

***Taking Hold of God: Reformed and Puritan Perspectives on Prayer.* Edited by Joel R. Beeke and Brian G. Najapfour. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011, xiii + 267 pp.**

Reviewed by Chadd M. Sheffield

When I see a book on prayer, it is usually and immediately followed with the Spirit's conviction. I consider how long it has been since I last prayed or how shortsighted and local they have been. I feel overwhelmed with guilt and rightly so. I don't usually buy that book. I, instead, veer towards the theology section to catch up on the latest arguments for God's complete sovereignty in salvation. It is not that there is a lack of desire to learn to pray, but if only reading the title of a book on prayer convicts me then what will reading it in full do?

Taking Hold of God has been an immense blessing and encouragement in my life. Knowing that for too long prayer has been too neglected and missed far too little, it was a pleasure to be set right by these faithful Puritans and Reformers.

For those of us that get a sense of dread when forced to read a book on prayer (or any spiritual discipline), *Taking Hold of God* gives you exactly what you need without pummeling your poor soul into the dust (just don't skip to the last chapter). With many powerful arguments, these Reformed men show you the blessings and gifts that prayer offers believers—the foremost being God Himself.

The focus on prayer's great benefits is much needed in my generation especially where loving God with all your mind seems easier to accomplish than communion with God. If you love God's sovereignty over the nations, then how exhilarating is it to pray for those very nations knowing that God will hear you and bring His kingdom to fruition in all the earth?

In the book you will learn how and why these great men of God spent so much time in prayer—band the answer isn't simply because it is a duty. No, rather they loved prayer, and it is the starting point for converting orthodoxy into orthopraxy. You've learned about God's love, power, and grace, but it is a great thing to meet with God and experience those things in prayer.

The book is broken into multiple sections by author and emphasis. In this book you'll find, among others, Bunyan on praying with the Holy Spirit, Perkins on the Lord's Prayer, Edwards on prayer and the Triune God, and Matthew Henry on praying daily.

Leave no doubt that these men will challenge you and convict you. However, you will get a fresh sense of how great a thing it is to pray to our Father in heaven in the name of the Son with the Spirit's help. This book is not a quick fix for the prayerless, but it is a medicine for those who know they should pray, but don't know how to pray, when the best time to pray is, or what blessings come with prayer.