

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

Before you make copies and use the studies...

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- **[DONATIONS]** – Although there is no charge for the studies, feel free to make a non-deductible donation to help offset the annual cost of web-hosting, etc. at: [paypal.me/handsofthur](https://www.paypal.me/handsofthur)
- **[QUESTIONS/COMMENTS]** – Email them to: information@fransciacca.com

Other great resources on fransciacca.com

Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- **“*The Road to Shalom*” podcast** – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
- **“*What’s Wrong With the World?*”** – A 14-part video series exploring the questions, “*What is the gospel, and does it really matter?*” and “*What is a disciple, and what does one look like?*” Each episode includes a small group handout as well as supplemental leader’s notes. You may take the series for a “test drive” and purchase the series.
- **“*Knot or Noose? - Recovering the Mystery of Marriage*”** – A 9-part video series for singles, engaged, or married couples exploring marriage from a radical perspective. Instead of trying to figure out how to get God into marriage, this series will guide you into how to place marriage into the center of the larger redemptive plan of God. This conference has been presented live throughout the U.S. in a multitude of different settings. Each episode includes everything needed for a small group. You may take the series for a “test drive” and order the series.



FOLKS
Like Us

THE PETITIONER

“A Transformed Heart Prays Differently.”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,
for a journey with God in the modern era.

Fran Sciacca

“*Folks Like Us*” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca
Birmingham, AL

THE PETITIONER

“A Transformed Heart Prays Differently.”

ABIDING PRINCIPLE – Sanctification will certainly revolutionize my prayer life. Rather than making daily requests for *my* wants and needs, I discover that what I really need is a new heart. Glorifying God becomes the passion of my prayers, rather than getting for myself.

“I had rather learn what some men really judge about their own justification from their prayers than from their writings.” —John Owen

Sanctification—making us less like Adam and more like Jesus—is the essence of what God desires to do *in* us, in order that He might work *through* us. Thus, sanctification usually involves a total transformation of whatever it touches, not a mere makeover. The Bible is teeming with insights, instructions and illustrations, commands and consolations—all pointing us toward practical, personal righteousness. In short, much of what God speaks to us is connected to what He seeks to do in us.

But how much of what we say to God is related to our own sanctification? Do we view prayer as a microphone at the drive-through of life that we use to present a quick list of our needs and wants? Or is prayer a wartime walkie-talkie in the battle for the glory of God in our lives? Certainly, much of our prayer life is the product of God's sanctifying fire, hut how many of our prayers focus on our sanctification itself? We may be convinced that we should talk to God, but do we really know what about?

KEY SCRIPTURE: Psalm 51

STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. Scripture records many amazing prayers. Read each of the following slowly, perhaps more than once. Then summarize what is revealed in each prayer about sanctification, not merely personal needs and wants:
 - a. 2 Samuel 7:18-21 (David)
 - b. Psalm 51:1-12 (David)
 - c. Matthew 6:9-13 (us)

- d. Mark 14:32-36 (Jesus)

 - e. Acts 4:23-31 (believers in general)
2. Look at the following prayers from Scripture that were offered by someone who was praying for somebody else. Record as many specific things as you can that the petitioner wanted to see God accomplish in another person's life that are related to someone being transformed to be more like Jesus:
- a. John 17:20-26 (Jesus)

 - b. Ephesians 1:15-21 (Paul)

 - c. Ephesians 3:14-19 (Paul)

 - d. Philippians 1:3-6,9-11 (Paul)

 - e. Colossians 1:9-14 (Paul)
3. Biblical characters also asked others to pray for them. Record all that has to do with their sanctification from the following prayers:
- a. Ephesians 6:19-20 (Paul)

 - b. Colossians 4:2-4 (Paul)

 - c. 2 Thessalonians 3:1 (Paul and companions)

 - d. Hebrews 13 :18-21 (unknown)

4. The following verses on prayer have significant connections to the *process* of sanctification in our lives. Read each one slowly, then record the truths that speak to your present understanding of God working in you to make you more like Jesus and less like Adam.
 - a. Matthew 5:43-45 –
 - b. Romans 8:22-27 –
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 –
 - d. James 4:1-3 –
 - e. James 5:16 –
 - f. 1 John 5:14-15 –

LOOKING BACK...

God's Word talks a lot about talking to Him—in fact, it is mentioned nearly four hundred times! And in the midst of many prayer items and themes, we discover that many of God's most faithful servants prayed the same thing for themselves *and* for others—namely, that their lives would glorify God.

They prayed about righteousness, personal holiness, and enlarging the kingdom of God. They viewed persecution, suffering, and adversity as loving tools in the hands of a sovereign God. They understood that their salvation included much more than their justification, focusing on this life, not just the one to come. Their understanding of sanctification not only shaped the content of their prayers, it consummated their entire prayer lives. Prayer had more to do with what God was doing in them than what they wanted Him to *do or them*.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

5. Think about your own prayer life during the past few weeks. Did you pray more about what you wanted God to do *for* you or *in* you? Be honest!
6. When you pray for those you love, what characterizes your prayers—their needs or their sanctification? Why? Explain with examples.

7. When you think of people's “needs,” do you think of sanctification as one of them? Why or why not?

8. In the space below, write a prayer of your own, similar to the prayers you've studied in this chapter. Imagine that it is going to be recorded for future believers to read and study in a Bible study like this one. Make it personal—a prayer that represents your own heart and present circumstances, but also contains the elements you've learned should characterize the petitions of those who are asking God to sanctify their own lives as well as the lives of other believers.

9. Now spend some time on your knees (alone or in a small group) and sincerely read your prayer back to God. When you finish reading, continue to pray if you feel led to do so. Spend time each day during the coming week reading your prayer back to the Lord, asking Him to make it real in your life.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY (optional)

- The proper prayer focus – Matthew 6:9-10
 - Praying according to God's will (sanctification) – 1 John 5:14-15
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