



Prayers &
reflections for creatives

**BLESS THE WORK
OF OUR HANDS**

Written and illustrated
by Jane Walters

‘Jane is a realist, a generous encourager, a determined follower of Jesus, and a fellow creative. Please read and use this book.’

Bridget Plass, writer and speaker

‘The prayers in this book are considered, wise, and beautiful. Using them will help artisans of every kind offer our work and creative play up to the living God who takes joy in our efforts.’

Keren Dibbens-Wyatt, Christian contemplative and creative

‘A tender and luminous guide for anyone who creates with heart and faith. This book is both a prayer and a practice, a companion for those who long to make creativity – and life itself – an act of worship.’

Cathy Edge RSM, @KnittingNun

‘*Bless the Work of Our Hands* is a sensitively written feast of prayers. Jane has written an honest and very down-to-earth book that will resonate strongly with professional and amateur creatives alike.’

Mary Fleeson, artist and writer, lindisfarne-scriptorium.co.uk

‘Thanksgiving spills from the pages, with a treasure trove of uplifting prayers. This beautiful book is achingly honest, with deeply personal stories shared that give voice to the cries of joy, failure, or inertia that will certainly resonate.’

Claire Daniel, author and speaker

‘All creatives should have a copy of this beautiful book at their elbow! What an inspiring gift for any writer, crafter or musician to be connected in prayer and imagination with our creator God.’

Amy Scott Robinson, author and performance storyteller



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Contents

Introduction	9
1 Prayers of thanksgiving and worship	13
2 Drawing near to God	19
Prayers of yielding	23
3 Inspiration	31
Prayers for inspiration and imagination	35
Prayers around colour	42
4 Prayers around getting started	49
5 Encouragement.....	55
Prayers for encouragement	59
6 Mid-project challenges, a.k.a. the messy middle	65
Prayers for the messy middle	70
Prayers for creative blockage	79
Prayers for confusion and anxiety	86
7 The loneliness of the long-distance creative	95
Prayers around aloneness	99

8	Keeping ourselves and our motives pure	103
	<i>Character focus: Demetrius, the silver-idol maker</i>	104
	Prayers for purity	108
9	Rest	113
	Prayers for rest	117
	Time	125
10	Facing failure	129
	Prayers around facing failure	134
11	Getting finished	141
	Prayers for finishing	145
12	Facing success	153
	<i>Character focus: Bezalel and Oholiab,</i> <i>the tabernacle supremos</i>	154
	Prayers around facing success	158
13	The teaching process	163
	Prayers for teachers and students	167

14 Prayers for creatives	175
Prayers for artists and painters	179
<i>Character focus: Joseph, the unseen carpenter</i>	183
Prayers for those behind-the-scenes:	
production/design	186
Prayers for those in fashion/dressmaking	190
Prayers for food-crafters	193
Prayers for glassworkers	196
Prayers for illustrators	199
Prayers for leatherworkers	203
<i>Character focus: Hiram,</i>	
<i>the 'mere' bronze-sculptor</i>	205
Prayers for metalworkers	209
<i>Character focus: David, the anointed</i>	212
Prayers for musicians/song-writers	215
Prayers for papercrafters	219
Prayers for performing artists	226
Prayers for perfumers	231
Prayers for photographers	234
Prayers for potters	239
Prayers for restorers	249
Prayers for sculptors	247
<i>Character focus: Paul, the jobbing tentmaker</i>	252
Prayers for textile-workers	256
Prayers for woodworkers	263
Prayers for writers/poets/ spoken-word artists/script-writers	269
Epilogue	275
Acknowledgements	279
Index	281

Introduction

Christian creative.

That's me, and I guess that it's you, too.

It's a wonderful privilege to partner with our creator God! I have loved making things throughout my life. I was going to add 'in good times and bad' but, of course, being creative is what can turn bad times around. Whether we're thinking of a crafted physical object, of music or of hand-picked words, each can be tools in God's hands to bring comfort, convey love, and lift the eye above the drabness of the mundane.

It's not just about the finished product, though. (I avert my eyes gratefully from the massive pile of half-started items.) Being creative is the time/space where we are left to our own thoughts and devices, where we can work and play to our heart and soul's content and satisfaction; and, yes, the place where we can make mess and mistakes, too.

Creativity is a wonderful expression of the gospel. Although God created us perfect, we were soon marred by sin and have been part of a re-creation process ever since. The act of creativity is rarely a 'once-and-for-all' event, but a process, an unfolding, a re-working. As Christian creatives, we must never lose sight of this living metaphor of God's work in us.

Please note my use of the phrase ‘work-play’ to describe our activity. Some of us are hobbyists, others are full-time creative professionals, but each of us performs the tasks of our craft as earnestly as if we were working, and as light-spirited as if we were playing.

How to use this book

These prayers and reflections offer the opportunity to dedicate ourselves and our activities to God, in humble recognition that he is the source of all inspiration, the one who gives wisdom at every stage and the sustainer who can get us to the end goal.

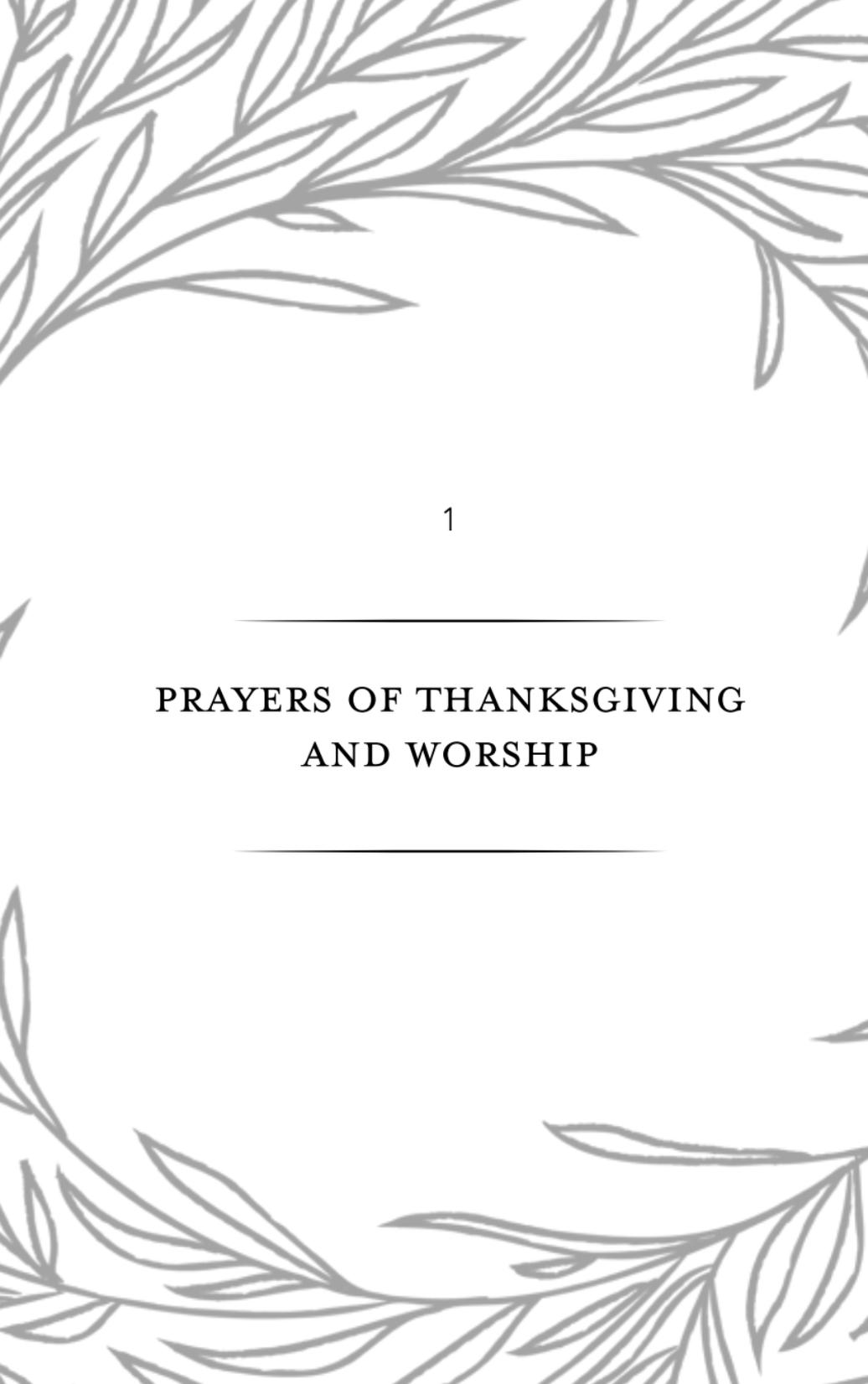
There are scripture references throughout, to help ground our thinking and praying in his word. It is a key component of this book, so don't be tempted to skip over the verses. It is my experience that my best times of creativity have come out of my dedicated times with God.

Inevitably there are drawbacks to a resource like this. The way I speak to God will not precisely match yours. The words I use may miss the mark for you. But it is my hope and prayer that something of the heart behind and within them will resonate with yours. By all means, modify the wording, add your own lines – whatever it takes to make this book personal to you.

The sections can be dipped in and out of according to need – and, of course, you are free to borrow prayers from a different craft! The longer reflections and poems are designed to provoke your own thinking.

My fervent prayer would be that you find fresh ways of engaging with our creator God; that you would meet him as you work-play and discover more of why you were created in the first place.



A decorative border of stylized, overlapping leaves in a light gray color frames the page. The leaves are elongated and pointed, with visible veins.

1

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING
AND WORSHIP**

I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.

PSALM 69:30

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-16

*God, I want to thank you for creativity,
for the grace-filled gift it is
to partake in your nature!
You could have reserved this privilege and pleasure for
yourself,
but instead you shared it freely
among all of humankind,
allowing my space here
to become a piece of heaven.*

*God, thank you for calling me to be a creative.
Thank you for gifting me with talents
and granting opportunities to explore them.
I consider myself beyond blessed,
overwhelmed at this lavish demonstration
of your goodness.*

*Thank you for what creating does to my inner being:
exciting my mind with wonder and possibility;
soothing my soul with peace and lifting my cares;
satisfying my heart with deep contentment.*

*My words of praise may falter and fail,
but receive this thanksgiving
from a grateful heart, I pray.*

Amen.

God, I thank you for the gift of a new day.

*Thank you that your word promises
your mercies are new every morning
and great is your faithfulness.*

*Thank you that yesterday,
with all its trials and testing,
is behind me.*

*Today I have new opportunities,
new strength,
fresh inspiration,
living hope.*

*Thank you, God, that I don't rely on yesterday's crumbs
but feast on today's daily bread.*

*May you be my helper today,
my cheerleader,
the faithful one who will take my hand and not let go.*

*Perfect, holy God,
accept these imperfect offerings
of me and what I create.*

Amen.

*God, I am surrounded by other voices
clamouring for my attention, but –
most insidious of all –
claiming to be the source of all I need.*

*So I come to you today,
not as the Universe,
nor as Supreme Power,
though those titles are true of you.*

*I come in full acknowledgement
that you are the only true God,
shown to us in flesh as Jesus Christ,
your Word incarnate.*

*When I pray today,
it is to you,
God Almighty,
El Shaddai.*

*You are the all-sufficient one,
the Jehovah Jireh who meets every need.*

*You are El Roi,
the God who sees –
and not only sees, but knows
and, what is more,
comes gloriously to our aid.*

Let all I do today be inspired by you.

Let all I do today bring glory to you.

Let nothing detract from who you are.

*There is a God:
and it's not me,
nor anything or anyone else.*

Hallelujah!

Amen.

*God, I worship you as creator,
initiator and sustainer,
thanking you for all you are,
all you do,
and all you enable.*

*Your works in plain view
bring joy to my soul
and inspiration to my mind.*

*Ever-living,
ever-moving,
ever-loving God:*

I seek to honour you in every way today.

*Let the crude works of my hands
be invaded by your glory,
giving praise to you
in their yet unformed state.*

*Let what I produce bear the imprint of the maker,
bearing silent witness to the king of kings.*

All I do is because of you!

*You are the one who gives me breath
and the only one worth living for.*

*Let your praises be on my lips
and a song of worship in my heart;
and may your glorious will be done here today.*

Amen.



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