

Announcements!

Weekly Bible Study We invite each of you to attend the mid-week Bible Study, held upstairs each Tuesday evening beginning at 6 pm. We encourage you to attend these vital and exciting studies!

Children's Church Children's Church is available upstairs on the 2nd-5th Sundays starting at 11:00 am. Ages 2-10 are welcome to attend. Please sign your children in and out. A snack is served. Please pick up your children promptly after services. ALL DONATIONS ARE WELCOMED. If you are interested in serving in Children's Church, please see Sarita Agee.

Donuts for Dads! Our children's church ministry would like to invite you to participate in a special treat on Sunday June 17th in honor of all our dads! We will have "doughnuts for dads" immediately following services. Please come by. Thank you! ECC KIDS

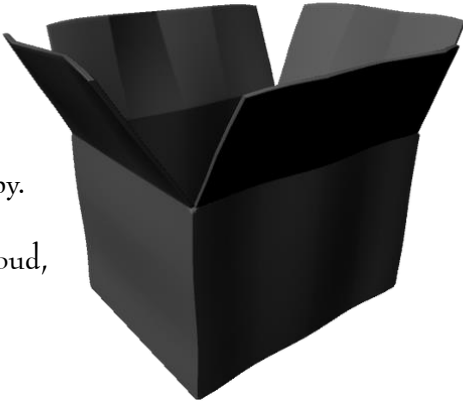
Words of Wisdom: God's Boxes...

I have in my hands two boxes which God gave me to hold. He said, "Put all your sorrows in the black, and all your joys in the gold."



I heeded His words, and in the two boxes both my joys and sorrows I stored; but though the gold became heavier each day, The black was as light as before.

With curiosity, I opened the black; I wanted to find out why. And I saw, in the base of the box, a hole which my sorrows had fallen out by.



I showed the hole to God, and mused aloud, "I wonder where my sorrows could be." He smiled a gentle smile at me. "My child, they're all here with me."

I asked, "God, why give me the boxes, Why the gold, and the black with the hole?" "My child, the gold is for you to count your blessings, The black is for you to let go."



Welcome to the Everlasting Covenant Church



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Follow Us:  "The Everlasting Covenant Church", Birmingham, AL
 "THE_ECC2015"

Eric R. Agee, Jr., Pastor

June 10, 2018

Vision Statement:



Enhancing Our Knowledge of Jesus Christ,
Empowering All Believers for Ministry, and
Encouraging Continuous Dedication to the Lord.

Order of Services

Fellowship | Refreshments – 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School – 10:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Services – 11:00 a.m.

Announcements & Recognition of Visitors

Call to Worship: Scripture Reading & Prayer

Tithes and Offerings; Prayer of Thanksgiving

Praise and Worship Selections

Sermon

Invitation to Christ

Benediction

How to Pray...

Taken from <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/how-to-pray.html>

I'm a wanna-be prayer warrior. I long to grow a deeper prayer life, but I have a secret struggle with boredom. I know prayer carries power and changes lives. But when I sit down to pray, I find it hard to focus. Are prayer wimps a thing? I suspect I am one and I'm left wondering how to pray better.

I don't mean to be flippant. Prayer is an amazing privilege. Through words like these in scripture, we have an open invitation from the God of the universe: "Call to me and I will answer you." (Jeremiah 33:3a) We have a promise that He hears us: "You will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you." (Jeremiah 29:12) Through the pages of our Bibles, we see examples of men who prayed. Even Jesus, the Son of God, prayed. So I know I should too, but I find it challenging. I suspect I'm not alone. Many Christians struggle with knowing how to pray.

Maybe we over-spiritualize it. We think we have to pray long and eloquent for it to really work. We measure ourselves with spiritual giants like Billy Graham or Mother Teresa, and we feel unqualified and unworthy. Sometimes we separate prayer from the rest of life; we look at it as something we do at prayer meetings or in our quiet time. When I read Paul's words in Colossians 4:2, "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful," I wonder... how do I devote myself to prayer when I have a regular life with a job and kids? I forget that Paul was surely talking about a heart attitude, not a never-ending prayer meeting or devotional time. Devoted prayer is a heart tendency to turn to God at each turn in our day. On my journey from prayer wimp to warrior, I'm discovering a few practical tips for how to pray:

Tip 1: Pray Simply - We might think we have to pray passionate, persuasive words for God to hear us, but in reality He listens even to our shortest "SOS" prayers. "The fewer the words, the better the prayer," said Martin Luther. Isn't that reassuring? We can talk to God in everyday language, just like we talk to a friend. We don't have to pray long. God delights in a simple word of praise, like "Lord, I love you." He treasures the anguished prayer of a mother when she calls, "Heal my child." He answers the simplest request: "Lord, give me strength for today."

Tip 2: Read the Word - Have you ever had a one-sided conversation with someone who talked continually without listening to you? The conversation didn't go very far, did it? We do the same thing to God when we pray without reading the Bible, His eternal letter of love and wisdom to each one of us on earth. Reading Scripture helps us get to know God. It brings life to our prayers. If you want to have a more effective conversation with God, read Scripture. Let David's words in the Psalms enliven your prayers. Stop in the Gospels to pray over a verse that strikes you, asking God to work that truth into your heart. Let the words of Paul's letters give you specific prayer requests for yourself and the people you love.

Tip 3: Make Prayer Active and Multi-Sensory - Prayer grows dull when we turn it into a purely mental exercise. God made us creative beings, so why don't we bring creativity to our prayer lives? Lighting a fragrant candle can send a signal to our brains: "It's time to pray." It can bring a sacred sense of awe to a few minutes of prayer. Listening to music can help us focus on God. Many people enjoy doodling, drawing, or painting while they pray. I help my ADHD-plagued brain focus on prayer by keeping a prayer journal. Making a list of requests keeps my mind alert; I stop to pray for each petition after jotting it down. Occasionally I write out longer prayers like a letter. A prayer journal builds faith when you look back over your petitions and recall God's answers. Remember you don't have to sit quietly to pray. My best prayer times happen out on the walking trail. Praying aloud also helps me keep my mind engaged, but I save that for prayer times at home.

Tip 4: Make Prayer an Integral Part of Your Day - This verse baffles me: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;" (1 Thess. 5:16-17) Is it really possible to pray without ceasing? How about trying an experiment? Start and end your day with prayer. Lift up short prayers to God as often as you can throughout your day. Pray over your schedule. Ask God to help you with your to-do list. When you hear a troubling news report, lift the situation up to God. Say a prayer for your spouse or child as you give him or her a hug. Pray for the person you're talking to. A friend of mine gives thanks whenever she stops at red lights while driving. Look for prayer moments that work for your life.

Tip 5: Pray Expectantly - Prayer becomes a lifeless exercise when we're not looking for answers. Jesus invites us to expect God to work. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7) How much more exciting prayer becomes when we keep our eyes open to watch for God's answers. Sometimes I wonder how many answers we miss because we don't really expect God to respond.

Remember Colossians 4:2: "Devote Yourselves to Prayer, being watchful and thankful." How about getting started today? Don't get discouraged if you get distracted like I do. Just get back on track. Pray and watch for God's answers, so you can thank Him. He might answer differently than you expect, but His answer will always be better than what you had in mind.

Sermon Notes

Scripture: _____

Subject: _____

Notes: _____
