust without needing evidence first, without requiring comfort, without demanding that You prove Yourself to me.

Let trust be simple: I give this to You. You will do what You will do.

I do not know what You will choose.

I do not know how this will end.

But I know I cannot hold it alone, and I know You can.

Let that be enough.

Let trust be what remains when certainty is gone.

What I Control

I have worried about what I cannot change.

I have planned outcomes I cannot guarantee.

I have held tight to what was slipping through my hands
anyway.

The worry did not help. The planning did not secure it. The
holding did not keep it.

Teach me to see clearly what is mine to do and what belongs to
You.

I can show up. I can try.

But I cannot make it turn out the way I want.

I can care deeply.

But I cannot stop others from choosing differently.

I can work with everything I have.

But the result is not mine to command.

Let me act with what I have been given: my attention today, my
effort now, my willingness to begin again tomorrow.

Let me do my part and trust You with the rest.

What I Release

I have been holding tight.

The resentment that keeps replaying the same scene.

The need to know why it happened the way it did.

The anger I return to when I feel powerless.

The hurt I keep as evidence.

The text message I keep rereading.

The conversation I rehearse endlessly.

The door I keep checking even though no one is coming back.

I cannot fix any of it by holding it.

I release these now.

I open my hands.

I do not need to understand before I let go.

I do not need to feel ready.

What I release, I give to You.

Not because it no longer matters, but because I cannot carry it
and still do what is mine to do.

Teach me to let go quietly, to put down what I was never meant
to hold, to walk forward with empty hands.

Mercy Toward Myself

I have been harsh with myself.

I have held myself to standards I would not impose on anyone else. I have rehearsed my failures and dismissed my efforts as insufficient.

I have spoken to myself in ways I would call cruel if I heard another person speak them.

Teach me mercy.

Not as excuse, not as permission to harm, but as the willingness to see myself as You see me: flawed, limited, trying, held.

Let me acknowledge what I have done wrong without believing I am only what I have done wrong.

Let me take responsibility without taking on contempt.

I do not ask to be excused.

I ask to stop punishing myself for being human.

Let mercy be this: gentleness that does not require perfection first.

I am not finished. Neither am I condemned.

Mercy Toward Others

A name came up and I had already decided.

I have seen the surface and believed I understood the whole.

I have assigned motive without knowing. I have condemned without hesitation. I have drawn conclusions from incomplete evidence and felt certain I was right.

Teach me to withhold judgment.

Not because others are blameless, not because harm should be ignored, but because I see so little and assume so much.

Let me name wrongdoing without claiming to know the fullness of the person who did it.

Let me hold others accountable without deciding their worth.

I ask to stop believing that my limited view is the final word.

Let mercy be this: the refusal to reduce anyone to the worst thing I know about them.

Let judgment belong to You alone.

Restraint

I reach for more when I already have enough.

The second portion when the first satisfied me.

The extra word when silence would have held.

The larger share when the smaller would have served.

Teach me restraint.

Not as punishment, but as the freedom to stop reaching.

To take what I need and leave the rest.

To say what matters and let the silence stand.

Teach me the smallness that is not lack, the quiet that is not emptiness.

Loss

Something is gone.

I reach for it and find only absence.

I turn toward where it was and the space is empty.

I do not understand why this was taken.

I do not understand why now.

I will not pretend to see purpose in this pain.

I will not dress the loss in explanations.

I will not make it mean something it does not mean.

It is simply gone, and I am left with the missing.

The chair no one sits in.

The name I do not say out loud anymore.

The future I planned that will not happen.

Teach me to carry absence the way I carried presence: as something You have allowed.

I do not ask You to explain.

I do not ask You to justify.

I ask You to hold me while I hold this emptiness, to steady me when the grief pulls everything loose.

Let me grieve honestly.

Let me trust You with what I cannot understand.

What was here is gone.

You remain.

After the Loss

The loss is no longer new.

The shock has faded. Others have moved on.

But I still—

I still set the table and remember who is missing.

I still reach for the phone.

I still expect the door to open.

The work does not stop.

The days do not pause.

Life requires me to continue.

Teach me to move forward while the grief remains.

Not moving on.

Learning to live with the shape of the loss still present.

Let me be fully here even as I grieve what is gone.

You have not taken the absence away.

But You steady me as I carry it.

Let me trust You with what I cannot resolve, only bear.

Work

I have made my work my worth.

I have believed that what I produce defines what I am.

I have measured my days by what I accomplished and called myself a failure when it was not enough.

The inbox that never empties.

The screen that measures my output.

The hours I log like proof.

Teach me to work as an offering, not as proof.

Let me do the work before me not to earn my place, but because the work itself deserves care.

When the work goes well, let me receive it with gratitude, not pride.

When the work fails, let me acknowledge it without believing I have become the failure.

I am not what I produce.

Let me offer what I can do today and trust You with what it becomes.

Rest

It is late. The list is not finished.

I have believed that rest must be earned.

That I may stop only when everything is finished, only when I have proven I worked hard enough, only when exhaustion gives me permission.

Teach me to rest not as reward, but as obedience.

To stop while work remains, trusting that You do not require me to carry what belongs to tomorrow.

The list will still be there in the morning.

The email will wait.

The project will not collapse if I sleep.

Let me lie down without rehearsing what I did not finish.

Let me sleep without justifying the stopping.

Let me receive rest as I receive breath: not because I earned it, but because You give it.

Tonight, let me trust You with what I leave undone.

Let rest be simple: I stop. You continue.

Silence

I fill the silence because it makes me uneasy.

I speak when I have nothing to say.

I reach for noise when quiet presses in.

I avoid the stillness where nothing distracts me from what I do not want to face.

Teach me to sit in silence without filling it, without fixing it, without making it mean more than it is.

Let silence be what it is: the absence of words, the presence of what remains when I stop talking.

I do not ask for visions. I do not ask for revelations.

I ask to be steady in the quiet, to let it stand without needing it to become something else.

Let me stop speaking and simply be here, before You, with nothing to prove, nothing to explain, nothing to add.

Let the silence be enough.

The Unseen

I see so little of what You do.

The wound closes slowly, beneath the skin.

The seed grows underground before it breaks the surface.

The anger softens over months, not days.

The habit changes so gradually I do not notice until it is already different.

I see what is in front of me. I do not see what shifts beneath.

Teach me to trust what I cannot see.

Not because I will someday understand it, but because You do not require my sight to do what needs doing.

Let me plant what needs planting even when I will not see the harvest.

Let me give care that goes unnoticed and trust it still matters.

Let me do today's work and trust that what I cannot see is also being tended.

I do not need to see the whole.

I only need to trust that You see what I cannot.

Correction

I have been going the wrong way.

Something has stopped me. Something has redirected me.

I did not want to be wrong. I did not want to turn back.

But You have made it clear: this path goes nowhere, this choice leads away from what matters, this direction ends badly.

Teach me to receive correction as care.

To see the closed door not as rejection, but as protection.

To accept the redirection even when it feels like failure.

Let me be humble enough to admit I was mistaken and flexible enough to change course.

I do not need correction to feel gentle.

I need the strength to receive it and the wisdom to follow where You lead.

Keep me from resisting what is meant to save me.

Humility

I am not as important as I believe I am.

The world does not turn on my choices.

Most of what I worry about will not be remembered.

Teach me to see myself accurately.

I am small. But I am not nothing.

I matter. But I am not the center.

Let me carry my share without believing the whole depends on me.

I am one person, in one place, with one set of tasks.

That is not a failure. That is my place.

Let me be small gladly, knowing that small is still seen by You.

Hope Without Promise

I hope for what has not been promised.

I want the test results to be good.

I want the relationship to heal.

I want to see a way forward that does not yet exist.

But You have not guaranteed any of this.

Teach me to hope not because I am certain, but because I choose to keep moving.

I write letters that may never be answered.

I show up to work that may not bear fruit.

I care for what I cannot fix.

This is not optimism, and it is not confidence in outcomes.

This is hope: I do what is before me as if good might still come, even when no one has promised me it will.

Let me hope in You, not in guarantees.

Return

I have been away.

I stopped praying. I stopped trying. I turned toward other things.

I do not have a good explanation.

I do not have a dramatic story of return.

I am simply here again.

Teach me to return without ceremony, to come back without needing a moment of transformation, a decisive change, a narrative that makes sense of the wandering.

I return because I return. That is all.

Let me begin again without announcing it, without needing to explain where I have been, without requiring my return to feel significant.

I open the door. I step back in. I resume.

Let return be simple: I was away. Now I am here.

Forgiveness

I do not want to forgive.

The harm was real. The hurt remains.

Forgiveness feels like saying it did not matter, like pretending it was smaller than it was.

But I am tired of carrying this.

Teach me to forgive not because I am required to, but because I choose to stop letting this person's actions define every interaction that follows.

Forgiveness is not forgetting. I remember what happened.

Forgiveness is not excusing. The harm was wrong.

Forgiveness is release: I will not hold this over them forever. I will not rehearse it. I will not let it be the only thing I see when I see them.

This does not happen all at once.

But I begin it now.

Let me release what I cannot undo, and trust You with what justice requires.

Obedience to Reality

I have argued with what is.

I have insisted my body should not hurt this way.

I have wished my circumstances were different.

I have refused to accept the time that has passed, the money I do not have, the relationship that will not change.

I have exhausted myself fighting what will not bend.

Teach me to accept what is.

Not as defeat, but as the ground I must stand on if I am going to move at all.

I cannot work with what I wish were true. I can only work with what is here.

This body. This situation. This day.

Let me stop spending my energy on the argument and use it for what can actually be done.

Acceptance is not approval.

I can accept what is and still work to change what can be changed.

But first, I must stop pretending.

This is what I have. Let me begin here.

Care

I have cared with clenched fists.

I have given help and demanded it be received my way.

I have tended what I cannot fix and grown angry when it did not improve.

I have confused care with control.

Teach me to care without owning, to give without claiming, to tend without insisting on outcomes.

Let me do the tending and trust You with the growing.

Let me offer presence, attention, kindness given freely.

But let me release the rest.

I cannot make anyone heal.

I cannot force anyone to change.

I cannot guarantee that my care will produce the result I want.

Let me care anyway.

Let me give what is mine to give for as long as I can give it, and trust You with what I cannot.

Time

I do not have forever.

The hours pass. The years accumulate.

The time I thought I had is less than I believed.

I have spent time as if it were limitless.

I have postponed what mattered, waited for better circumstances, assumed I would return to it later.

Teach me to live within the time I have.

Not with urgency, not with panic, but with clarity about what is finite.

Let me choose today what I would choose if I knew how little time remains.

Let me give attention to what matters and stop pretending I will have time for everything.

I will not finish all I intended. I will not do all I imagined.

Let me do what is mine to do in the time You have given, and let that be sufficient.

Time is not mine to hoard or command. It is Yours.

The Body

This is the body I have.

Not the one I wanted. Not the one I imagined.

This one.

It tires when I push it.

It hurts in ways I cannot explain.

It needs rest, food, care I sometimes resent giving.

Teach me to trust this body.

Not to celebrate it, not to transcend it, but to live in it honestly.

It breathes without my instruction.

It heals wounds I do not consciously tend.

It knows when to sleep before I admit I am tired.

Let me listen when it speaks: the hunger that asks to be fed, the fullness that says stop, the exhaustion that says rest, the pain that says something is wrong.

I did not choose this body.

But it is mine to steward, mine to care for, mine to trust with my days.

Let me be grateful for what it does without demanding it do more than it can.

This body carries me. Let me carry it with kindness.

The Mind

My mind speaks with authority it does not have.

The thought says I am failing.

The thought says disaster is coming.

The thought says no one will help.

The thought says I am worthless.

The thought says this will never get better.

The thought says I should have known.

The thought says everyone is judging me.

The thought says I do not deserve rest.

I did not choose these thoughts.

They arrive unbidden.

Teach me to see thoughts as thoughts, not as truth, not as commands, not as the final word on who I am.

The thought says I am worthless. That does not make it true.

The thought says disaster is coming. That does not mean I must live as if it already has.

Let me hold my thoughts lightly, neither dismissing them entirely nor granting them the power to decide for me.

The mind is restless. The mind is loud. The mind does not rest easily.

But I am not only what my mind tells me I am.

Let me hear the noise and still choose what I do next.

What Remains

After the effort, after the loss, something remains.

Not what I expected. Not what I planned for.

But something.

I am still breathing.

The ground still holds.

There is still coffee in the morning.

There are still hands that reach for mine.

There is still work that needs doing, small as it is.

There is still a door I can open.

There is still a bed I can lie down in.

Teach me to see what remains not as leftover, not as what I settled for, but as what endures.

What I built may have fallen.

What I loved may be gone.

What I hoped for may not have come.

But I am here.

There are still people who need what I can give.

Let me not despise what remains because it is less than what I wanted.

Let me begin again with what is still here: these hands, this day, this breath.

This is not nothing. This is what remains.

The Day Given

This is the day I have been given.

Not the day I planned. Not the day I hoped for.

This day.

It opens before me with its tasks, its interruptions, its small mercies and small frustrations.

Teach me to receive it as it is.

Let me not spend the morning wishing it were already evening.

Let me not waste the hours rehearsing tomorrow or replaying yesterday.

This day will not come again. These hours are the only ones I have.

The coffee is hot.

The email needs answering.

The conversation needs having.

The rest needs taking.

Let me meet what is before me.

I do not know what tomorrow will bring.

I cannot change what yesterday held.

But I have today.

Let me receive it not as burden, but as gift.

Enough to Say Thank You

I do not have eloquent words.

I cannot name all the ways You have held me.

But I can say this: Thank You.

For what I noticed and what I did not.

For what I asked for and what You gave instead.

For what You withheld that would have harmed me.

Thank You for the breath I am breathing now.

Thank You for the ground beneath me.

Thank You for the day I have been given.

I do not need to say more.

It is enough to say thank You.

I have been carried. I have been steadied. I have been held.

Thank You.

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Thirty-three prayers, written in a non-denominational voice and rooted in a contemplative devotional discipline.

Each prayer addresses one internal state: fear, patience, loss, work, rest, the day you return after being away. The language is direct and restrained, offered without doctrinal instruction, and each prayer ends quietly.

This is a book to return to rather than to finish. Read one a day for a month, or reach for the one that names what you are carrying today. It favors return over completion, discipline over aspiration, and silence over certainty.

It is a practice rather than a theory — a path walked again, not a destination reached once.

I have asked for more than I need.

Teach me what is enough.

*Not as deprivation, not as settling,
but as the end of reaching.*

— from “Enough”

The Penitent Petitioner