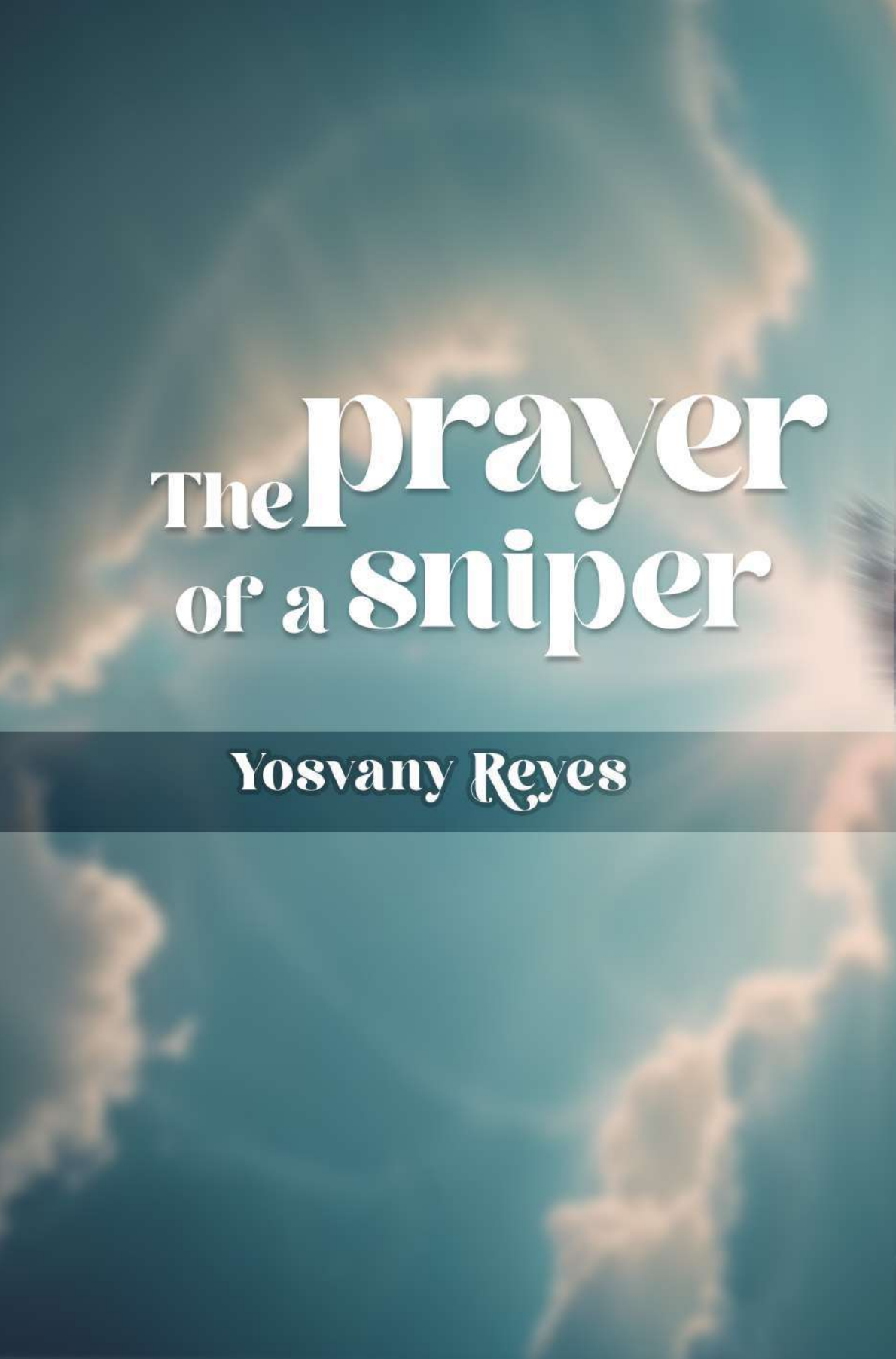

The prayer of a sniper
Yosvany Reyes



A Prayer of a Sniper

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(305) 303-9746

@lanotalatina

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"You shall make your prayer unto him, and he shall hear you, and you shall pay your vows. 28 You shall also decree a thing, and it shall be established for you: and the light shall shine upon your ways".

(Job 22:27-28, KJ2000)

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Yosvany Reyes

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the men and women of God who, like Ezra and David—to name just two of many who have been approved in the presence of God—prepared their hearts, not merely their minds or intellects, to receive the Word of God, remain faithful to it, and then teach it to others:

> ***"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances".***
>
> *(Ezra 7:10, KJ2000)*

> ***"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from your presence; and take not your holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of your salvation; and uphold me with a free spirit. 13 Then will I teach transgressors your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto you".***
>
> *(Psalm 51:10-13, KJ2000)*

To those who hear the Word and receive it with meekness, just as the Berean brothers did—searching the Scriptures not to argue or debate over knowledge, but to verify whether what they were being told was true—with the purpose of receiving and embracing the Word, so they may grow in a healthy way through the teachings of the apostles, who were chosen and taught directly by Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit in all they did and said:

> ***"But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you".***
>
> *(John 16:13-14, KJ2000)*

> ***"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming there went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so".***
>
> *(Acts 17:10-11, KJ2000)*

To those who are willing to receive the Word of God in order to obey it as good soldiers of Christ, and who do not use the name of God as a label for their own benefit:

> ***"And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach!".***
>
> *(Isaiah 4:1, KJ2000)*

> ***And why call me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?".***
>
> *(Luke 6:46, KJ2000)*

> ***"Not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven".***
>
> *(Matthew 7:21, KJ2000)*

To those who desire to grow and become instruments of God, and who are willing to die to their own tastes and desires if these are not pleasing to Him, so that Christ may grow within them:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me".

(Galatians 2:20, KJ2000)

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple".

(Luke 14:26-27, KJ2000)

To those who are willing to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice—holy and pleasing to God—consciously rejecting the temporary pleasures of destruction and death that the world offers:

"For you desire not sacrifice; else would I give it: you delight not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise".

(Psalms 51:16-17, KJ2000)

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God".

(Romans 12:1-2, KJ2000)

To those who are willing to confess the name of Jesus—not merely with words, but through their actions—wherever they go:

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven".

(Matthew 10:32-33, KJ2000)

"It is possible to be a follower of Jesus without being his disciple, to be on the King's side without being his soldier, to be in favor of something without sacrificing anything.

Someone once said to a great professor:

«So-and-so says he was a student of yours."

"He may have attended my classes," the professor replied, "but he wasn't one of my students."

One of the Church's most serious problem is that there are many within it who follow Jesus from afar, but very few true disciples of Jesus."

William Barclay

Introduction

Most people who believe in God fail to consider that even the demons believe—and tremble.

> ***"You believe that there is one God; you do well: the demons also believe, and tremble".***
>
> *(James 2:19, KJ2000)*

Even if they don't attend a place of worship, many people speak to God in one way or another—this is called "praying." When we pray, just as when we speak to someone, we hope for that person's attention—especially when we are facing problems that only God can solve. But how can we capture someone's attention so they will truly listen to what we want to express? In this case, we are speaking of addressing God, so that He may respond to our pleas and requests—those that only He can resolve, thanks to the authority and absolute power found in His omnipotence (supremacy, superiority, and sovereignty).

There are many types of prayers we can direct to God. This doesn't mean they are classified into specific categories in Scripture, but rather that, depending on the purpose of the conversation and what we wish to express, each prayer takes a particular form. For this reason, before you begin reading this book, I want to clarify what you will not find within its pages.

In this book, you won't find a guide on how each person should pray to God from their heart, because every individual has a unique and personal relationship with the Creator. Each person is free to express their joys, dreams, sorrows, fears, frustrations, disappointments, and plans—both present and future—in whatever way they choose.

Nor will you find here instructions on how to pray to God during moments of sadness, depression, anguish, fatigue, or even when the desire to give up feels overwhelming. These emotions are natural and can arise at any stage of life. I'm not referring to a chronic condition, but rather to that intense physical and mental exhaustion that, at times, leaves us without the strength to go on—making it hard to see a way out or a possible solution.

You might think that a man of God couldn't feel this way, but even Elijah—a great servant of God—experienced such exhaustion. This was the same man who slaughtered 450 prophets of Baal (the Canaanite-Phoenician god of fertility and weather) on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18), and who was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind by a chariot of fire with horses of fire sent by God (2 Kings 2:11). He became so weary that he asked Jehovah to take his life. However, God did not grant that request. Instead, He sent the angel of the Lord to strengthen him and enable him to continue fulfilling his mission.

> ***"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers".***
>
> *(1 Kings 19:4, KJ2000)*

> ***"And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for you. 8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God".***
>
> *(1 Kings 19:7-8, KJ2000)*

God multiplies our strength when we have none and leads us by the hand when we trust Him.

"He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint".

(Isaiah 40:29-31, KJ2000)

We can speak to God through Christ, who is the only mediator between God and mankind, no matter how difficult our emotions or feelings may be. These are the kinds of emotions that, due to their level of intimacy, moral guilt, or spiritual pain, we would never dare to share with anyone. Often, we don't know what to do with these repressed emotions, nor do we know whom to turn to for help, since confessing our secrets or sins to the wrong person could turn a private counseling session into a public confession—distorting the original purpose, which was to find relief and spiritual help.

However, I want you to know that Christ is waiting for you. It doesn't matter if you're an atheist, a theologian, a preacher, a hopeless sinner, or someone who has never known God—He wants you to open your broken heart to Him so He can place His miraculous healing over your wounds. You will be set free, joy will return to you, and you will have the peace that only He can give. He will fill the emptiness in your heart—an emptiness that friends, work, money, achievements, efforts, and especially progressive, degenerative addictions that offer instant pleasure with the guaranteed outcome of eternal death can never fill.

"He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds".

(Psalm 147:3, KJ2000)

God loves us, understands us and knows us more than we know ourselves.

So what will we be learning in this book?

In this book, we will talk about two topics that are closely connected: **The Kingdom of God and effective prayer—**the kind of prayer we offer after receiving strength like the eagles, to walk and not grow weary, to run and not grow tired.

In Scripture, we find several verses that compare the life of a Christian to that of a soldier. Regardless of the area in which he serves, a soldier's life is one DEDICATED to service, setting aside the ordinary affairs of personal life. A soldier is COMMITTED to obey without questioning the voice of higher command, often without even knowing the reasons behind the orders received. Moreover, he SACRIFICES his life for the purpose of serving his country and remains FAITHFUL unto death.

William Barclay (December 5, 1907 – January 24, 1978), a minister of the Church of Scotland and professor of divinity and biblical criticism at the University of Glasgow, described what the life of a soldier is like from his perspective in his commentary on 2 Timothy 2:3–4, titled The Soldier of Christ. According to Barclay, the qualities of dedication, commitment, sacrifice, and loyalty are essential in the life of a soldier.

There is no doubt that these same qualities should be present in every person who has sincerely decided to DIE TO SELF and to the old nature in order to follow Jesus Christ. Dedication, commitment, sacrifice, and loyalty unto death must be a genuine and profound way of life—not merely a superficial or outward trait.

The Bible shows us how Paul exhorted Timothy to serve in the Kingdom of God, just as had been prophesied about him, and to endure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It is well known that Timothy was entrusted with a special mission in Thessalonica:

to encourage the Christians who were being persecuted. Timothy embraced this calling with dedication, sacrifice, and, even more, with a willingness to lay down his life for the Gospel.

> ***"This charge I commit unto you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which were made concerning you, that you by them might war a good warfare; 19 Holding faith, and a good conscience";***
> *Timothy 1:18-19a, KJ2000)*

> ***You therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier".***
> *Timothy 2:3-4, KJ2000)*

As we can see in this verse, Paul presents the idea that a soldier, while serving in the army, is far from his family and loved ones, fulfilling his duty. However, since the purpose of this book is prayer, I will not go into an explanation of 2 Timothy 2:3–4 or how a soldier of Christ should be. As I mentioned earlier, not only is that not the aim of this book, but the topic has already been thoroughly addressed by Professor William Barclay and many other prominent commentators.

Instead, I will attempt to show the similarity that I personally see between the prayer of a child of God and certain characteristics found in a sniper. The latter is essentially known as a highly feared soldier due to his special skills, which allow him to inflict precise and significant casualties on enemy forces.

Relationship between a sniper and the prayer of a child of God

You may be wondering: what connection could there possibly be between a sniper and the prayer of a child of God?

This question will be explained in great detail, from my perspective, in the following chapters, using direct Bible verses that require no interpretation—so as to avoid confusion or misinterpretation of Scripture.

For example, if you arrive at a place and see a sign on the wall that says, "No smoking," there is no need for interpretation; it is clearly stated that smoking is not allowed in that area. In the same way, the biblical references I will use will be just as clear and understandable, guiding you, dear reader, to a higher level in your daily prayer life.

All the details will be carefully covered in each chapter, but allow me to offer a brief introduction before we begin.

This idea came to me after watching a YouTube interview with a sniper named Nicholas Irving, which completely changed my perception of snipers. In addition, I read the passage from James 5:16, which says:

> ***"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much".***
>
> *(James 5:16, KJ2000)*

Added to this is the difference I've noticed between how my prayers were fifteen years ago and how they are now, after my first encounter with God back in December 2015. I feel that my prayers today are, in my understanding, closer to those of the men of God we see in Scripture. Of course, Christ is the first and only true example—the one who left us the perfect guide so that we might follow in His footsteps, and no one else's.

For those who wish to watch the interview that inspired this reflection, here is the reference: Ex Sniper Reveals the Dark Side of Being a Sniper (Valuetainment/YouTube channel).

What strikes me powerfully in this passage is that our brother James does not write "the prayer of the righteous," but rather "the effective prayer of the righteous." In other words, for a prayer to be effective, at least two essential requirements must be met before praying: first, one must be righteous in the eyes of God—not in the eyes of men—because appearances can often be deceiving. Some men may appear righteous to us but are not in the eyes of God, or vice versa.

> ***"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart".***
>
> *(1 Samuel 16:7, KJ2000)*

On the other hand, prayer must be effective, since our main objective is to subdue our enemies, mentioned in Ephesians 6:12: dominions, powers, principalities, rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual hosts of wickedness that dwell in the heavenly places. The goal is to place them under our feet by making visible the majesty of the Kingdom under the whole heaven. This majesty has been given to the saints of God through the authority conferred upon us as ambassadors in the name of Christ. This is only possible when we learn to pray efficacious prayers, that is, effective prayers that achieve the desired purpose.

> ***"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him".***
>
> *(Daniel 7:27, KJ2000)*

> ***"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through your name".***
>
> *(Luke 10:17, KJ2000)*

If most people were asked what a sniper is, they would probably say it's someone who, from a strategic position, carefully watches through a scope, pulls the trigger, and hits the target from an impressive distance. At least, that's what I used to think.

Is that what you think a sniper is?

If that's what you think, I want to tell you that you're not entirely wrong—but that concept is vague and incomplete compared to what being a sniper truly involves. In fact, shooting is one of the things snipers practice the least in sniper schools. Marksmanship makes up only about fifteen to twenty percent of what they are taught. In some schools, they may practice shooting a bit more—perhaps up to thirty percent—but what about the remaining seventy or eighty percent of their training? What is that?

Let's see.

First of all, we must understand that making an accurate long-range shot is not simply a matter of looking through a scope and pulling the trigger from a comfortable—or uncomfortable—position. If that were the case, anyone could be a sniper. In the United States, many people carry firearms, and there are numerous places where target practice is legally permitted, supported by the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution.

For a sniper, the ability to read the wind, study nature, and understand humidity and temperature is of vital importance. He must also possess a deep understanding of mathematics and geometry as applied to shooting. This is essential for estimating range, improving accuracy, and being able to operate effectively even if the primary scope becomes unusable.

Another key skill is physical endurance. A sniper must be able to run approximately seven kilometers in 52 minutes while carrying gear that weighs over eleven kilograms.

Snipers spend most of their time on what they call "attention to detail" or "target detection." In this training, small objects such as toothbrushes, bullets, or ropes are hidden in the woods or other environments and must be spotted from a distance using binoculars. This exercise helps them identify tiny anomalies that don't belong in the landscape.

A sniper cannot be colorblind or suffer from mental illness. His physical condition must be excellent. In addition,

- He must be able to properly plan the mission.
- He must move stealthily to the shooting position, and the shot is not taken until all mathematical calculations determining the bullet's trajectory have been completed.
- He must have the patience to wait for days—even when nothing seems to be happening—and endure harsh weather conditions.
- He must study maps, images, and access routes, which are essential to his performance.
- He must undergo rigorous training to master various types of terrain, land navigation tactics, concealment, camouflage, and observation.
- He must be able to give clear commands and make difficult decisions—skills that are just as crucial as the shot itself.

A sniper must also have exceptional mental conditioning.

To illustrate a sniper's effectiveness, it is estimated that during the Vietnam War, it took fifty thousand rounds to eliminate a single enemy soldier. However, when the task was carried out by snipers, only 1.3 bullets were needed per target.

Snipers are a dominant instrument of warfare, striking fear into the heart of the enemy.

British sniper Craig Harrison holds the record for the longest confirmed kill: 2,475 meters, achieved in 2009. This shot surpassed the previous record set by Rob Furlong in 2002, which was 2,430 meters. Harrison's accomplishment is listed in the Guinness World Records.

As is clearly evident, being a sniper requires much more than a firearm and a good scope. Likewise, having effective prayers requires more than just knees and a mouth.

Effective prayer requires more than just knees and a mouth.

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