

S T U D Y   G U I D E



# BLESSING AND PRAISE

BENEDICTIONS AND DOXOLOGIES  
IN SCRIPTURE

H. B. CHARLES JR.

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# Blessing and Praise

## Benedictions and Doxologies in Scripture

H.B. Charles Jr.



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

*Renew your Mind.*

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# Introduction

The Bible contains numerous blessings from God and praises to God. These summary statements of blessing and praise are full of rich theological truths for your edification and nourishment. In *Blessing and Praise*, Dr. H.B. Charles Jr. draws out these truths in short expositions of some of the most instructive benedictions and doxologies in Scripture. Surveying the content of each pronouncement of blessing and praise, he explains how they ought to affect our worship and daily walk with God.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind you of what you have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills that the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging with its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge that each lecture is communicating.</p>

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that are intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The time stamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at <a href="http://Ligonier.org">Ligonier.org</a>.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

# Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through the *Blessing and Praise* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 10-Week Plan	Standard 8-Week Plan	Abbreviated 6-Week Plan	Intensive 4-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1	1 & 2
2	1	2	2 & 3	3 & 4
3	2	3	4	5 & 6
4	3	4	5	7 & 8
5	4	5	6 & 7	
6	5	6	8	
7	6	7		
8	7	8		
9	8			
10	*			

\* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

# The Ability of God

## INTRODUCTION

Christians long to be assured that God hears them and is able to meet their deepest needs when they pray. Yet many of us do not rightly understand what prayer is or how we ought to pray. In this introductory lesson, Dr. Charles explains the importance of learning to pray in light of the power and glory of God in the Apostle Paul's doxology in Ephesians 3:20–21.

## LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify doxologies in Scripture
- Recognize the God-centered nature of Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14–21
- Know that the purpose of prayer is to glorify God

## KEY IDEAS

- We best learn how to pray by studying the God who answers prayer.
- God is able to do far more than we could ask or think because He is infinitely powerful and omniscient.
- God is glorified in the church and in Christ, whenever He works His power within us.

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## REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Before the Video

#### *What Do You Think?*

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Why are you interested in participating in a study on benedictions and doxologies?
- Why is it important for you to learn to pray in a God-glorifying way? Are there areas in which you would like to grow in your prayer life?

#### *Scripture Reading*

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

—Ephesians 3:20–21

- What does this passage reveal about God's ability to answer our prayers?

### During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

#### *Able to Answer*

0:00–17:26

- What is the best way to learn how to pray?
- What can we learn from the structure of the prayer in Ephesians 3:14–21?
- How does God work His power within us?



*Worthy of Praise*

17:26–26:24

- What ought to be the purpose of all our prayers?
- What are the two platforms on which God is glorified?

*After the Video*

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- “Sometimes we short-circuit our own prayers because we say ‘Amen’ too soon.” Why did Dr. Charles make this assertion?

If you are in a group, encourage the members to discuss the content of their prayers. Consider questions like this: How should we bring our prayers to a close after we have brought our personal requests to God?

- In this lesson, a distinction was made between God’s working “according to” His power and God’s working “out of” His power. What is significant about this distinction?

If you are in a group, discuss the ways in which we think about God’s power to meet our needs. Consider questions like these: Do you ever feel as though your needs and burdens are so great that there is no hope? Have you been in a situation in which you were overwhelmed by a certain need, only to experience God’s powerful work to do more than what you asked or imagined He could do?

- Why should we not worry when we do not “feel” God’s power in us? What does Scripture teach us about God’s power and our weakness?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss how God has used their sense of weakness to drive them to Him in prayer. Encourage them to talk about times in which they have recognized God’s power at work in them when they did not “feel” His power at work.

**PRAYER**

Commit what you have learned from God’s Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for manifesting His power in your life in answer to your prayers.
- Confess how often you forget that the purpose of prayer is to bring glory to God.

- Thank God for being aware of your needs, even when you are unaware of them.
- Ask God to enable you to rely more fully on His power to meet your deepest needs.

## REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Why did Donald Grey Barnhouse once tell his congregation, “Prayer changes nothing”?
  - a. God has already determined what He will do in your life.
  - b. God, not prayer, changes things.
  - c. God doesn’t do what we ask.
  - d. God has made us free.
2. What makes all prayer effective?
  - a. Sincerity
  - b. Boldness
  - c. Articulation
  - d. God-centeredness
3. How does God’s power work in us?
  - a. Through the church
  - b. Through our studying prayer
  - c. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
  - d. Through His making us feel His power
4. What is the ultimate purpose of all true prayer?
  - a. To increase our faith
  - b. To give us peace
  - c. To make us humble
  - d. To bring glory to God
5. What was articulated in this lesson as impossible to have a low view of if you have a high view of Christ?
  - a. The church
  - b. Yourself
  - c. Other people
  - d. All of the above
6. What does the word *amen* mean?
  - a. “We hope so”
  - b. “The end”
  - c. “So be it”
  - d. “To God be the glory”

# Answer Key—The Ability of God

## REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Before the Video

#### *What Do You Think?*

*These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.*

#### *Scripture Reading*

- What does this passage reveal about God's ability to answer our prayers?

*This passage teaches us that God is infinitely powerful and omniscient and is therefore able to meet our deepest needs—even beyond all that we could ask or think. It reveals that God works His power in His people for His own glory. The God who powerfully answers prayers is the God who is glorified in the church and in Christ.*

### During the Video

#### *Able to Answer*

- What is the best way to learn how to pray?

*We do not best learn how to pray by undertaking a study of prayer; we best learn how to pray by studying the prayer-answering God to whom we pray. Prayer works because the sovereign power of God works in answer to our prayers. As we grow in our knowledge of God, we learn to pray to Him as we ought. As Dr. Charles explained, "Christian living must always flow from Christian truth."*

- What can we learn from the structure of the prayer in Ephesians 3:14–21?

*The structure of the prayer highlights the fact that all effective prayer is centered on God. Both before and after the Apostle's petitions are two great statements about God—namely, He is "the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named," and He "is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think."*

- How does God work His power within us?

*God is infinite in power and is therefore Himself the power. God comes and dwells in His people by the Holy Spirit. The power that God works in us is brought about by the indwelling of the Spirit. Though we are, in and of ourselves, weak people, God works His power in us to resist temptation, live obediently, serve faithfully, witness boldly, and suffer joyfully.*

### Worthy of Praise

- What ought to be the purpose of all our prayers?

*Paul closes his prayer with the words “to him be glory.” Accordingly, the purpose of all prayer is the glory of God. As Dr. Charles stated, “The God who is able to answer your biggest request is the God who is worthy to receive your highest praise.” We must learn to pray for things that would bring glory to God and to praise Him when He has met our needs by His powerful work within us.*

- What are the two platforms on which God is glorified?

*God is glorified in the church and in Christ. Ephesians 3:20–21 is the only doxology in the New Testament that contains a reference to the church. When the people of God pray for things that bring glory to God—and God answers those prayers—the church glorifies God by praising Him. The glory of God is displayed in Christ. Jesus is the glory of God. We see the glory of God fully displayed only “in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).*

### After the Video

- “Sometimes we short-circuit our own prayers because we say ‘Amen’ too soon.” Why did Dr. Charles make this assertion?

*We often end our prayers before we have praised the God who is able to answer our prayers above all that we could ask or think. We tend to bring a list of our requests to God without recognizing that God wants us to pray to Him so that He would receive all the glory.*

- In this lesson, a distinction was made between God’s working “according to” His power and God’s working “out of” His power. What is significant about this distinction?

*God doesn’t have power out of which He works. He is infinitely powerful. He is all-powerful. God works “according to” His own infinite power in the lives of His people. This distinction is crucial when we come to God with our needs. The ability of God to surpass our requests and perceived needs is limitless.*

- Why should we not worry when we do not “feel” God’s power in us? What does Scripture teach us about God’s power and our weakness?

*We frequently get discouraged because we do not feel the power of God at work in us. Instead, we should be encouraged to come to God when we feel weak, because we are weak. It is in time of weakness that God works His almighty power in us. The Apostle Paul pleaded with the Lord to take away his debilitating weakness. Rather than doing so, the Lord responded, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).*

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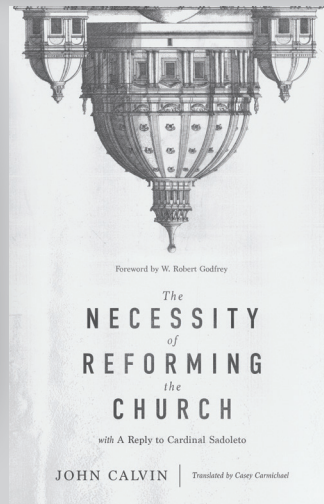
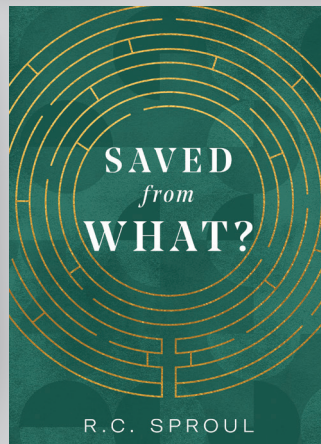
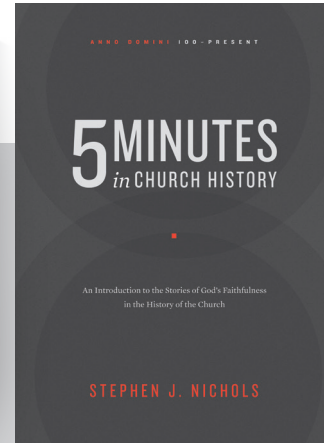
REVIEW QUIZ

## Lesson 1

1. **B.**  
*To emphasize the point that God, rather than prayer, has the power to effect change, Donald Grey Barnhouse once told his congregation, “Prayer changes nothing.” Dr. Charles explained, “Prayer works not because of the words we say, the promises we claim, or the faith we demonstrate. Prayer works because of the sovereign power, the omnipotent power, of almighty God.”*
2. **D.**  
*All effective prayer is God-centered prayer. When we acknowledge who God is and that He is able to hear and answer far beyond what we ask or think according to His power and knowledge, we will be able to pray as we ought to pray.*
3. **C.**  
*God works His power in us by the Holy Spirit. God is infinite in power. When He comes to dwell in the hearts of His people by the Holy Spirit, He works His power within them. As Dr. Charles explained, when someone believes in Christ for salvation, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in his or her heart “immediately, permanently, completely.”*
4. **D.**  
*The ultimate purpose of all true prayer is to bring glory to God. God doesn’t answer prayer, first and foremost, because of us. He does so in order to receive glory in the church and in Christ.*
5. **A.**  
*In this lesson, an emphasis was placed on having a high view of the church. The church is the platform by which God is glorified, so we cannot have a low view of the church if we have a high view of Christ. Christ is the Bridegroom of the church, and the church is the bride of Christ. He is the Shepherd of His sheep and Head of His church.*
6. **C.**  
*The word amen means “so be it.” We conclude our prayers with this word because we are expressing our confidence that God is able to do all that He has promised to do and that He will do it for His own glory. It is not an uncertain well-wishing. It is not a word simply expressing hope. It is a confident affirmation that God answers prayers.*



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