



Prayer Thoughts: Praying Scriptures with God Power

Orva Lynn Kaufmann

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In its careful reflections, Prayer Thoughts will offer contemplative Christians much hope and inspiration.

Orva Lynn Kaufmann's devotional work *Prayer Thoughts* is a compendium of Christian reflections designed to aid in both contemplation and action.

The book's fifty-three short essays—the “prayer thoughts” of the title—neatly parallel the calendar year, with readings that apply to holy times like Christmas and Pentecost as well as others that are more topically based. These guided readings are designed to be helpful both in good times and bad.

Each selection knits together biblical texts and includes a mix of praise, repentance, requests, and reminders to yield to God's ways. The organization is nicely rhythmic, and each element reflects long-standing worship traditions.

Prayers are generally brief, usually encompassing just four or five short paragraphs. The topics chosen reflect common themes in Christian spirituality, including guidance, hope, and love, though they also tackle challenging notions such as terrorism, Satan, and fear. Bible verses carry most of the weight, serving as a source of inspiration and reflection. In its variety, the book speaks to the wide range of Christian experiences, ranging from finding joy to soul-searching and repentance.

Prayers often include teaching elements, describing concepts like blessing, family time, and Christian freedom. Following each prayer, the book includes space for reflection, so that it may also serve as a way to trace one's spiritual ideas. The prayers reflect conservative evangelical theology and practice.

Within prayers, bits of scripture—including verses from Psalms, admonitions from Proverbs, and teaching texts from the gospels—wind together to make even familiar verses seem fresh and new, though still allowing their individual wisdom to shine through. The approach itself is not unique, but is used to good effect.

It is easy to imagine incorporating these prayers in the process of worship planning or design. The book's prayers for holidays like Lent and Easter add emphasis on teaching, making them especially meaningful.

At their best, the prayers read more like poetry than prose. They are compiled in a readable and relatable way, remaining approachable throughout, even during the exploration of potentially difficult topics. Prayers easily bridge the gaps between various Bible verses with thoughtful reflections, clarifying remarks, or messages of hope.

This straightforward, thoughtful book succeeds in offering an adaptable, meaningful approach to prayer. The careful reflections within *Prayer Thoughts* will offer contemplative Christians much hope and inspiration.

JEREMIAH ROOD (April 19, 2018)

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