

*Kneeling with Giants:
Learning to Pray with History's Best Teachers
By Gary Neal Hansen*
Material for Chapter 6 (St. Teresa of Avila)
Pastor Andy Smothers

I invite you tonight to choose one of two practices Gary recommends during our evening prayer. The first option will be more flexible; the second will have you enter with particular items that have weighed on you this day or the last few days. We'll spend 15 minutes on this during our weekly prayer time.

Option 1

For each of the following images of God, turn your gaze on God and who you are in relationship with God. Who is this God? What does he do in these various roles? What do you need from him in each role, and what does he demand from you in each of these roles?

Images:

1. **King or Lord.** God is all powerful and all-knowing. He demands our all, our obedience, our minds, our hearts, and our prayer and relationship. He is in charge of all that happens to and around us. He holds us accountable to his law but with mercy and grace. But this king or lord invites us into relationship and sees us as part of his royal people; he lifts us up into his presence. He bends down to hear us because he cares deeply about his subjects.
2. **Father (or mother).** We can speak to God with humility. He is our father as he has adopted us as his children. God is, also, our provider, defender, and protector. He cares about the challenges we face and will counsel us. He is not distant but part of our family. He further holds us accountable for our actions and may discipline us if we misbehave.
3. **Spouse.** God loves us and wants to be a part of every part of our lives. He wants a sort of intimacy with us. He can be jealous when we put other people or things before him. He wants us to be passionate for him, for his work, for his people, and for his concerns. He wants us to care deeply about his son's sacrifice on the cross and to be willing to sacrifice significantly for him. He wants us to wonder about him — who he is, what he desires, and what he hopes. He wants us to chase after him and to pursue him.
4. **Friend.** He wants us to long to be with him, to know him better, and to be in prayer without ceasing. He wants us to share the big things and the little things of life. He wants us to laugh and to cry with him as he laughs and cries with us. He holds us accountable in life and in faith.
5. **Guest.** He wants us to long that he stay with us — to open more and more of our lives, our thoughts, and our friends to him. He wants us to invite him into our every emotion, our every thought, and our every decision. He gives his Spirit to dwell within us and for us to become more and more like him. (Maybe, he's the only guest we should invite so deeply.)

Option 2

List three items that have weighed heavily on you today or the last few days:

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* _____

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Pray about these three items in the context of the images listed below.

Images:

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2. **Father (or mother).** We can speak to God with humility. He is our father as he has adopted us as his children. God is, also, our provider, defender, and protector. He cares about the challenges we face and will counsel us. He is not distant but part of our family. He further holds us accountable for our actions and may discipline us if we misbehave.
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This study aid is written by Pastor Andy Smothers to guide study and discussions of *Kneeling with Giants: Learning to Pray with History's Best Teachers* by Gary Neal Hansen. The full set of study guides is available at <https://livingintograce.com/study-group-aids-for-kneeling-with-giants-learning-to-pray-with-historys-best-teachers-by-gary-neal-hansen>. While based on the book, this guide was not prepared in cooperation with the author, Gary Neal Hansen, nor the publishers (InterVarsity Press).



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