

**W**hen you pray for someone to follow Christ, you are praying for God to move so powerfully in that person's life that they are freed from the bondage of darkness and given to Jesus. Hebrews 2:13-15 describes the wonderful work of power that Christ is still advancing in the lives of many people. We'll pray through these verses in reverse order.

**Hebrews 2:15**

*...and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.*

**1. Getting free from fear of death (vs 15)**

Fear of death is probably the greatest fear that people ever experience. Consider what drastic things people are driven to do because they are afraid to die. The "power of death" mentioned in vs 14 operates by the dynamic of holding people hostage to their fear of death. Christ died to free people from this tyranny. Pray that God would reveal the splendid reality of the risen Jesus, who died for all and lives forever. Pray that they would experience freedom from the grim terror of death.

**Hebrews 2:14**

*Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil...*

**2. Disempowering the devil (vs 14)**

Satan has various schemes to hold people in bondage to their own sins, fears, and distorted desires. Use this verse as a launch point to ask Christ to accomplish what He died to do in your friend's life: that they would be free from satanic power. Keep your prayer simple by directing your request right to Jesus. Ask Jesus, mighty in the power of His risen life, to break whatever hold Satan might have in the life of your friend.

**Hebrews 2:13**

*And again, "I will put my trust in Him."  
And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me."*

**3. That God would give them to Jesus (vs 13b)**

In the book of Isaiah, the Messiah is described as someone who trusts God and forms a new community of faith with the followers that God gives Him. You can find the prophecy in Isaiah 8:17-18. The writer of Hebrews quotes this passage. Follow the truths of this ancient prophecy to ask God to add your friend to the ones gathered to Jesus as His followers. Extend the following prayer in your own words:

"We behold You Jesus, risen from the dead, triumphant over satanic power.  
And we behold You saving, protecting and leading a new faith family.

Almighty Father, we ask You to give     (insert their name)     to Jesus, to be Your child."

**4. That they would entrust themselves to God (vs 13a)**

The prophecy of Isaiah 8:17 as found in Hebrews 2:13a expresses the founding faith of the Messiah and the entire new faith family. Pray that very soon your friend will also say, "I will put my trust in Him!"

You'll find this issue of FreshPrayer to be a flexible approach, offering a variety of angles from which people can pray for people who have yet to follow Christ.

**Always ask God to do something.**

People often flounder in prayer because they fail to envision God actually doing anything. God remains absent from their field of view. They are merely sending requests up to an unseen, remote heavenly realm, in hopes that the procedure prayer is performed correctly enough to get results. Prayer is considered to be answered when something changes or something happens. But God Himself is not seen as extending His hand or His power into the scene of people's lives. Prayer is simply wishing for circumstances to change. The clearest prayers are those which ask God Himself to do something in order to bring about those changes. Always try to press people to ask God to actually do something instead of merely asking for things to be different.

In this issue of FreshPrayer, for example, you can guide people to pray for Christ to liberate people from fear, and not just that fears would go away. You can guide people to pray that God will complete the wonderful transaction of giving people to Jesus. You know from this passage that these are things that God does, and this emboldens and clarifies prayer.

**Ground prayers on God's word.**

We've structured the prayers to follow Hebrews 2:13-15 in reverse order. Mention this at the start and guide the group in reading through the passage in correct order (verse 13 first, then 14 and 15).

Some background that may be helpful is to ask someone to read Isaiah 8:16-18. Most scholars consider this to be a prophetic anticipation of God forming a new people out of a faithful remnant of the people of Israel. The very existence of this group of people, called "disciples" in Isaiah 8:16, results in God demonstrating His faithfulness to all of Israel (vs 18). Who is the person who is speaking in first person (the one referring to himself as "I")? There are different interpretations of these words of Isaiah. But there is no doubt that the writer of Hebrews identifies the key figure of this prophecy as the Messiah. And of course, the writer of Hebrews sees this prophecy as being fulfilled by Jesus and the disciples who follow Him, including both Jewish and Gentile followers.

Avoid getting tangled up in the intricacy of interpreting Isaiah's prophecy. Emphasize the wonderful picture of God Almighty entrusting a following of disciples, called "children," to the leadership of Jesus.

**Guide in focused prayer.**

Use the four "rounds" of prayer as a way of keeping the prayer gathering moving. Focus on one or several people who have yet to follow Jesus. Form small groups or keep everyone together.

In the second round of prayer, there may be some who feel they should directly denounce Satan and his work in people's lives. While there is biblical ground for this kind of prayer, the language of Hebrews 2 describes Jesus Himself disempowering the enemy. If, as in most people's lives who are far from God, action needs to be taken against the enemy, it is entirely appropriate to ask God to take action against the enemy rather than directly speaking to or denouncing Satan. Guide your group in the way you feel appropriate, but it can help keep prayers focused by asking that prayers about the devil be directed immediately to Jesus, at least for this particular session.