

SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT FOR IMMANUEL PRAYER

*Use of specific scriptures based on the work of Dr. Ed Smith, with contributions from Jessica Handy, David Mealiff, the Rev. Dr. George B. Koch, and Catherine Penney.
Most verses are quoted from the NIV.*

IS IT BIBLICAL?

Obviously Immanuel Prayer as a technique or process is not discussed in scripture. Jesus never says, “Go into all the world baptizing people and living the Immanuel Lifestyle!” But the foundational beliefs, principles, and goals of Immanuel Prayer are deeply scriptural.

1. First, Immanuel Prayer is rooted in the belief that God is always with us, always has been with us, and always will be with us.

Matthew 1:23 - The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him **Immanuel** (which means “God with us”).

Deuteronomy 31:6, 8 - Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will **never leave you nor forsake you**. ... The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will **never leave you nor forsake you**. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Joshua 1:5 - No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will **never leave you nor forsake you**.

1 Kings 8:57 - May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us nor **forsake** us.

Hebrews 13:5 - Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “**Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.**”

Psalm 73:23 - Yet **I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.**

Matthew 28:20 - And surely **I am with you always**, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three gather in my name, **there am I with them.**”

Hebrews 13:8 - Jesus Christ is the **same yesterday and today and forever.**

Psalm 139 - Almost the entire psalm addresses God with us.

John 4:39 - Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” (*Not only is God with us, but his knowledge of us and choice to relate to us, even in the midst of our sin, is powerful to transform. After Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well, her testimony led many of her townspeople to faith in Jesus. That’s what healing prayer is all about - discovering that God already knows and still chooses to be with us, bringing his truth, light, love and salvation.*)

2. Second, the Triune God—compassionate Father, Son who “became flesh” (Jn 1:14) and even “became sin” (2 Cor 5:21) in order to save us from sin, and comforting and counseling Spirit—brings redemption into every aspect of our lives, including physical, emotional & relational healing. In fact, the Greek word “sozo” (salvation) is used in the New Testament not only for salvation from sin but also for salvation from suffering, punishment, brokenness & destruction. For example, Luke uses the very same word to describe, in addition to Jesus’ death on the cross, all of the following:

- Jesus telling Zacchaeus that “the Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost”
- Jesus’ teaching that those who seek to save their lives will lose them, and those who lose them shall save them (Lk 17:33)
- onlookers mocking Jesus on the cross, saying “save yourself!” (Lk 23:37, 39)
- physical healing of the woman with the flow of blood (Lk 8:48)
- deliverance/restoration of the Gerasene demoniac (Lk 8:36)

This word “sozo” is very similar to the Hebrew “shalom” in its sense of returning to wholeness in all its aspects. Given that God’s saving work in the world is much broader than (though not in any way downplaying) forgiveness and justification, here are some other scriptures that include the concept of healing as physical/emotional:

Deuteronomy 1:29-31 - Then I said to you, "Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. The LORD your God, who is going before you, will **fight for you**, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, and in the desert. There you saw how the LORD your God **carried you**, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place."

Psalm 103:2-3 - Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who **forgives** all your sins and **heals** all your diseases.

Acts 10:38 - God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about **doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil**, for God was with Him.

Isaiah 61 - Pretty much all of this chapter, which Jesus later quoted about himself (Luke 4).

3. **Third, God not only dwells among us and offers wholeness, but he listens to us and communicates with us in ways we can understand.**

Matthew 7:7 - Ask, and it shall be **given** you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be **opened** unto you

Psalm 34:17-18 - The righteous cry out, and the **LORD hears them**; he delivers them from all their troubles.

Ezekiel 14:7 - When any Israelite or any alien living in Israel separates himself from me and sets up idols in his heart and puts a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet to inquire of me, **I the LORD will answer him myself**.

Job 35:4 - "**I will answer you**, And your friends with you.

Psalm 91:15 - He shall call upon me, and **I will answer him**: **I will be with him** in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

Isaiah 30:19 - How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, **he will answer you**.

Isaiah 65:24 - And it shall come to pass, that before they call, **I will answer**; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Jeremiah 33:3 - Call unto me, and **I will answer thee**, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Isaiah 44:17-18 - he makes a god his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, “Save me! You are my god!” They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered

over so they cannot see, their minds closed so they cannot understand. (*Implication: our God is not blind and unthinking/uncaring like the idols*)

1 Corinthians 12:2 - You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. (*Implication: our God is not mute like the idols*)

The entire story of the boy Samuel revolves around the Lord speaking both specifically to Samuel, and, through Samuel, to his people (**1 Sam 3**, esp vv. 8-11, 19-21). See also **Genesis 6 & 18** for Noah and Abraham conversing with God, and **Acts** (4:23-31; 9:27; 10; 11:27-28; 13:2; 16:9-10; 21:10-14) for early church leaders asking for & receiving input from the Lord.

4. **Fourth, the goals of intentionally remembering and appreciating God's work in and around us, of living not stirred up but in truth and peace (shalom; synchronization with God & others), and of growing in joy through relational connection and secure attachment with God are all solidly biblical.** Here are a few examples of themes pervasive in scripture:

Remembering:

Deuteronomy 4:9 - Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you **do not forget** the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

Deuteronomy 32:7 - **Remember** the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you.

Joshua 4:4-7 - Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."

Psalm 22:30 - Posterity will serve him; future **generations** will be told about the Lord.

Psalm 45:17 - I will perpetuate your memory through all **generations**; therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever.

Psalm 48:13 - Consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next **generation**.

Psalm 102:18 - Let this be written for a future **generation**, that a people not yet created may **praise** the LORD.

Gratitude:

Psalm 50:14, 22 - Sacrifice **thank offerings** to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with no one to rescue you: Those who sacrifice thank offerings honor me, and to the blameless I will show my salvation.

Psalm 107:22 - Let them sacrifice **thank offerings** and tell of his works with songs of joy.

Jeremiah 33:10-12 - Yet in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted, inhabited by neither people nor animals, there will be heard once more the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to

the house of the Lord, saying, “Give thanks to the Lord Almighty, for the Lord is good; his love endures forever.

James 1:17 - Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Truth (words & beliefs):

Psalm 15:2 - The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the **truth** from their heart;

Psalm 25:5 - Guide me in your **truth** and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Psalm 45:4 - In your majesty ride forth victoriously in the cause of **truth**, humility and justice; let your right hand achieve awesome deeds.

Proverbs 16:24 - Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Jeremiah 33:6 - Behold, I will bring it health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and **truth**.

Proverbs 12:18 - The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

John 14:6 - Jesus answered, “I am the way and the **truth** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Peace:

John 14:27 - Peace I leave with you; my **peace** I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Isaiah 26:3 - You will keep in perfect **peace** those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust **in** you.

Acts 10:36 - You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

Philippians 4:7 - And the **peace** of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:15 - Let the **peace** of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to **peace**. And be thankful.

Joy:

John 15:11 - These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

1 Chronicles 16:27 - Splendor and majesty are before him; **strength** and **joy** are in his dwelling place.

Nehemiah 8:10 - Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the **joy** of the LORD is your **strength**.”

One could also search the scriptures for other themes such as security, trust, the face of God, etc.

HOW DO I KNOW IT'S REALLY GOD?

Of course the concept of actually conversing with God raises the question of our own fallibility: “How do I know that what the person is experiencing is really from God?” The short answer to this is: does what’s happening align with scripture and demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit? In order to answer that question, it is vital to have both a good knowledge of scripture and a community of believers who can help with discernment. The long answer involves two additional components.

1. First, there are specific scriptural ways to test whether something is from God:

- a. Does it line up with scripture? (2 Tim 3:16)
- b. Does it point us to God? (Deut 13:1-4)
- c. Does it produce good fruit? (Gal 2:22)
- d. Does it match up with reality? / Does it come true over time? (Dt 18:22)
- e. Do other Christians recognize it as coming from the Holy Spirit? (Prov 27:17; Mt 18:19)
- f. Does it seem to resonate with the Holy Spirit living in me? (Rom 8:16; Jn 14:26)

Don't use these guidelines singly. Use them as a group. If something is from God, it will match up with most of these. I don't say it will match up with all of them because there are sometimes exceptions. For example, when Peter first tried to tell the other Jewish believers that Gentiles were accepted by God as Gentiles without having to become Jews first, they didn't accept his word, so (e) wouldn't seem to apply. But later, after they heard his testimony, saw God continue to work in the lives of Gentiles, prayed & discussed among themselves, and realized the inclusion of the Gentiles was actually there in the scriptures and they'd just missed it, then the other discernment points brought them around until (e) was also a "yes."

2. Second, if something seems not to be from God - someone is supplying thoughts or experiences from their own mind or personal history, or perhaps from the enemy - the best thing to do within the context of an Immanuel Prayer Ministry session is go back to the last time it was clear the Lord was involved, get solidly re-connected, and then ask him about whatever seemed not to be from him.