

SECRET CHURCH™

KNOW HIS WORD. KNOW HIS PERSECUTED.

For many believers around the world, following
Christ is not simply unpopular or discouraged.
It's dangerous.

KNOW HIS WORD.
KNOW HIS PERSECUTED.

Each year's Secret Church gathering consists
of over four hours of intense Bible study, as
well as a concentrated time of prayer for our
persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ
around the world.

We hope you'll not only believe these truths, but
also share them with others. The goal of Secret
Church is to serve the church in making disciples
of all nations, all for the glory of God.

secrechurch.org

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Why Is This Called Secret Church?

The idea behind Secret Church comes from time David Platt spent teaching and ministering among underground Asian house churches. Due to hostility from the government, from the surrounding community, and even from their own family, many of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are forced to gather in secret, sometimes at the risk of their lives.

The plight of our persecuted brothers and sisters also explains why prayer for the persecuted church is a major part of every Secret Church gathering. We remember those who cannot meet openly, asking God to sustain their faith, to change the hearts and the actions of their persecutors, and to use their witness for the spread of the gospel. We also pray for the unreached, those who have little or no access to the gospel.

Why So Much Teaching for One Night?

We realize that each Secret Church study contains too much biblical teaching—over four hours worth!—to digest in one sitting. That's one reason we make it available in bite-size segments at radical.net. However, this deluge of teaching is meant to remind us of the hunger for God's Word that exists among many underground churches around the world.

With few opportunities to gather and little access to biblical teaching, our persecuted brothers and sisters may meet for eight to twelve hours at a time simply to sing, pray, and study God's Word. This God-centered focus is a helpful corrective to the desire for entertainment that characterizes many church gatherings in the U.S.

What's the Goal of This Study?

We hope your faith will be strengthened as you encounter teaching from God's Word in this study. However, the truths you hear are not meant to stop with you. You are encouraged to teach them to others as you meet one-on-one or as you gather in small groups and churches. Secret Church is intended to be a resource for making disciples both locally and globally.

We urge you to consider the role God may have for you and your church as you take the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ to those in your own community and to unreached peoples among the nations. For more Secret Church resources, go to radical.net.

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PRAYER, FASTING, AND THE PURSUIT OF GOD

Why Are We Here?

- We have many questions about prayer.

Prayer: _____ Conversation _____ with God.

- _____ How _____ does prayer work?
- When does God answer?
- Why pray when God already knows what I need? Or does He?
- _____ Why _____ pray when God has already determined what will happen? Or has He?
- What do I do when it feels like I'm praying into thin air?
- How do I know what God is leading me to do in my life?

- We are very confused about fasting.

Fasting: _____ Abstinence _____ from physical food for spiritual purposes.

- The world has defined it in different ways.
- The church has _____ ignored _____ it in most ways.
- Few of us do it.
- Most of us avoid it.

- We are relentlessly tempted to forsake the pursuit of God.

The Pursuit of God: The _____ all-consuming _____ quest to know, enjoy, worship, and love God.

- We are self-sufficient (or so we think).

- We are always busy (or so we say).
- We are easily distracted.
- We are constantly entertained.
- We are addicted to food.
- We are accustomed to comfort.

What Is Our Plan?

- Let the Word do the work.
 - 125 Texts and Takeaways
 - Explore biblical truths.
 - Answer personal questions.
 - Offer practical exhortations.

- Pray the Word in the process.

| *If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:7)*

125 TEXTS AND TAKEAWAYS

A Biblical, Practical Overview of Prayer and Fasting

THE PENTATEUCH

1 GENESIS 1–4: Essential Foundations

The Nature of God . . .

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:31)

- He is the supreme Creator.

| *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)*

- He is the sovereign King.

| *And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food. (Genesis 1:30)*

- He is the righteous Judge.

| *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16–17)*

- He is the merciful Savior.

| *And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. (Genesis 3:21)*

The Nature of Men and Women . . .

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26–27)

- We are created in the _____ image _____ of God.
 - We are a unique reflection of God.
 - We are utterly reliant upon God.
 - We are ultimately responsible to God.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

- We are created for the _____ purpose _____ of God.
 - To enjoy a relationship with God.
 - To rule over all creation.
 - To reflect and multiply God's glory to the ends of the earth.

The Nature of Sin . . .

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:1–6)

- We are _____ spiritual _____ beings.
- We are in a spiritual battle.
 - Satan can speak and is smart.
 - Satan is a malicious liar and an evil murderer.
- We are full of _____ iniquity _____.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned . . .
(Romans 5:12)

- We question God's Word.
- We doubt God's love.
- We choose our ways.

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:7–13)

- We need a faithful _____ intercessor _____.

The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:14–15)

- One who is fully like us.
- One who is fully like God.
- One who will redeem us from our rebellion against God.
- One who will restore us to a relationship with God.

The Nature of Salvation . . .

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:8–9)

- God seeks the guilty.
 - A relationship with God begins not with our pursuit of Him, but with His pursuit of us.

"When I was coming to Christ, I thought I was doing it all myself, and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. I do not think the young convert is at first aware of this. I can recall the very day and hour when first I received those truths [of the doctrine of election] in my own soul—when they were as John Bunyan said, burnt into my heart as with a hot iron, and I can recollect how I felt that I had grown on a sudden from a babe into a man—that I had made progress in scriptural knowledge, through having found, once for all, the clue to the truth of God. One week-night, when I was sitting in the house of God, I was not thinking much about the preacher's sermon. The thought struck me, How did you come to be a Christian? I sought the Lord. But how did you come to seek the Lord? The truth flashed across my mind in a moment—I should not have sought him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek him. I prayed, thought I, but then I asked myself, How came I to pray? I was induced to pray by reading the Scriptures. How came I to read the Scriptures? I did read them, but what led me to do so? Then, in a moment, I saw that God was at the bottom of it all, and that he was the Author of my faith, and so the doctrine of grace opened up to me, and from that doctrine I have not departed to this day, and I desire to make this my constant confession, 'I ascribe my change wholly to God.'" – Charles Spurgeon

- A relationship with God continues because of God's personal, faithful, perpetual pursuit of us.

“However far and fast I’ve run, still over my shoulder I’d catch a glimpse of You on the horizon, and then run faster and farther than ever, thinking triumphantly: Now I have escaped. But no, there You were, coming after me. There was no escape. I have never wanted a God, or feared a God, or felt under any necessity to invent one. Unfortunately, I am driven to the conclusion that God wants me.” – Malcolm Muggeridge

And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. (Genesis 3:21)

- God _____ covers _____ the shameful.
 - Purity of heart is essential to be in the presence of God.
 - Sacrifice for sin is necessary to experience communion with God.

Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:22–24)

- God _____ protects _____ the fearful.
 - God’s grace alone keeps us from experiencing His eternal wrath.

“I saw my condemnation in my own heart, and I found no way wherein I could escape the damnation of hell, only through the merits of my dying Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” – George Leile

- God’s grace alone allows us to enjoy His eternal love.

“We were living in slavery to sin and Satan, and the Lord hath redeemed our souls to a state of happiness, to praise his glorious and ever-blessed name; and we hope to enjoy everlasting peace by the promise of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.” – Thomas Nicholas Swigle

The Need for Prayer . . .

The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin

is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.” (Genesis 4:6–7)

- The appeal of sin and selfishness is strong before us.

Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. (Genesis 4:8)

- The antidote to sin and selfishness is _____ seeking _____
God above us.

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, “God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.” To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord. (Genesis 4:25–26)

2 GENESIS 12; 15; 17: TWO REALITIES AT THE HEART OF COMMUNION WITH GOD

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

(Genesis 12:1–9)

- God graciously _____ speaks _____.
 - He provides direction for us.
 - He makes promises to us.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." (Genesis 17:1–8)

- We gladly _____ submit _____.
 - We take radical risks.
 - We trust in radical _____ reward _____.

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:1–6)

- Not just in His plans for us...
- But primarily in His satisfaction of us.

"Prayer in the sense of petition, asking for things, is a small part of it; confession and penitence are its threshold, adoration its sanctuary, the presence and vision and enjoyment of God its bread

and wine. The great purpose of prayer is to come humbly, expectantly, and—because of Jesus—boldly into the conscious presence of God, to relate to him, talk with him, and ultimately enjoy him as our great Treasure.” – C.S. Lewis

3 GENESIS 18: The Privilege of Intercession

So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. Then Abraham drew near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” And the Lord said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?” And he said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.” Again he spoke to him and said, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.” Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do it, if I find thirty there.” He said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.” Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.” And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

(Genesis 18:22–33)

- We approach God on _____ behalf _____ of those in need.
- We appeal to God on the basis of His character.
 - Based upon God’s justice.
 - Based upon God’s mercy.

- We present our requests to God with boldness.
- We trust the response of God with humility.

4 GENESIS 20: A Prayer for Healing

Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. For the Lord had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.
(Genesis 20:17–18)

- God is absolutely able to heal.
- Abraham's intercession leads to God's intervention.

5 GENESIS 24: A Prayer for Help

And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh, that I may make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac." The servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?" Abraham said to him, "See to it that you do not take my son back there. The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there." So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.
(Genesis 24:2–9)

- We pray to God for help in specific ways.

Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. And he said, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master." (Genesis 24:10–14)

- We praise God for help in specific ways.

The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord and said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the Lord has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen." (Genesis 24:26–27)

6 GENESIS 32: Wrestling with God

The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." The sun rose upon him as he

passed Penuel, limping because of his hip. Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the thigh.
(Genesis 32:22–32)

- We experience personal _____ interaction _____ with God.
- We plead persistently for blessing from God.

"Great grief prays with great earnestness. Prayer is not a collection of balanced phrases; it is the pouring out of the soul. What is love if it not be fiery? What are prayers if the heart be not ablaze? They are the battles of the soul. In them men wrestle with principalities and powers. . . . The prayer that prevails is not the work of lips and fingertips. It is the cry of a broken heart and the travail of a stricken soul." – Samuel Chadwick

- We confess our sinfulness honestly before God.

"In prayer we do not 'prevail on' God, but rather prevail on ourselves to submit to God. True, the language of 'prevailing on God' is often used in regard to prayer, but it is an accommodation to human weakness. Even when Jacob 'prevailed on God,' what really happened is that God prevailed over him, bringing him to the point of surrender when he was able to receive the blessing which God had all the time been longing to give Him." – John Stott

- We walk away having been _____ changed _____ by God.

"Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness." – Phillips Brooks

7 EXODUS 3; 6: Who Is the God We Pursue?

"It is not a cheerful thought that millions of us who live in a land of Bibles, who belong to churches and labor to promote the Christian religion, may yet pass our whole life on this earth without once having thought or tried to

think seriously about the being of God. Few of us have let our hearts gaze in wonder at the I AM, the self-existent Self back of which no creature can think. Such thoughts are too painful for us. We prefer to think where it will do more good— about how to build a better mousetrap, for instance, or how to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. And for this we are now paying a too heavy price in the secularization of our religion and the decay of our inner lives.”

– A.W. Tozer

- He is _____ holy _____.

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Exodus 3:1–6)

- He is perfectly unique.
- He is completely separate.
- He is absolutely pure.

- He is _____ merciful _____.

Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” (Exodus 3:7–10)

- He sees our affliction.
- He hears our cries.
- He knows our sufferings.
- He remembers His covenant.

Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." (Genesis 15:13–16)

- He is ever-present.

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." (Exodus 3:11–12)

- He is all-powerful.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. (Isaiah 40:28)

- He is self-existent.
 - God has no origin.

Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:13–14)

- He is self-sufficient.

- God has no needs.

Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God. Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me. (Psalm 50:7–15)

“Were all human beings suddenly to become blind, still the sun would shine by day and the stars by night, for these owe nothing to the millions who benefit from their light. So, were every man on earth to become an atheist, it could not affect God in any way. He is what He is in Himself without regard to any other. To believe in Him adds nothing to His perfections; to doubt Him takes nothing away.” – A.W. Tozer

- He is eternal.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. (Psalm 90:1–2)

- His glory never dims.
- His beauty never fades.

“When we enjoy God, we enjoy him in his eternity without any flux . . . after many ages, the joys will be as savory and satisfying as if they had been but that moment first tasted by our hungry appetites. When the glory of the Lord shall rise upon you, it shall be so far from ever setting, that after millions of years are expired, as numerous as the sands on the seashore, the sun, in the light of whose countenance you shall live, shall be as bright as at the first appearance; he will be so far from ceasing to flow, that he will flow as strong, as full, as at the first communication of himself in glory to the creature. God is always vigorous and flourishing; a pure act of life, sparkling new and fresh rays of life and light to the creature, flourishing with a perpetual spring, and contenting the most capacious desire; forming your interest, pleasure, and satisfaction; with

an infinite variety, without any change or succession; he will have variety to increase delights, and eternity to perpetuate them; this will be the fruit of the enjoyment of an infinite and eternal God." – Stephen Charnock

- He is immutable.

For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. (Malachi 3:6)

- His perfections never change.

- He is faithful.

God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.'" (Exodus 6:2–8)

- He promises liberation.
- He promises redemption.
- He promises adoption.
- He promises possession.

- He is sovereign.

But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. (Exodus 3:19–20)

- He is just.
 - Be careful not to evaluate God's justice in the short-term.
 - God will assert His justice ultimately and completely in His perfect time.
- He is _____ God _____.

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:1–3)

"Most Christians expect little from God, ask little, and therefore receive little, and are content with little." – A.W. Pink

8 EXODUS 16; 17: We Are Created to Crave

- God created us with physical _____ cravings _____.

They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (Exodus 16:1–3)

- Our physical cravings are designed to be satisfied by our _____ Creator _____.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily." (Exodus 16:4–5)

- He is the Giver of all good gifts.

In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat." (Exodus 16:13–15)

- He is the Provider for our daily needs.

This is what the Lord has commanded: "Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent." And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning." (Exodus 16:16–19)

- He is our Sustainer throughout all generations.

Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. Moses said, "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'" And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar, and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the Lord to be kept throughout your generations." As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony to be kept. The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan. (Exodus 16:31–35)

- God uses our physical cravings to teach us about spiritual sustenance.

All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water,

and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." And the Lord said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" (Exodus 17:1-7)

- Our spiritual need for God is far more fundamental than our physical need for food and water.

And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 8:3)

- We ultimately have life, not because of natural selection, but because of supernatural provision.

9 EXODUS 32: Does Prayer Change God's Mind?

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord." And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. And the Lord said

Does prayer
change
God's mind?

to Moses, "Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you." But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'" And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

(Exodus 32:1–14)

"Prayer assumes the sovereignty of God. If God is not sovereign, we have no assurance that He is able to answer our prayers. Our prayers would become nothing more than wishes. But while God's sovereignty, along with His wisdom and love, is the foundation of our trust in Him, prayer is the expression of trust." – Jerry Bridges

Four Truths Moses Knows . . .

- The _____perfections_____ of God are unchanging.

But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?" (Exodus 32:11)

For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. (Malachi 3:6)

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
(Matthew 5:48)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17)

◦ He is perfectly holy.

And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" (Isaiah 6:3)

◦ He is perfectly loving.

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16)

◦ He is perfectly just.

The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.
(Deuteronomy 32:4)

• The _____ purposes _____ of God are unchanging.

But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?" (Exodus 32:11)

The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. (Psalm 33:11)

Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose," calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it. (Isaiah 46:8–11)

- The promises of God are unchanging.

Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, "I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever." (Exodus 32:13)

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? (Numbers 23:19)

For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. (Psalm 33:4)

I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips. (Psalm 89:34)

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. (Matthew 24:35)

- The plans of God are unfolding.

And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people. (Exodus 32:14)

And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret. (1 Samuel 15:29)

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:1–4)

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. (Jonah 3:10)

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus . . . (1 Timothy 2:5)

Four Lessons We Learn . . .

So Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written."
(Exodus 32:31–32)

- God has designed prayer to be a powerful means by which we _____ participate _____ in His plan.
- God brings about remarkable change in the world in response to the prayers of His people.
- Our prayers affect the way God acts in the world.
- Prayer is an invitation to join with God in effectively _____ shaping _____ the course of history.

10 EXODUS 33: The Reason for Prayer

The Lord said to Moses, "Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your offspring I will give it.'

I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."
(Exodus 33:1–3)

And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" And the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." Moses said, "Please show me your glory."

(Exodus 33:15–18)

- We pray because we have an assignment we cannot fulfill.

Moses said to the Lord, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.'" (Exodus 33:12)

"Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God." – Phillips Brooks

- We pray because we have a privilege we cannot forsake.

Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent. (Exodus 33:7–11)

- We pray because we have a family we cannot forget.

And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here." (Exodus 33:14–15)

- We pray because we have a God we cannot fathom.

Moses said, "Please show me your glory." (Exodus 33:18)

11 EXODUS 34: The Effect of Fasting

So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.
(Exodus 34:28–35)

- The Fast
 - A miraculous fast from food and water.
 - A divine feast on God's Word and prayer.

- The Effect
 - The more we pursue God in all of His glory, the more we reflect God in every facet of our lives.
 - We can't help but to become like what we _____ behold_____.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
(2 Corinthians 3:17–18)

12 EXODUS 40: The Purpose of Salvation

- God saves His people from captivity so that they might seek His face in worship.

He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." (Exodus 3:12)

And I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son. (Exodus 4:23)

And you shall say to him, "The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, 'Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.' But so far, you have not obeyed." (Exodus 7:16)

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."'" (Exodus 8:1)

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."'" (Exodus 8:20)

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."'" (Exodus 9:1)

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."'" (Exodus 9:13)

So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me.'" (Exodus 10:3)

Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?" So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. And he said to them, "Go, serve the Lord your God. But which ones are to go?" (Exodus 10:7-8)

Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the Lord our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there. (Exodus 10:26)

Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, “Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as you have said.” (Exodus 12:31)

- Worship at creation . . .
 - The dwelling place of God: Eden.
 - Adam enjoyed God’s presence.
 - Creation reflected God’s glory.
- Worship at Mount Sinai . . .
 - The dwelling place of God: Tabernacle.

And God said . . . (Genesis 1:3)	The Lord said to Moses . . . (Exodus 25:1)
And God said . . . (Genesis 1:6)	The Lord said to Moses . . . (Exodus 30:11)
And God said . . . (Genesis 1:9)	The Lord said to Moses . . . (Exodus 30:17)
And God said . . . (Genesis 1:14)	The Lord said to Moses . . . (Exodus 30:22)
And God said . . . (Genesis 1:20)	The Lord said to Moses . . . (Exodus 30:34)
And God said . . . (Genesis 1:24)	The Lord said to Moses . . . (Exodus 31:1)
Then God said . . . (Genesis 1:26)	And the Lord said to Moses . . . (Exodus 31:12)

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done,

and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:1–3)

You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, “Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.” (Exodus 31:13–14)

Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:22–24)

You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel. (Exodus 25:17–22)

◦ Aaron entered God’s presence.

Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests—Aaron and Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. You shall speak to all the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill, that they make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him for my priesthood. These are the garments that they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash. They shall make holy

garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests. They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. (Exodus 28:1–5)

- Israel followed God's glory.

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys. (Exodus 40:34–38)

- God saves His people from captivity so that they might seek His face in worship.

13 **LEVITICUS: How Can People in Their Sinfulness Commune with God in His Holiness?**

- God is holy.

The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the Lord and died, and the Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat." (Leviticus 16:1–2)

- We cannot be casual with God.

But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. (Leviticus 16:3)

- We must be _____ contrite _____ before God.

And it shall be a statute to you forever that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and shall do no work,

either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you. For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the Lord from all your sins. It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute forever. (Leviticus 16:29–31)

How Can People in Their Sinfulness Commune with God in His Holiness?

- Sin is deadly.

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace. And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come near; carry your brothers away from the front of the sanctuary and out of the camp." (Leviticus 10:1–4)

- The propensity to sin is strong.
- The punishment for sin is severe.

Now an Israelite woman's son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel. And the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought in the camp, and the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. Then they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. And they put him in custody, till the will of the Lord should be clear to them. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death." (Leviticus 24:10–16)

- Sacrifice is necessary.

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. (Leviticus 17:11)

- The provision in the Old Testament: An annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement.

And it shall be a statute to you forever that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and shall do no work, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you. For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the Lord from all your sins. (Leviticus 16:29–30)

- The elements . . .
 - A priest entering an earthly sanctuary.

But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He shall put on the holy linen coat and shall have the linen undergarment on his body, and he shall tie the linen sash around his waist, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He shall bathe his body in water and then put them on. (Leviticus 16:3–4)

- The blood of a spotless animal.

Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself. And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil and put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, so that he does not die. And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. (Leviticus 16:11–14)

- God saw the sins of Israel.
- God was satisfied by the sacrifice of a substitute.

Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. Thus

he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses. No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make atonement in the Holy Place until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel. (Leviticus 16:15–17)

- A sacrifice that would need repeating.

"And this shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins." And Aaron did as the Lord commanded Moses. (Leviticus 16:34)

- The effect . . .
 - A reminder of all our sin.

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Hebrews 10:1–4)

- The provision in the New Testament: An abiding sacrifice in the death of Christ.

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. (Hebrews 9:11–14)

And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:10)

▪ The elements . . .

- A priest entering a heavenly sanctuary.

Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. (Hebrews 9:23–24)

- The blood of a sinless man.

For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. (Hebrews 9:13–14)

- God sees the sin of our lives.
- God is satisfied by the sacrifice of His Son.

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

- A sacrifice that will last forever.

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (Hebrews 10:11–14)

- The effect . . .
 - The removal of all our sin.

And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. (Hebrews 10:15–18)

- Our guilt is gone.
- Our conscience is clear.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:19–22)

- Sinful people can only commune with a holy God through sufficient sacrifice.
 - Jesus is our only hope of _____ access _____ to God.
 - Jesus is our constant and eternal _____ advocate _____ before God.

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:23–25)

14 NUMBERS 9: God Our Guide

On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony. And at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night. And whenever the cloud lifted from over the tent, after that the people of Israel set out, and in the place

where the cloud settled down, there the people of Israel camped. At the command of the Lord the people of Israel set out, and at the command of the Lord they camped. As long as the cloud rested over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. Even when the cloud continued over the tabernacle many days, the people of Israel kept the charge of the Lord and did not set out. Sometimes the cloud was a few days over the tabernacle, and according to the command of the Lord they remained in camp; then according to the command of the Lord they set out. And sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning. And when the cloud lifted in the morning, they set out, or if it continued for a day and a night, when the cloud lifted they set out. Whether it was two days, or a month, or a longer time, that the cloud continued over the tabernacle, abiding there, the people of Israel remained in camp and did not set out, but when it lifted they set out. At the command of the Lord they camped, and at the command of the Lord they set out. They kept the charge of the Lord, at the command of the Lord by Moses.

(Numbers 9:15–23)

- God is continually present with His people.
- God gives constant guidance to His people.

15 NUMBERS 11; 12; 14; 21: The Power of Intercession

And the people complained in the hearing of the Lord about their misfortunes, and when the Lord heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. Then the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the Lord, and the fire died down. So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burned among them.

(Numbers 11:1–3)

- Moses pleads for God's righteous anger to relent . . .
- God _____ answers _____ by suspending judgment.

When the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she

was leprous. And Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, do not punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother's womb." And Moses cried to the Lord, "O God, please heal her—please." But the Lord said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again." So Miriam was shut outside the camp seven days, and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again. (Numbers 12:10–15)

- Moses pleads for God's healing amidst Miriam's hurt . . .
- God answers according to His holiness.

But Moses said to the Lord, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O Lord, are in the midst of this people. For you, O Lord, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, 'It is because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.' And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, 'The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.' Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now." Then the Lord said, "I have pardoned, according to your word." (Numbers 14:13–20)

- Moses pleads for God's mercy according to God's Word . . .
- God answers according to Moses' _____ word _____.

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many

people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live. (Numbers 21:4–9)

- Moses pleads for God's grace on behalf of sinners . . .
- God answers by providing salvation.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:14–16)

16 DEUTERONOMY: Love for God, The Way to Life

- The supreme command: _____ Love _____ the Lord.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:4–5)

And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment." (Matthew 22:35–38)

- Enjoy the gifts.
- _____ Exalt _____ the giver.

And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of

Egypt, out of the house of slavery. It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—for the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 6:10–15)

- The clear charge: Hear the _____ Law _____.

And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:1–2)

See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” (Deuteronomy 4:5–6)

Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children—how on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, the Lord said to me, “Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.” (Deuteronomy 4:9–10)

And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and rules, that you might do them in the land that you are going over to possess. (Deuteronomy 4:14)

Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for all time. (Deuteronomy 4:40)

And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them." (Deuteronomy 5:1)

You shall be careful therefore to do as the Lord your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess. (Deuteronomy 5:32–33)

Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. (Deuteronomy 6:1–3)

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build . . . (Deuteronomy 6:6–10)

You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded you. (Deuteronomy 6:17)

And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us. (Deuteronomy 6:24–25)

- The ultimate choice: Death or _____ life _____.

For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (Deuteronomy 30:11–20)

- The prophet Moses was ultimately unable to bring life as he died.

"And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring). For I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give." So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the people of Israel. And the Lord commissioned Joshua the son of Nun and said, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the people of Israel into the land that I swore to give them. I will be with you." When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book to the very end, Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, "Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against you. For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the Lord. How much more after my death! Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly and turn aside from the way that I have

commanded you. And in the days to come evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands.” (Deuteronomy 31:21–29)

Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the Valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. And the Lord said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, ‘I will give it to your offspring.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.” So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord, and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day. Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated. And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended. (Deuteronomy 34:1–8)

- The greater prophet Jesus is uniquely able to conquer death and give us life.

Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people’s land. (Deuteronomy 32:43)

And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. (Deuteronomy 30:6)

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, “Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.” And the Lord said to me, “They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.” (Deuteronomy 18:15–19)

The Historical Books

17 JOSHUA 1: Practicing the Presence of God

"We should make a deliberate effort at the outset of every day to recognize the person of the Holy Spirit, to move into the light concerning his presence in our consciousness and to open our minds and to share all our thoughts and plans as we gaze by faith into the face of God. We should continue to walk throughout the day in a relationship of communication and communion with the Spirit mediated through our knowledge of the Word, relying upon every office of the Holy Spirit's role as counselor mentioned in Scripture. We should acknowledge him as the illuminator of truth and of the glory of Christ. We should look to him as teacher, guide, sanctifier, giver of assurance concerning our sonship and standing before God, helper in prayer, and as one who directs and empowers our witness. We should particularly recognize that growth in holiness is not simply a matter of the lonely individual making claims of faith on the basis of Romans 6:1–14. It involves moving about in all areas of our life in dependent fellowship with a person: 'Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.' When this practice of the presence of God is maintained over a period of time, our experience of the Holy Spirit becomes less subjective and more clearly identifiable, as gradually we learn to distinguish the strivings of the Spirit from the motions of our flesh."

– Richard Lovelace

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of

the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

(Joshua 1:1–9)

- Strength and courage are dependent upon the _____ presence of God.
 - From the perspective of the world, Joshua should be scared to death.

At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh. They brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan." But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it." Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are." So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them." (Numbers 13:25–33)

Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt." Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. And Joshua

the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them." Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel. (Numbers 14:1–10)

- But with the presence of God, Joshua could be sure of victory.
- Success and prosperity are dependent upon _____ communion _____ with God.

After these things Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being 110 years old. And they buried him in his own inheritance at Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the Lord did for Israel. (Joshua 24:29–31)

18 JOSHUA 7: Uncovering the Presence of Sin

Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads. And Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord God, why have you brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan! O Lord, what can I say, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will you do for your great name?" (Joshua 7:6–9)

- Prayer before God leads to the _____ revelation _____ of sin.

The Lord said to Joshua, "Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. Get up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the Lord, God of Israel, "There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you." In the morning therefore you shall be brought near by your tribes. And the tribe that the Lord takes by lot shall come near by clans. And the clan that the Lord takes shall come near by households. And the household that the Lord takes shall come near man by man. And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel.'" (Joshua 7:10–15)

- Prayer before God is necessary for _____ repentance _____ from sin.

And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his burning anger. Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor. (Joshua 7:26)

- Prayer before God leads to _____ restoration _____ beyond sin.

And the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land. And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its livestock you shall take as plunder for yourselves. Lay an ambush against the city, behind it." (Joshua 8:1–2)

19 JOSHUA 9–10: Our Voice and God's Voice in Prayer

- The need for God's voice . . .
 - Failing to seek God's counsel in prayer leads to foolish decisions in our lives.

So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them. (Joshua 9:14–15)

- The power of our voice . . .
 - Never underestimate the effect of praying to the God who will fight for you.

At that time Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, “Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.” And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. There has been no day like it before or since, when the Lord heeded the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel. (Joshua 10:12–14)

20 JUDGES: Hearing Our Cries for Help

*In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
(Judges 21:25)*

- Because of our sin, we experience God’s righteous judgment.

And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger. They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. Whenever they marched out, the hand of the Lord was against them for harm, as the Lord had

warned, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress. Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the Lord, and they did not do so. Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways. So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he said, "Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the Lord as their fathers did, or not." (Judges 2:10–22)

- Because of His mercy, God hears and answers our cries for help.

Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, and the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab. (Judges 3:15)

21 JUDGES 6: Should We Ask God for Signs?

- Not everyone in the Bible (nor everything they do) is intended to be an example for our lives.

Then Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said." And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. Then Gideon said to God, "Let not your anger burn against me; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece. Please let it be

dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew." And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew. (Judges 6:36–40)

Should We Ask God for Signs?

- Gideon wants a sign from God because he doesn't trust the Word of God.

Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor." And Gideon said to him, "Please, my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian." And the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?" And he said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." And the Lord said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." And he said to him, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you." And he said, "I will stay till you return." So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them. And the angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them." And he did so. Then the angel of the Lord reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight. Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the Lord. And Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face." But the Lord said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die." Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it, The Lord Is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites. (Judges 6:11–24)

- Gideon's lack of faith in God eventually leads to turning from the worship of God.

Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian." Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you." And Gideon said to them, "Let me make a request of you: every one of you give me the earrings from his spoil." (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) And they answered, "We will willingly give them." And they spread a cloak, and every man threw in it the earrings of his spoil. And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian, and besides the collars that were around the necks of their camels. And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah. And all Israel whored after it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family. So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel, and they raised their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon. (Judges 8:22–28)

- We must pray with _____ trust _____ in God's Word alone.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:7)

- We must pray with zeal for God's _____ glory _____ alone.

Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9–10)

22 1 SAMUEL 1–2: Prayer Amidst Barrenness and Praise for Blessing

After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head." As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was speaking in her heart; only

her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you." But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation." Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him." And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the Lord."

(1 Samuel 1:9–20)

- Prayer involves petition according to _____ needs _____ in our lives.
- Prayer involves expression of the _____ longings _____ of our heart.
- Prayer involves conviction that God hears and responds to our cries.
- Prayer involves devotion of God's gifts for God's glory.

"For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord." And he worshiped the Lord there. And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God." (1 Samuel 1:27–2:2)

"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to

his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.” Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest. (1 Samuel 2:9–11)

23 1 SAMUEL 3; 7; 8; 12; 15: The Ministry of Prayer

*And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” Then the Lord said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.” Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.” And Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him.” And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord.
(1 Samuel 3:10–21)*

- The ministry of prayer requires humbly hearing God’s Word.

And the people of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.” So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. And Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the Lord thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car. (1 Samuel 7:8–11)

- The ministry of prayer requires continually pleading for God's help.

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day." But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king." Samuel then said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city." (1 Samuel 8:6–22)

- The ministry of prayer requires faithfully interceding for God's people.

And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king." And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty. For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself."

Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.”
(1 Samuel 12:19–25)

- The ministry of prayer requires passionately sharing God’s perspective.

The word of the Lord came to Samuel: “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.” And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the Lord all night. (1 Samuel 15:10–11)

24 1 SAMUEL 23; 28; 30: Inquiring of the Lord

Now they told David, “Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors.” Therefore David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And the Lord said to David, “Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah.” But David’s men said to him, “Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?” Then David inquired of the Lord again. And the Lord answered him, “Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand.” And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.
(1 Samuel 23:1–5)

- When facing a decision, God provides _____ direction _____ through prayer.

When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David to Keilah, he had come down with an ephod in his hand. Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. And Saul said, “God has given him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.” And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.” Then David said, “O Lord, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. Will the men

of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, the God of Israel, please tell your servant." And the Lord said, "He will come down." Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the Lord said, "They will surrender you." Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition. And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand. (1 Samuel 23:6–14)

- When facing potential defeat, God provides _____ deliverance through prayer.

And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. And David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue." (1 Samuel 30:7–8)

- When walking in disobedience, God may _____ disregard our prayers.

Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the necromancers out of the land. The Philistines assembled and came and encamped at Shunem. And Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. (1 Samuel 28:3–6)

25 **2 SAMUEL 7: Prayer and the Promises of God**

- Prayer to God hinges on _____ promises _____ from God.

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord God. You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction

for mankind, O Lord God! And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord God! Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O Lord, became their God. And now, O Lord God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. And your name will be magnified forever, saying, 'The Lord of hosts is God over Israel,' and the house of your servant David will be established before you. For you, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. Now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you, O Lord God, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever." (2 Samuel 7:18–29)

"Tell God what He has said." – Robert Smith

- The promise from God to David . . .
 - A continual seed from your line will endure.

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Samuel 7:12–13)

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever. (2 Samuel 7:16)

- An honored son from your line will reign.

I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men . . . (2 Samuel 7:14)

Then he called for Solomon his son and charged him to build a house for the Lord, the God of Israel. David said to Solomon, "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of the Lord my God. But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth. Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. He shall build a house for my name. He shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever.'" (1 Chronicles 22:6–10)

And they ate and drank before the Lord on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and they anointed him as prince for the Lord, and Zadok as priest. Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king in place of David his father. And he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him. (1 Chronicles 29:22–23)

◦ **Your family will enjoy God's rest.**

Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours. Your territory shall be from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea. (Deuteronomy 11:24)

But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies around, so that you live in safety . . . (Deuteronomy 12:10)

Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies . . . (2 Samuel 7:1)

And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly . . . (2 Samuel 7:10)

◦ **Your family will exalt God's glory.**

He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Samuel 7:13)

Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom

God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O Lord, became their God. And now, O Lord God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. And your name will be magnified forever, saying, "The Lord of hosts is God over Israel," and the house of your servant David will be established before you. (2 Samuel 7:22–26)

- The prayer from David to God . . .

- A prayer of humble gratitude.

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord God. You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord God! And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord God! Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it." (2 Samuel 7:18–21)

- A prayer of extravagant worship.

Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. (2 Samuel 7:22)

- A prayer of confident trust in God's promise.

And now, O Lord God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. (2 Samuel 7:25)

- A prayer of courageous petition for God's blessing.

For you, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, "I will build you a house." Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good

thing to your servant. Now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you, O Lord God, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever. (2 Samuel 7:27–29)

- Prayer to God hinges on promises from God.

26 1 KINGS 3: A Prayer for Wisdom

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

(1 Kings 3:5–15)

- Prayer fundamentally depends upon the _____ generosity _____ of God.

- Prayer humbly focuses on what is _____pleasing_____ to God.
- Prayer necessarily trusts in _____wisdom_____ from God.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:5–8)

- Prayer inevitably leads to blessing from God.
- Prayer ultimately results in _____worship_____ of God.

27 1 KINGS 8: A Prayer of Worship

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, and said, "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart . . ."

(1 Kings 8:22–23)

- The basis of prayer: God's faithfulness to His promises.

. . . and said, "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart; you have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day."

(1 Kings 8:23–24)

- The source of prayer: God's Word to His people.

Now therefore, O Lord, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, "You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me." Now therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David my father. (1 Kings 8:25–26)

- The place of prayer: God's dwelling in heaven displayed on earth.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O Lord my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, "My name shall be there," that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive. (1 Kings 8:27–30)

- The _____ requirement _____ for prayer: continual repentance before God.

If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near, yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors, saying, "We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly," if they repent with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name, then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them (for they are your people, and your heritage, which you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace). Let your eyes be open to the plea of your servant and to the plea of your people Israel, giving ear to them whenever they call to you. For you separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to

be your heritage, as you declared through Moses your servant, when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God. (1 Kings 8:46–53)

When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:13–14)

- The heart of prayer: a love _____ relationship _____ with God.

Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and plea to the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven. And he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying, “Blessed be the Lord who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us, that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers. Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the Lord, be near to the Lord our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other. Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.” (1 Kings 8:54–61)

28 1 KINGS 17–19: The Power of Prayer

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

(James 5:16–18)

“Our God has boundless resources. The only limit is in us. Our asking, our thinking, our praying are too small. Our expectations are too limited.”

– A.B. Simpson

- Prayer finds strength in the solitude of God's presence.

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." And the word of the Lord came to him: "Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." So he went and did according to the word of the Lord. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. (1 Kings 17:1-7)

- Prayer carries the potential to see the dead come to life.

After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!" And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. And he cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?" Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again." And the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives." And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth." (1 Kings 17:17-24)

When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the Lord. Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. Then he summoned Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came to him, he

said, "Pick up your son." She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out. (2 Kings 4:32–37)

- Prayer exalts the glory of the true God above the false gods of the world.

So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And the people did not answer him a word. Then Elijah said to the people, "I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, he is God." And all the people answered, "It is well spoken." (1 Kings 18:20–24)

- The power of prayer is (in and of itself) useless.

Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it." And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention. (1 Kings 18:25–29)

- The power of people who communicate with Almighty God is unstoppable.

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that had been thrown down. Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord came, saying, "Israel shall be your name," and with the stones he built an altar in

the name of the Lord. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood." And he said, "Do it a second time." And they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time." And they did it a third time. And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water. And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back." Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God." (1 Kings 18:30–39)

"What an instrument is this which God hath put into your hands! Prayer moves Him that moves the universe." – Robert Murray McCheyne

- Prayer _____ perseveres _____ until God provides according to His promise.

And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain." So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go again," seven times. And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'" And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. (1 Kings 18:41–46)

- Prayer expresses _____ honest _____ emotion before God.

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your

life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." (1 Kings 19:1-4)

- Prayer depends on the gracious and perpetual pursuit of God.

And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God. (1 Kings 19:5-8)

- Prayer focuses not just upon the big, unusual, and extraordinary, but also upon the small, normal, and ordinary.

And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:11-13)

29 2 KINGS 6: Prayer and Spiritual Warfare

Once when the king of Syria was warring against Israel, he took counsel with his servants, saying, "At such and such a place shall be my camp." But the man of God sent word to the king of Israel, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are going down there." And the king of Israel sent to the place about which the man of God told him. Thus he used to warn him, so that he saved himself there more than once or twice. And the

mind of the king of Syria was greatly troubled because of this thing, and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me who of us is for the king of Israel?" And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." And he said, "Go and see where he is, that I may send and seize him." It was told him, "Behold, he is in Dothan." So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see." So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. And when the Syrians came down against him, Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, "Please strike this people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha. And Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." And he led them to Samaria.

(2 Kings 6:8–19)

- We live in the middle of a spiritual war.
- A spiritual war requires spiritual _____ weapons _____.

30 2 KINGS 19–20: Prayer for Long Life

- Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said: "O Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands,

wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. So now, O Lord our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone." (2 Kings 19:14–19)

- Hezekiah prays for the deliverance of God's people.
- Hezekiah prays for the fame of God's name.
- In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.'" Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, saying, "Now, O Lord, please remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him: "Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord, and I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David's sake." (2 Kings 20:1–6)
- Hezekiah pleads before God for the prolonging of his life.
- God answers Hezekiah not only for Hezekiah's good, but for God's glory.

31 1 CHRONICLES 4: Prayer for Physical Blessing

Jabez was more honorable than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!" And God granted what he asked.

(1 Chronicles 4:9–10)

- Jabez prays for God's blessing, presence, and protection...

- God answers.

32 1 CHRONICLES 5: Prayer in the Battle

The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had valiant men who carried shield and sword, and drew the bow, expert in war, 44,760, able to go to war. They waged war against the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab. And when they prevailed over them, the Hagrites and all who were with them were given into their hands, for they cried out to God in the battle, and he granted their urgent plea because they trusted in him.

(1 Chronicles 5:18–20)

- The people pleaded urgently in battle.
- The people trusted completely in God.

33 1 CHRONICLES 23: Prayer Every Day

For by the last words of David the sons of Levi were numbered from twenty years old and upward. For their duty was to assist the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord, having the care of the courts and the chambers, the cleansing of all that is holy, and any work for the service of the house of God. Their duty was also to assist with the showbread, the flour for the grain offering, the wafers of unleavened bread, the baked offering, the offering mixed with oil, and all measures of quantity or size. And they were to stand every morning, thanking and praising the Lord, and likewise at evening, and whenever burnt offerings were offered to the Lord on Sabbaths, new moons, and feast days, according to the number required of them, regularly before the Lord. Thus they were to keep charge of the tent of meeting and the sanctuary, and to attend the sons of Aaron, their brothers, for the service of the house of the Lord.

(1 Chronicles 23:27–32)

- The Levites were to thank and praise God every morning.

- The Levites were to thank and praise God every evening.
- The Levites were to thank and praise God in every offering.

34 2 CHRONICLES 14: Prayer that Prevails

Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots, and came as far as Mareshah. And Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up their lines of battle in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. And Asa cried to the Lord his God, "O Lord, there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. O Lord, you are our God; let not man prevail against you." So the Lord defeated the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. Asa and the people who were with him pursued them as far as Gerar, and the Ethiopians fell until none remained alive, for they were broken before the Lord and his army. The men of Judah carried away very much spoil.

(2 Chronicles 14:9–13)

- Prayer is reliance upon God . . .
 - When we are weak.
 - When we are overwhelmed.
- Prayer leads to prevailing with God . . .
 - He defends His people.
 - He shows His power.

"I have joyfully dedicated my whole life to the object of exemplifying how much may be accomplished by prayer and faith." – George Müller

35 2 CHRONICLES 15: Courage through Prayer

- When we are with God, He will be with us.

The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded, and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest and without law, but when in their distress they turned to the Lord, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them. In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for great disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands. They were broken in pieces. Nation was crushed by nation and city by city, for God troubled them with every sort of distress. But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded." As soon as Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded, he took courage and put away the detestable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim, and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the Lord. (2 Chronicles 15:1–8)

- When we seek God, we will find God.

And all Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and had sought him with their whole desire, and he was found by them, and the Lord gave them rest all around. (2 Chronicles 15:15)

- He will give us courage in our walk.
- We will experience reward in our work.

36 2 CHRONICLES 20: Fasting and Praying in Desperation

- After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar" (that is, Engedi). Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah assembled to seek help from the Lord; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:1–4)

- They set their face to seek the Lord.
 - They proclaimed a fast among all the people.
-
- And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, “O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, ‘If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.’ And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy—behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.” (2 Chronicles 20:5–12)
-
- They appealed to God’s might and power.
 - They recalled God’s faithfulness in the past.
 - They remembered God’s promises to His people.
 - They confessed their weakness before God.
 - They fixed their eyes upon God.
-
- Meanwhile all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. And he said, “Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the Lord to you, ‘Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God’s. Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the Lord will be with you.” (2 Chronicles 20:13–17)

- Prayer removes fear from us.
 - Prayer shifts the fight to God.
-
- *Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice. (2 Chronicles 20:18–19)*
 - Prayer produces _____ expectant _____ faith.
 - Prayer leads to extravagant worship.
-
- *And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed." And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever." And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another. (2 Chronicles 20:20–23)*
 - When we pray, we see God's hand at _____ work _____.
-
- *When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them, in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much. On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, for there they blessed the Lord. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Beracah to this day. Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat at their head, returning to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies. They came to Jerusalem with harps and lyres and trumpets, to the house of the Lord. And the fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. So*

the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.
(2 Chronicles 20:25–30)

- When we pray, we experience God's joy in _____ worship_____.

37 2 CHRONICLES 33: Prayer that Moves God

The Lord spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they paid no attention. Therefore the Lord brought upon them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria, who captured Manasseh with hooks and bound him with chains of bronze and brought him to Babylon. And when he was in distress, he entreated the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. He prayed to him, and God was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.
(2 Chronicles 33:10–13)

- God hears our prayers . . .
 - When we plead with humility . . .
 - As we seek His favor.
- God emboldens our faith . . .
 - We experience the provision of God.
 - We grow in the knowledge of God.

38 EZRA: Fasting First (Part 1)

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him." So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.
(Ezra 8:21–23)

- Fast for protection.
- Fast for _____ provision_____.

39 NEHEMIAH: Fasting First (Part 2)

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel, that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, "O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.' They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Now I was cupbearer to the king.

(Nehemiah 1:1–11)

- Fast in confession of sin.

- Fast for success in _____ mission _____.

40 ESTHER: Fasting First (Part 3)

And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish." Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

(Esther 4:12–17)

- Fast in light of _____ urgent _____ need.
- Fast in the face of real fear.
- Fast for the _____ salvation _____ of people.
- Fast for the glory of God.

41 EZRA 9–10: Praying and Fasting for Sin (Part 1)

- *After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands. And in this faithlessness the hand of the officials and chief men has been foremost." As soon as I heard this, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat appalled. Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles, gathered around me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice. And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garment and my cloak torn, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands*

to the Lord my God, saying: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. . . ."

(Ezra 9:1–6)

- We fall on our _____ faces _____ before God, trembling before His holiness.
 - We lift up our cries to God, pleading for His mercy.
- While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly. And Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, of the sons of Elam, addressed Ezra: "We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this." (Ezra 10:1–2)
- We _____ weep _____ over our sin bitterly.
- Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God and went to the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib, where he spent the night, neither eating bread nor drinking water, for he was mourning over the faithlessness of the exiles. And a proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the returned exiles that they should assemble at Jerusalem, and that if anyone did not come within three days, by order of the officials and the elders all his property should be forfeited, and he himself banned from the congregation of the exiles. Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem within the three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month. And all the people sat in the open square before the house of God, trembling because of this matter and because of the heavy rain. And Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have broken faith and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. Now then make confession to the Lord, the God of your fathers and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives." (Ezra 10:6–11)
- We confess our sin honestly.
- Then all the assembly answered with a loud voice, "It is so; we must do as you have said." (Ezra 10:12)
- We consecrate our lives completely.

42 NEHEMIAH 9–10: Praying and Fasting for Sin (Part 2)

- Prayer includes _____ praising _____ God for who He is.

Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the Lord their God. On the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani; and they cried with a loud voice to the Lord their God. Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, "Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you." (Nehemiah 9:1–6)

- Prayer includes thanking God for what He has done.

You are the Lord, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham. You found his heart faithful before you, and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite. And you have kept your promise, for you are righteous. And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea, and performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers. And you made a name for yourself, as it is to this day. And you divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land, and you cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters. By a pillar of cloud you led them in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way in which they should go. You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments, and you made known to them your holy Sabbath and commanded them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses your servant. You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger and brought water for them out of the rock for their thirst,

and you told them to go in to possess the land that you had sworn to give them. (Nehemiah 9:7–15)

- Prayer includes confessing to God our need for His grace.

Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day. Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly. Our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept your law or paid attention to your commandments and your warnings that you gave them. Even in their own kingdom, and amid your great goodness that you gave them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve you or turn from their wicked works. Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. And its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress. (Nehemiah 9:32–37)

- Prayer includes _____ expressing _____ to God our devotion to His Word.

Because of all this we make a firm covenant in writing; on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests. (Nehemiah 9:38)

43 NEHEMIAH 2: Praying in the Face of Fear

- Prayer transforms our perspective of _____ power _____ in this world.

In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. And the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid. I said to the king, “Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my

fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" Then the king said to me, "What are you requesting?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it." (Nehemiah 2:1–5)

- Prayer trains us to trust the good hand of God.

And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me. (Nehemiah 2:8b)

44 NEHEMIAH 4: Praying in the Midst of Opposition

- We plead for God's defense in our lives.

Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?" Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!" Hear, O our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunt on their own heads and give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives. Do not cover their guilt, and let not their sin be blotted out from your sight, for they have provoked you to anger in the presence of the builders. So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. (Nehemiah 4:1–6)

- We trust in God's protection of our lives.

But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night. (Nehemiah 4:7–9)

- We rejoice in God's provision for our lives.

Then I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall and appointed two great choirs that gave thanks. One went to the south on the wall to the Dung Gate. (Nehemiah 12:31)

The other choir of those who gave thanks went to the north, and I followed them with half of the people, on the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens, to the Broad Wall . . . (Nehemiah 12:38)

And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away. (Nehemiah 12:43)

45 NEHEMIAH 6: Praying at All Times for All Things

Now when Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies heard that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono." But they intended to do me harm. And I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" And they sent to me four times in this way, and I answered them in the same manner. In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand. In it was written, "It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall. And according to these reports you wish to become their king. And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem, 'There is a king in Judah.' And now the king will hear of these reports. So now come and let us take counsel together." Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind." For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done." But now, O God, strengthen my hands.

(Nehemiah 6:1–9)

- No prayer is too _____ great _____, and no prayer is too _____ small _____.

- We ask God to heal cancer, and we ask God to heal colds.
- We ask God to move mountains, and we ask God to work through mustard seeds.

46 **NEHEMIAH 13:** Praying for Remembrance Before God

*Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.
(Nehemiah 5:19)*

*Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good
deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for his service.
(Nehemiah 13:14)*

*Then I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves and
come and guard the gates, to keep the Sabbath day holy. Remember
this also in my favor, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness
of your steadfast love.
(Nehemiah 13:22)*

*Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I established the
duties of the priests and Levites, each in his work; and I provided
for the wood offering at appointed times, and for the firstfruits.
Remember me, O my God, for good.
(Nehemiah 13:30–31)*

- The more we pray, the more we realize what matters most in the end.
- The more we pray, the more we grow in our desire to please God for eternity.

Wisdom Literature

47 JOB 1–2: Prayer Amidst Suffering

Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.
(Job 1:20–22)

- In prayer, we express honest pain from our circumstances.
- In prayer, we express humble trust in God's sovereignty.

Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2:9–10)

- In prayer, we express true gratitude for God's generosity.
 - In prayer, we look beyond the gift to the Giver.
 - In prayer, we realize that even when the gifts are gone, God is still good.
- In prayer, we express unwavering faith in God's righteousness.

48 JOB 28: Prayer for Wisdom

"But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living. The deep says, 'It is not in me,' and the sea says, 'It is not with me.' It cannot be bought for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price. It

cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire. Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold.

No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; the price of wisdom is above pearls. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold. From where, then, does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding? It is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the air. Abaddon and Death say, 'We have heard a rumor of it with our ears.' God understands the way to it, and he knows its place. For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure, when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then he saw it and declared it; he established it, and searched it out. And he said to man, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.'"

(Job 28:12–28)

- The limited wisdom of man . . .
 - We lack knowledge.
 - We lack perspective.
 - We lack experience.

- The unlimited wisdom of God . . .
 - He has perfect knowledge.
 - He has eternal perspective.
 - He has infinite experience.

49 JOB 3–7: Praying in Light of Our Inevitable Questions

Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire? Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?

(Job 3:11–12)

Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light?

(Job 3:16)

*Why is light given to him who is in misery, and
life to the bitter in soul . . .*
(Job 3:20)

*Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,
whom God has hedged in?*
(Job 3:23)

What if I don't
understand
what God
is doing?

- In prayer, we ask God, “Why?”

| *What is my strength, that I should wait? And what is my end, that I should
be patient? (Job 6:11)*

- In prayer, we ask God, “What have I done?”

| *But now, be pleased to look at me, for I will not lie to your face. Please
turn; let no injustice be done. Turn now; my vindication is at stake. Is
there any injustice on my tongue? Cannot my palate discern the cause of
calamity? (Job 6:28–30)*

- In prayer, we ask God, “Where is this going?”

| *When I lie down I say, “When shall I arise?” But the night is long, and I
am full of tossing till the dawn. (Job 7:4)*

- In prayer, we ask God, “How long will this last?”

| *What is man, that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart
on him, visit him every morning and test him every moment? How long
will you not look away from me, nor leave me alone till I swallow my spit?
(Job 7:17–19)*

- As we pray, amidst all of our questions, we eventually realize that our
greatest need . . .
 - Is not an explanation from God.
 - Is ultimately an _____ encounter _____ with God.

"God, like a father, doesn't just give advice. He gives himself. He becomes the husband to the grieving widow (Isaiah 54:5). He becomes the comforter to the barren woman (Isaiah 54:1). He becomes the father of the orphaned (Psalm 10:14). He becomes the bridegroom to the single person (Isaiah 62:5). He is the healer to the sick (Exodus 15:26). He is the wonderful counselor to the confused and depressed (Isaiah 9:6)."

– Joni Eareckson Tada and Steve Estes

50 JOB 36–42: Praying in Light of Our Greatest Need

Then Job answered the Lord and said: "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.' I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

(Job 42:1–6)

- Our greatest need is not an answer for the “why” of suffering.
- Our greatest need is ultimately a glimpse the One “who” reigns over suffering.
 - He is our Creator.

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, and said, “Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed”? (Job 38:4–11)

Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go and say to you, “Here we are”? Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given

understanding to the mind? Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, when the dust runs into a mass and the clods stick fast together? (Job 38:34–38)

◦ He is our Sustainer.

Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket? Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God for help, and wander about for lack of food? (Job 38:39–41)

The wings of the ostrich wave proudly, but are they the pinions and plumage of love? For she leaves her eggs to the earth and lets them be warmed on the ground, forgetting that a foot may crush them and that the wild beast may trample them. She deals cruelly with her young, as if they were not hers; though her labor be in vain, yet she has no fear, because God has made her forget wisdom and given her no share in understanding. (Job 39:13–17)

◦ He is our Savior.

Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be in the right? Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his? Adorn yourself with majesty and dignity; clothe yourself with glory and splendor. Pour out the overflowings of your anger, and look on everyone who is proud and abase him. Look on everyone who is proud and bring him low and tread down the wicked where they stand. Hide them all in the dust together; bind their faces in the world below. Then will I also acknowledge to you that your own right hand can save you. (Job 40:8–14)

◦ He is our Hope.

He delivers the afflicted by their affliction and opens their ear by adversity. He also allured you out of distress into a broad place where there was no cramping, and what was set on your table was full of fatness. (Job 36:15–16)

◦ He is our Friend.

After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant

Job has. Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly. For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them, and the Lord accepted Job's prayer. (Job 42:7-9)

- He is with us _____ through _____ suffering.
- He will bring an _____ end _____ to suffering.

Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me! (Job 19:23-27)

"Were we happy? Verily we were. With every year our happiness increased more and more. I never saw my beloved wife at any time, when I met her unexpectedly anywhere in Bristol, without being delighted so to do. I never met her even in the Orphan Houses, without my heart being delighted so to do. Day by day, as we met in our dressing room, at the Orphan Houses, to wash our hands before dinner and tea, I was delighted to meet her, and she was equally pleased to see me. Thousands of times I told her—"My darling, I never saw you at any time, since you became my wife, without my being delighted to see you."

. . . When I heard what Mr. Pritchard's judgment was, viz., that the malady was rheumatic fever, I naturally expected the worst. . . . My heart was nigh to be broken on account of the depth of my affection.

"The last portion of scripture which I read to my precious wife was this: 'The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Now, if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have received grace, we are partakers of grace, and to all such he will give glory also. I said to myself, with regard to the latter part, 'no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly'—I am in myself a poor worthless sinner, but I have been saved by the blood of Christ; and I

do not live in sin, I walk uprightly before God. Therefore, if it is really good for me, my darling wife will be raised up again; sick as she is. God will restore her again. But if she is not restored again, then it would not be a good thing for me. And so my heart was at rest. I was satisfied with God. And all this springs, as I have often said before, from taking God at his word, believing what he says.”— George Müller ^[1]

PSALMS 5–7; 10; 17; 22; 26: Prayers of Grievance Over Suffering, False Accusations, or Persecution ^[2]

“For any Christian for whom prayer is becoming formal and stereotyped, the Psalms provide a rich source of inspiration. It is true that to read the Psalms on your knees, as it were, can be a great boost to one’s prayer experience.”

– Graeme Goldsworthy

“More than one-third of the psalms are laments. They allow the psalmist to cry out to God in anguish, knowing that He alone is the ultimate healer and justifier.”

– John Perkins

Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my groaning. Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray. O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

(Psalm 5:1–3)

O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me, lest like a lion they tear my soul apart, rending it in pieces, with none to deliver.

(Psalm 7:1–2)

- Prayer _____ wrestles _____ with the goodness, presence, and power of God in a world of evil, sin, and suffering.
 - Asking the question, “Why?”

Why, O Lord, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? (Psalm 10:1)

◦ Asking the question, “How long?”

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing; heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled. But you, O Lord—how long? (Psalm 6:2–3)

- Prayer maintains a confidence in God’s character and God’s compassion
amidst suffering.

I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me; hear my words. Wondrously show your steadfast love, O Savior of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand. Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings, from the wicked who do me violence, my deadly enemies who surround me. (Psalm 17:6–9)

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord. Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, “Seek my face.” My heart says to you, “Your face, Lord, do I seek.” Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in. Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord! (Psalm 27:1–14)

◦ What David saw . . .

- Devastation.
- Desertion.
- Danger.

- What David prayed . . .
 - The shock of his prayer:
 - David doesn't ask first for deliverance.
 - David asks first for God.
 - The benefits of his request:
 - God is absolutely sovereign.
 - God is incomparably beautiful.
 - The relevance of his example:
 - What is our one thing?
 - Do we find God useful for our circumstances or do we find Him glorious regardless of circumstances?
- What David concluded . . .
 - Prayerful confidence is found in passionate focus on God amidst our pain and affliction.

52 PSALM 6; 13; 22: Prayers Expressing a Sense of Alienation from God

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?
(Psalm 22:1)

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
(Matthew 27:45–46)

- Prayer includes cries of spiritual anguish.

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. (Psalm 22:2)

- Prayer includes cries of relational alienation.
 - Alienation from God.
 - Alienation from others.

But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him! (Psalm 22:6–8)

Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help. Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me . . . (Psalm 22:11–12)

I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me . . . (Psalm 22:17)

- Prayer includes cries of physical agony.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet . . . (Psalm 22:14–16)

- Expressing our sorrow in prayer to God opens the door for experiencing God's love for us.

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me. (Psalm 13:1–6)

"The Laments of Scripture do more than just voice our pain. The psalms of lament stand alone as theology. They teach us about our God and how to worship Him. They transform us." – John Perkins

53 PSALM 3; 31; 43; 59; 70–71; 120; 129; 137: **Prayers for Deliverance from Suffering or Enemies**

- Prayer honestly faces fear, frustration, danger, and depression.

O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; many are saying of my soul, "There is no salvation for him in God." Selah (Psalm 3:1–2)

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. I have been forgotten like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel. For I hear the whispering of many—terror on every side!—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. (Psalm 31:9–13)

- Prayer hopefully trusts in salvation from all these things (and more).

But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. I cried aloud to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked. Salvation belongs to the Lord; your blessing be on your people! Selah (Psalm 3:3–8)

But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors! Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love! O Lord, let me not be put to shame, for I call upon you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them go silently to Sheol. Let the lying lips be mute, which speak insolently against the righteous in pride and contempt. (Psalm 31:14–18)

- We pray with urgency.

Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me! Let them be put to shame and confusion who seek my life! Let them be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my hurt! Let them turn back because of their shame who say, "Aha, Aha!" (Psalm 70:1–3)

O God, be not far from me; O my God, make haste to help me! May my accusers be put to shame and consumed; with scorn and disgrace may they be covered who seek my hurt. But I will hope continually and will praise you yet more and more. My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day, for their number is past my knowledge. With the mighty deeds of the Lord God I will come; I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone. (Psalm 71:12–16)

- We pray with expectancy.

May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation say evermore, "God is great!" But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay! (Psalm 70:4–5)

O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come. Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you? You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again. You will increase my greatness and comfort me again. I will also praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praises to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to you; my soul also, which you have redeemed. And my tongue will talk of your righteous help all the day long, for they have been put to shame and disappointed who sought to do me hurt. (Psalm 71:17–24)

54 PSALM 25:6–10; 36:5–10; 62:5–7; 63: PRAYERS EXALTING GOD FOR HIS FAITHFULNESS, COMPASSION, AND LOVE ^[3]

Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord! Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

(Psalm 25:6–10)

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O Lord. How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light. Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your righteousness to the upright of heart!
(Psalm 36:5–10)

- Our relationship with God in prayer should look like a consuming _____ addiction _____ in our lives, not a convenient addition to our lives.

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
(Psalm 63:1)

My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. (Psalm 63:8)

- Prayer to God is not designed to be our duty; prayer to God is designed to be our _____ delight _____.

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.
(Psalm 62:5–7)

- Prayer leads us to be satisfied in God over and above His gifts.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. (Psalm 63:2–4)

- Prayer transforms our experiences in the wilderness into experiences in worship.

But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth; they shall be given over to the power of the sword; they shall be a portion for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of liars will be stopped. (Psalm 63:9–11)

55 PSALM 2; 18; 21; 45; 72; 89; 110; 140: Prayers of and for the King

- Praying for the righteousness of the king's rule.

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor! May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more! (Psalm 72:1–7)

- Praying for the spread of the king's dominion.

May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! (Psalm 72:8–11)

- Praying ultimately for the spread of God's justice.

For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight. (Psalm 72:12–14)

- Praying for blessing in the king's life.

Long may he live; may gold of Sheba be given to him! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day! May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field! May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed! (Psalm 72:15–17)

- Praying ultimately for the fame of God's name.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended. (Psalm 72:18–20)

- As we read the prayers in these psalms, we find their final fulfillment in the perfect King who came to save us from our sin and rule us with His righteousness.

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (Psalm 2:1–12)

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. (Acts 2:36)

And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers

were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’—for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.” (Acts 4:24–28)

And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.” (Acts 13:32–33)

. . . and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus . . . (Ephesians 2:6)

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15)

56 PSALM 6; 7; 16; 23; 28; 54; 56; 71; 109; 140: **Prayers Expressing Trust and Confidence in God**

Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

(Psalm 16:1–11)

And David rose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said to him, “Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing to one another of him in dances, ‘Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands’?” And David took these

words to heart and was much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. So he changed his behavior before them and pretended to be insane in their hands and made marks on the doors of the gate and let his spittle run down his beard. Then Achish said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me? Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this fellow to behave as a madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?"

(1 Samuel 21:10–15)

Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker oppresses me; my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly. When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? All day long they injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil. They stir up strife, they lurk; they watch my steps, as they have waited for my life.

(Psalm 56:1–6)

- In prayer, we put our trust in the _____ character _____ of God.
 - We trust in His power.
 - We trust in His mercy.

You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? I must perform my vows to you, O God; I will render thank offerings to you. For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life. (Psalm 56:8–13)

- In prayer, we lift our hearts to the _____ Word _____ of God.

In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? (Psalm 56:4)

I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes. (Psalm 119:48)

My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments. (Psalm 119:120)

I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word. (Psalm 138:2)

- His Word is supreme.
- His Word is sure.
- His Word is sufficient.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23:1–6)

57 PSALM 32; 38; 51: Prayers of Confession Before God

- In prayer, we acknowledge the seriousness of sin.
 - Sin is offensive.
 - Sin defies God.
 - Sin destroys man.
 - Sin is comprehensive.
 - Sin is pervasive.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:1–5)

- In prayer, we appeal to the grace of God.

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. (Psalm 51:6–8)

- His cleansing is costly.

Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. (Exodus 12:22)

For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Hebrews 9:19–22)

- His forgiveness is free.

Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:9–10)

- In prayer, confession is the connection between sin's seriousness and God's grace.

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. (Psalm 51:16–17)

- Confession requires honesty.
- Confession requires humility.

- Through prayer, restoration becomes a reality.

Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. (Psalm 51:11–12)

- God re-creates our heart.
- God re-establishes our joy.
- We walk with Him.
- We witness to Him.
- We worship Him.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. (Psalm 51:13–15)

58 PSALM 26; 66; 96; 103–107; 145; 148–150: Prayers of General Praise to God^[4]

Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity." Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness.
(Psalm 96:1–13)

- In prayer, we praise God for who He is.

One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. (Psalm 145:4–6)

- In prayer, we praise God for what He has done.

Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! (Psalm 150:1–6)

59 PSALM 68; 78; 105; 106; 114; 136: Prayers of Remembrance

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.

(Psalm 78:1–4)

- Remember God's giving of the law.

They did not keep God's covenant, but refused to walk according to his law. (Psalm 78:10)

- Remember God's parting of the Red Sea.

He divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a heap. (Psalm 78:13)

He led them in safety, so that they were not afraid, but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. (Psalm 78:53)

- Remember God's guidance through the wilderness.

In the daytime he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a fiery light. (Psalm 78:14)

- Remember God's provision of food and water.

He split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. He made streams come out of the rock and caused waters to flow down like rivers. (Psalm 78:15–16)

- Remember God's judgment against sin.

But before they had satisfied their craving, while the food was still in their mouths, the anger of God rose against them, and he killed the strongest of them and laid low the young men of Israel. (Psalm 78:30–31)

- Remember God's mercy toward sinners.

Yet he, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them; he restrained his anger often and did not stir up all his wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again. (Psalm 78:38–39)

- Remember the signs and wonders in Egypt.

He turned their rivers to blood, so that they could not drink of their streams. He sent among them swarms of flies, which devoured them, and frogs, which destroyed them. He gave their crops to the destroying locust and the fruit of their labor to the locust. He destroyed their vines with hail and their sycamores with frost. He gave over their cattle to the hail and their flocks to thunderbolts. He let loose on them his burning anger, wrath, indignation, and distress, a company of destroying angels. He made a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death, but gave their lives over to the plague. He struck down every firstborn in Egypt, the firstfruits of their strength in the tents of Ham. (Psalm 78:44–51)

- Remember the victory of enemies in the Promised Land.

He drove out nations before them; he apportioned them for a possession and settled the tribes of Israel in their tents. (Psalm 78:55)

- Remember God's discipline of His people.

When God heard, he was full of wrath, and he utterly rejected Israel. He forsook his dwelling at Shiloh, the tent where he dwelt among mankind, and delivered his power to captivity, his glory to the hand of the foe. He gave his people over to the sword and vented his wrath on his heritage. Fire devoured their young men, and their young women had no marriage song. Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation. (Psalm 78:59–64)

- Remember God's anointing of the king.

He rejected the tent of Joseph; he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loves. He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever. He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance. With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand. (Psalm 78:67–72)

- Prayer is an opportunity to _____ **remember** _____, recall, and retell the works of God.

He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God. (Psalm 78:5–8)

60

PSALM 7; 9; 36; 50; 58; 67; 82; 94; 96; 98; 137; 149: Prayers Asking for or Rejoicing in the Salvation and Judgment of God

- God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment: "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy;

deliver them from the hand of the wicked." They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. I said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince." Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!
(Psalm 82:1–8)

- We pray to . . .
 - The sovereign King over all.
 - The good Judge of all.
 - The merciful Savior for all.
- We pray for . . .
 - God's justice to reign.
 - God's kingdom to come.
 - God's salvation to spread.

"Justice comes most surely by falling on our knees with our heads bowed. When God's justice comes, it will be perfect, proportionate, and balanced." – Thabiti Anyabwile

- *May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!* (Psalm 67:1–5)

- We pray for God's _____ blessing _____ on His people for the sake of His _____ praise _____ among all peoples.
 - We pray to . . .
 - The God who saves the needy.
 - The God who judges the peoples.
 - The God who guides the nations.
 - We pray for . . .
 - God's ways to be known among all peoples.
 - God's salvation to be enjoyed by all peoples.
 - God's name to be feared by all peoples.
- We pray with confidence that God will accomplish His purpose by spreading His praise among all peoples.

The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him! (Psalm 67:6–7)

61 PROVERBS: Acceptable Prayer

*The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.
(Proverbs 15:8)*

- The prayers of the righteous are acceptable to God.

*The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.
(Proverbs 15:29)*

- The prayers of the _____ disobedient _____ are abhorrent to God.

If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination. (Proverbs 28:9)

62 ECCLESIASTES 5: Our Approach to Prayer

*Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.
(Ecclesiastes 5:1–3)*

- _____ Pause _____ in heartfelt, thoughtful reverence.
- Prioritize listening over speaking.

63 SONG OF SOLOMON: A Relationship Filled with Love

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.
(Song of Solomon 2:4)

- This book wonderfully portrays romantic love in marriage.
- This book ultimately points to God's design for marriage.
 - To show Christ's love for the church.
 - To show the church's love for Christ.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
(Ephesians 5:22–33)

- This book powerfully reminds us that we are in a relationship with God filled with _____ love.
 - This is the heart of prayer.

You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you. (Song of Solomon 4:7)

The Prophets

64 ISAIAH 6: Encountering God's Presence

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

(Isaiah 6:1–4)

- The pursuit of God leads to a glorious view of His _____ holiness _____.
 - He is without error.
 - He is without equal.

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing. (Isaiah 40:25–26)

- He is the Creator of the world.
- He is the Ruler of history.

Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose," calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it. (Isaiah 46:8–11)

- He is the King of the nations.

Beware lest Hezekiah mislead you by saying, "The Lord will deliver us." Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of

the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? (Isaiah 36:18–20)

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word that the Lord has spoken concerning him: ‘She despises you, she scorns you—the virgin daughter of Zion; she wags her head behind you—the daughter of Jerusalem. Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? Against the Holy One of Israel! By your servants you have mocked the Lord, and you have said, With my many chariots I have gone up the heights of the mountains, to the far recesses of Lebanon, to cut down its tallest cedars, its choicest cypresses, to come to its remotest height, its most fruitful forest. I dug wells and drank waters, to dry up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt. Have you not heard that I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should make fortified cities crash into heaps of ruins, while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown. I know your sitting down and your going out and coming in, and your raging against me. Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come to my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came.’” (Isaiah 37:21–29)

“Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.” And the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh. And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword. And after they escaped into the land of Ararat, Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place. (Isaiah 37:33–38)

- He is the Judge of all peoples.

The Lord has taken his place to contend; he stands to judge peoples.
(Isaiah 3:13)

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (Isaiah 25:6–9)

- The pursuit of God leads to a humble view of our _____ sinfulness _____.

And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5)

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. (Isaiah 1:2–4)

How the faithful city has become a whore, she who was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. Your silver has become dross, your best wine mixed with water. Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them. (Isaiah 1:21–23)

For you have rejected your people, the house of Jacob, because they are full of things from the east and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners. Their land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots. Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made. (Isaiah 2:6–8)

Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he? (Isaiah 2:22)

You have not bought me sweet cane with money, or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities. (Isaiah 43:24)

- The pursuit of God leads to an overwhelming view of His grace.

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." (Isaiah 6:6–7)

And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:13–14)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6–7)

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the

hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. (Isaiah 11:1–10)

I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. (Isaiah 43:25)

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:2–12)

- The pursuit of God leads to an urgent view of our mission.

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." And he said, "Go,

and say to this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, and the Lord removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump. (Isaiah 6:8–13)

And now the Lord says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him—for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength—he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (Isaiah 49:5–6)

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1–3)

65 **ISAIAH 56: A House of Prayer**

*"And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, "I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered."
(Isaiah 56:6–8)*

- God designed the temple to be a house of prayer.
- God designed the temple to be for all the peoples.

Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, "The Lord will surely separate me from his people"; and let not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." For thus says the Lord: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." (Isaiah 56:3–5)

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. (Acts 8:26–35)

66 ISAIAH 58: False and True Fasting

False Fasting . . .

- Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to

God. "Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?" Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord? (Isaiah 58:2-5)

- Seeks the pleasures of the world.
- Ignores the poor in the world.
- Leads to conflict with others.
- Exalts ourselves above God.
- Is ultimately abhorrent to God.

When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. (Isaiah 1:15-17)

True Fasting . . .

- Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, "Here I am." If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. (Isaiah 58:6-11)

- Seeks purity in the world.
- Cares for the poor in the world.
- Leads to compassion for others.
- Exalts God above ourselves.
- Is ultimately pleasing to _____ God_____.

And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." (Isaiah 58:12–14)

67 ISAIAH 62: Give God No Rest

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth. The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: "I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored; but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the Lord, and those who gather it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary."

(Isaiah 62:1–9)

The Attitude of Our Hearts . . .

- We want God's glory to be _____ restored _____ among His people.

His watchmen are blind; they are all without knowledge; they are all silent dogs; they cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. The dogs have a mighty appetite; they never have enough. But they are shepherds who have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way, each to his own gain, one and all. "Come," they say, "let me get wine; let us fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow will be like this day, great beyond measure." (Isaiah 56:10–12)

- We want God's praise to _____ resound _____ among all peoples.

. . . and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the Lord, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord. (Isaiah 66:19–20)

- We want God Himself to _____ return _____ for His people.

The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion. (Isaiah 52:8)

The Action in Our Lives . . .

- We give God no rest from our _____ praising _____ . . .
 - God, we will exalt Your name!
- We give God no rest from our _____ confessing _____ . . .
 - God, we will reflect Your holiness!

- We give God no rest from our asking . . .
 - God, we will bombard Your throne!
- We give God no rest from our working . . .
 - God, we will accomplish Your mission!

Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up a signal over the peoples. Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." And they shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken. (Isaiah 62:10–12)

68 JEREMIAH: Prayer in the New Covenant

The Problem in the Old Covenant . . .

- The people of God were idolatrous.

Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. (Jeremiah 2:11–13)

- The people of God were immoral.

Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, "We are delivered!"—only to go on doing all these abominations? Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 7:8–11)

- The people of God were *incapable* of anything different.

But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers. "So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. And you shall say to them, 'This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips. Cut off your hair and cast it away; raise a lamentation on the bare heights, for the Lord has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.'" (Jeremiah 7:24–29)

The Promises of a New Covenant . . .

Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:31–34)

- The law of God . . .
 - Old Covenant: Written on stone tablets.
 - New Covenant: Written on human hearts.

The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars . . . (Jeremiah 17:1)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

- Our worst enemy: fleshly religion.
- Our greatest need: spiritual regeneration .

- Obedience to the law is not a condition for entering the new covenant.
- Obedience to the law is a promise we experience in the new covenant.

"I think the difference here pointed out between these two covenants, lies plainly here, that in the old covenant God promised to be their God upon condition of hearty obedience; obedience was stipulated as a condition, but not promised. But in the new covenant, this hearty obedience is promised." – Jonathan Edwards

- The knowledge of God . . .
 - Old Covenant: We relate to God through flawed men.
 - Limited admission to the presence of God.
 - Distant encounter of the glory of God.
 - New Covenant: We are reconciled to God through a flawless man.
 - Unlimited access to the presence of God.
 - Direct experience of the glory of God.
- The grace of God . . .
 - Old Covenant: Persistent sacrifice through which God patiently passes over sin.
 - New Covenant: A perfect sacrifice through which God permanently removes our sin.
 - God forgives our sin!
 - God forgets our sin!

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. (Hebrews 10:11–18)

Prayer Transformed . . .

- We pray with a new heart that _____ desires _____ God.
- We pray with direct and unlimited _____ access _____ to God.
- We pray with humble confidence in the grace of God.

Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when the city shall be rebuilt for the Lord from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb, and shall then turn to Goah. (Jeremiah 31:38–39)

69 LAMENTATIONS: Crying Out for Our Relief

*Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the night watches!
Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord!
Lift your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint
for hunger at the head of every street.
(Lamentations 2:19)*

- Profound questions in prayer . . .

*Why do you forget us forever, why do you forsake us for so many days?
Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored! Renew our
days as of old—unless you have utterly rejected us, and you remain
exceedingly angry with us. (Lamentations 5:20–22)*

- Are we forsaken?
- Can we be forgiven?

- Lead to profound _____ rest _____ in God.

*Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the
gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.*

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." (Lamentations 3:19–24)

- Prayer opens for us fresh floodgates of mercy from God.
- Prayer reminds us of unceasing faithfulness in God.
- Prayer instills in us hope in the provision of God.

The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him; let him put his mouth in the dust— there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults. For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men. (Lamentations 3:25–33)

70 EZEKIEL: Crying Out for God's Glory

The Glory of God Revealed . . .

- God is omnipresent.

In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin), the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Chebar canal, and the hand of the Lord was upon him there. As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal. And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings. Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: their wings touched one another. Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went. As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a

lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle. Such were their faces. And their wings were spread out above. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies. And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures darted to and fro, like the appearance of a flash of lightning. (Ezekiel 1:1–14)

- God is omniscient.

And their rims were tall and awesome, and the rims of all four were full of eyes all around. (Ezekiel 1:18)

- God is omnipotent.

Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads. And under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body. And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings. And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads. When they stood still, they let down their wings. (Ezekiel 1:22–25)

- God is faithful.

Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking. (Ezekiel 1:28)

- God is merciful.

In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. (Ezekiel 1:1)

- God is personal.

Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking. (Ezekiel 1:28)

The Glory of God Removed . . .

- *In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord God fell upon me there. Then I looked, and behold, a form that had the appearance of a man. Below what appeared to be his waist was fire, and above his waist was something like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming metal. He put out the form of a hand and took me by a lock of my head, and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the valley. Then he said to me, "Son of man, lift up your eyes now toward the north." So I lifted up my eyes toward the north, and behold, north of the altar gate, in the entrance, was this image of jealousy. And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see still greater abominations." And he brought me to the entrance of the court, and when I looked, behold, there was a hole in the wall. Then he said to me, "Son of man, dig in the wall." So I dug in the wall, and behold, there was an entrance. And he said to me, "Go in, and see the vile abominations that they are committing here." So I went in and saw. And there, engraved on the wall all around, was every form of creeping things and loathsome beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel. And before them stood seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, with Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan standing among them. Each had his censer in his hand, and the smoke of the cloud of incense went up. Then he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in*

the dark, each in his room of pictures? For they say, 'The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.'" He said also to me, "You will see still greater abominations that they commit." (Ezekiel 8:1–13)

- They pursued false gods instead of the true God.
- They exchanged the protecting presence of God for the _____ punishing _____ presence of God.

The Glory of God Restored . . .

- *Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. (Ezekiel 36:22–23)*
 - God will forgive His people of their sin.
 - We pray with rest in God's _____ grace _____!
 - God will fill His people with His Spirit.
 - We pray according to the leadership of God's _____ Spirit _____!
 - God will glorify His name through their salvation.
 - We pray for the glory of God's _____ name _____!

71 DANIEL: Prayer More Important than Life

Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king.

Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But

if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we

serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”
(Daniel 3:13–18)

- Pray consistently.

When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. (Daniel 6:10)

- Pray with courage.

Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. (Daniel 6:16–17)

- Pray contritely.

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. (Daniel 9:1–5)

- Pray with confidence.

Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come." When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me." Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince. (Daniel 10:12–21)

- We are in a battle.
- God will win the war.

72 JOEL: Fasting and Repentance

The Day of the Lord Is Coming . . .

Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes. (Joel 1:14–15)

- A day of destruction for the resistant.

Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful

people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations. (Joel 2:1–2)

The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The Lord utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it? (Joel 2:10–11)

- A day of judgment for God's people.
- A day of judgment for all peoples.

"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. (Joel 2:12–13)

Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. (Joel 3:14–16)

- A day of salvation for the repentant.

The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls. (Joel 2:31–32)

The Day of Fasting Is Now . . .

"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a

drink offering for the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep and say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" (Joel 2:12–17)

- Fasting is an external expression of an _____ internal _____ reality.
- In fasting, we repent . . .
 - Confession: Agreement with God about our sin.
 - Contrition: Brokenness before God over our sin.

Awake, you drunkards, and weep, and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth. (Joel 1:5)

Lament like a virgin wearing sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth. (Joel 1:8)

Be ashamed, O tillers of the soil; wail, O vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine dries up; the fig tree languishes. Pomegranate, palm, and apple, all the trees of the field are dried up, and gladness dries up from the children of man. Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests; wail, O ministers of the altar. Go in, pass the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God! Because grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God. Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes. (Joel 1:11–15)

- Conversion: Turning to God from our sin.
- Through fasting, God relents . . .
 - He rescues us.

Then the Lord became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. The Lord answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending to you

grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations. I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear guard into the western sea; the stench and foul smell of him will rise, for he has done great things.” (Joel 2:18–20)

- He restores us.

Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done great things! Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and vine give their full yield. Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before. The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. (Joel 2:21–26)

- He _____ resides _____ with us.

You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame. (Joel 2:27)

- He will come to us in His Son.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. (Joel 2:28–29)

- He will live in us through His Spirit.

And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood,

and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Acts 2:17–21)

- He will protect us in His stronghold.

The Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. (Joel 3:16)

73 AMOS: Our Relenting God (Part 1)

- This is what the Lord God showed me: behold, he was forming locusts when the latter growth was just beginning to sprout, and behold, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings. When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said, "O Lord God, please forgive! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!" The Lord relented concerning this: "It shall not be," said the Lord. This is what the Lord God showed me: behold, the Lord God was calling for a judgment by fire, and it devoured the great deep and was eating up the land. Then I said, "O Lord God, please cease! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!" The Lord relented concerning this: "This also shall not be," said the Lord God. (Amos 7:1–6)
 - As we cry out in repentance . . .
 - God relents with compassionate _____ patience _____.
- This is what he showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said, "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass by them; the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." (Amos 7:7–9)
 - God brings final judgment . . .
 - To all who fail to _____ repent _____.

74 JONAH: Our Relenting God (Part 2)

- The city of Nineveh deserved God's judgment.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:1–4)

- The city of Nineveh called out for God's mercy.
 - They fasted over their sin.
 - They turned from their sin.

And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish." (Jonah 3:5–9)

- God relented from showing them judgment and showered them with His mercy.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. (Jonah 3:10)

75 HABAKKUK: Questioning God in Prayer

Amidst Our Many Questions . . .

- *The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw. O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save? (Habakkuk 1:1–2)*
 - Does God hear?
 - Does God care?
 - Is God good?
- *Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. (Habakkuk 1:3)*
- *You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he? (Habakkuk 1:13)*
 - Is God holy?
 - Where is God's power?
- *So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted. (Habakkuk 1:4)*
 - Where is God's Word?
- *Is he then to keep on emptying his net and mercilessly killing nations forever? (Habakkuk 1:17)*
 - Will God show that He is just?
 - Is God worthy of my trust?

Prayer Teaches Us . . .

- And the Lord answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2:2–4)

- To listen to the truth of God.
- To lean on the timing of God.
- To look forward to the triumph of God.
 - He will show His glory.

Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity! Behold, is it not from the Lord of hosts that peoples labor merely for fire, and nations weary themselves for nothing? For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:12–14)

- We will stand in awe.

But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him. (Habakkuk 2:20)

- To live with trust in God.

O Lord, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. (Habakkuk 3:2)

- God is our Savior.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16–17)

- God is all sovereign.

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power. Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels. He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation? You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. Selah You split the earth with rivers. The mountains saw you and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice; it lifted its hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear. (Habakkuk 3:3–11)

- **God is our protector.**

You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger. You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. (Habakkuk 3:12–13)

- **God is our deliverer.**

You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters. I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. (Habakkuk 3:14–16)

- **God is our satisfaction.**

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. (Habakkuk 3:17–19)

- God is our strength.
- God is our victory .

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
 When sorrows like sea billows roll;
 Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
 It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
 Let this blest assurance control,
 That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
 And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
 My sin, not in part but the whole,
 Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
 If Jordan above me shall roll,
 No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life
 Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,
 The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
 Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!
 Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
 The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
 The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
 Even so, it is well with my soul.

It is well, with my soul,
 It is well, it is well, with my soul.

– Horatio Spafford

76 ZECHARIAH: Fasting Is Feasting

- Repent of _____ sin _____ . . .

"The Lord was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Thus declares the Lord of hosts: Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 1:2–3)

- Renew your _____ strength _____ . . .

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9)

- Fast and feast with joy on His grace.

And the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, "Thus says the Lord of hosts: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace." (Zechariah 8:18–19)

- Pray and live with zeal for His glory.

Thus says the Lord of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, "Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord and to seek the Lord of hosts; I myself am going." Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." (Zechariah 8:20–23)

77 MALACHI: Prayer that Pleases God

A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts

to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, "How have we despised your name?" By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, "How have we polluted you?" By saying that the Lord's table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us.

With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the Lord of hosts. Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand.

For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted,

and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. But you say, "What a weariness this is," and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord. Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

(Malachi 1:6–14)

- Prayer that pleases God _____ reveres _____ His greatness.
 - He is the Author of our lives.
 - He is the Lover of our souls.
 - He is the Lord of all creation.
 - He is the King of all glory.
- Prayer that pleases God reflects His holiness.
 - They traded in the Word of God for the wisdom of the world.
 - They traded in the purity of God for the pleasures of the world.
 - They traded in the acceptance of God for the applause of the world.
- Prayer that pleases God _____ remembers _____ His purpose.

Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. "They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him. For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts. Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." (Malachi 3:16–4:6)

The Gospels

78 MATTHEW 4: Fasting and Temptation

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

(Matthew 4:1–11)

- Fasting and praying are guards against self-gratification.
 - We are tempted to fulfill our wants apart from God's will.

And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 8:2–3)

- As we fast and pray, we remember that we can trust in the all-satisfying, all-sufficient goodness of the Father.

"Fasting helps express, deepens, confirms the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves, to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God." – Andrew Murray

"Jesus absorbed the famine so that we might be able to feast. He absorbed the desert so that we might be able to drink from the fountains of life." – Stephen Um

- Fasting and praying are guards against self-protection.

You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah. (Deuteronomy 6:16)

- We are tempted to question God's presence and manipulate God's promises.
- As we fast and pray, we remember that we can rest in the shelter of the Father's unshakeable security.

- Fasting and praying are guards against self-exaltation.

- We are tempted to assert ourselves in the world while we rob God of His worship.
- As we fast and pray, we remember that we must refuse to exchange our end-time exaltation by the Father for a right-now exaltation from a snake.

It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. (Deuteronomy 6:13)

79 MATTHEW 6; LUKE 11: The Lord's Prayer

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

(Matthew 6:5–15)

Why do
we pray?

Why Do We Pray?

- We pray to express the depth of our daily _____ need _____ for God.

| *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* (Hebrews 4:16)

- Our conviction in prayer: we can do nothing without God.

| *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.* (John 15:5)

| *"It is in the place of secret prayer that the truths of the man of God become clothed in the fiber of his being."* – Conrad Mbewe

- Prayer is an expression of humility.
- Prayerlessness is evidence of pride.

- Our confession in prayer: Lord, teach me to pray.

| *Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."* (Luke 11:1)

| *"Fear not because your prayer is stammering, your words feeble, and your language poor. Jesus can understand you."* – J.C. Ryle

- We pray to explore the mystery of intimacy with God.
 - The primary goal of prayer is not to get something.
 - The primary goal of prayer is to know Someone.
 - Set aside a time.

“Whatever is your best time in the day, give that to communion with God.” – Hudson Taylor

“In the morning—this is the fittest time for intercourse with God. An hour in the morning is worth two in the evening. While the dew is on the grass, let grace drop upon the soul. Let us give to God the morning of our days and the morning of our lives. Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night.” – Charles Spurgeon

- Go to a place.

“Christ choosing solitude for private prayer, doth not only hint to us the danger of distraction and deviation of thoughts in prayer, but how necessary it is for us to choose the most convenient places we can for private prayer. Our own fickleness and Satan’s restlessness call upon us to get into such places where we may freely pour out our soul to God.” – Thomas Brooks

- Receive your reward.

But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

“The main reward in prayer is that we get God Himself.”
– Stephen Um

“Prayer is not merely a way to get more things from God, but prayer is the way to get more of God Himself.” – Charlie Dates

- We pray to experience the power of being used by God.

. . . and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me. (Psalm 50:15)

Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13)

- We get the help.
- God gets the glory.

"If I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained, without asking any individual, the means for establishing and carrying on an Orphan-House: there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted, of the reality of the things of God. This, then, was the primary reason, for establishing the Orphan-House. . . . The first and primary object of the work was, (and still is) that God might be magnified by the fact, that the orphans under my care are provided, with all they need, only by prayer and faith, without any one being asked by me or my fellow-laborers, whereby it may be seen, that God is faithful still, and hears prayer still." – George Müller

Who Do We Pray To?

Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
(Matthew 6:9)

- We pray to God our Father .

"What is a Christian? The richest answer I know is that a Christian is one who has God as Father. If you want to [know] how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all."
– J.I. Packer

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
(Matthew 5:16)

. . . so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:45)

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
(Matthew 5:48)

Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 6:1)

. . . so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:4)

But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
(Matthew 6:8–9)

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:14–15)

. . . that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
(Matthew 6:18)

Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6:26)

For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. (Matthew 6:32)

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:11)

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.
(Matthew 7:21)

- The contrast with earthly fathers . . .

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." And he said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'" And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:1–13)

- We are evil; He is good.
- We have limited wisdom; He has infinite wisdom.
- We have imperfect love; He has perfect love.

◦ The care of our Heavenly Father . . .

- He _____ loves _____ us.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. (1 John 3:1)

- He understands us.

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:13–14)

O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you

know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. (Psalm 139:1–6)

- He forgives us.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:11–15)

- He provides for us.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:25–33)

“Do not grow weary in prayer because a good God is listening who does not fear man and will respond out of his goodness to provide for his people.” – Thabiti Anyabwile

- He disciplines us.

And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” It is for discipline

that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:5–11)

■ He leads us.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:14–17)

■ He _____ indwells _____ us.

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (Luke 11:13)

“We can live in daily dependence on God because our Father will give us the one necessary thing: the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit, God provides all we truly need to defeat temptation, forgive sin, and find daily bread.” – Thabiti Anyabwile

• Our Father has all _____ authority _____.

The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. (Psalm 24:1–2)

○ He has all supply.

Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God. Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. (Psalm 50:7–12)

◦ He has all sovereignty.

Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me. (Job 42:4)

The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. (Psalm 33:10–11)

Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand. (Proverbs 19:21)

The Lord of hosts has sworn: "As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand . . ." (Isaiah 14:24)

• Our Father is always approachable.

You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." (Psalm 27:8)

- God delights in revealing Himself to those who are bold enough to bother Him.
- God invites us to bother Him anytime . . .
 - It is never too early.

But I, O Lord, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you. (Psalm 88:13)

- It is never too late.

Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice. (Psalm 55:17)

- God invites us to bother Him in everything . . .

| . . . *pray without ceasing* . . . (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

- There is nothing too small.
- There is nothing too great.

| *For nothing will be impossible with God.*
(Luke 1:37)

What do we
pray for?

- Our Father is always _____ active _____.

| *But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."* (John 5:17)

- The picture we need to see: God is never asleep.
- The privilege we need to embrace: God has actually invited us to participate with Him in His provision for others through prayer.
- Prayer to God is never, ever, ever in _____ vain _____.

| *Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.* (Jeremiah 33:3)

| *And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.* (Luke 11:9–10)

What Do We Pray For?

Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:9–15)

- The twofold secret to prayer:

- Make your wants God's wants.

Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)

- Ask for whatever you _____ **want** _____.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:7)

- Ask for God's _____ **glory** _____.

Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9–10)

- Our great God . . .

- He is the sovereign Father.
- He is the holy One.

Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. (2 Samuel 7:22)

And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. (Ezekiel 36:23)

"[Hallowed be your name] is the heartfelt prayer that God will be worshiped and adored. It is the prayer that our affection for God would be rivaled by no other affection." – Michael Oh

- He is the coming King.
- Our consistent cry . . .
 - Cause people to hallow Your name.
 - Bring people to submit to Your kingdom.
 - Enable people to obey Your will.

“God’s people should have a holy dissatisfaction with the worshiplessness of the world, a holy dissatisfaction that more than two billion people in the world have little or no access to the gospel of Jesus—and those two billion do not worship or hallow the blessed and worthy name of the God who created them.” – Michael Oh

- Ask God for His _____ gifts _____.

| Give us this day our daily bread . . . (Matthew 6:11)

- He daily satisfies our hunger.

| Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”
(John 6:35)

- He daily sustains our faith.

| And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
(Deuteronomy 8:3)

- Ask God for His _____ grace _____.

| . . . and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
(Matthew 6:12)

- Experience His forgiveness.

- Continually.
- Specifically.

| If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.
(Psalm 66:18)

- Extend His forgiveness.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:14–15)

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. His master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.” (Matthew 18:21–35)

- Ask God for His _____ guidance _____.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6:13)

- He gives protection amidst temptation we face.

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

- He gives perseverance amidst trials we encounter.

... for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:3–8)

Excursus: PRAY

- **P**____raise____: Worship God for who He is.
 - Consider journaling . . .
 - Write out prayers of praise.
 - Write out prayers of thanksgiving.
 - Consider different postures . . .
 - Sitting.
 - Standing.
 - _____Kneeling_____.
 - Raising hands.
 - Lying prostrate.
 - Consider resources . . .
 - Musical worship.
 - Prayer books.

- **R**____epent____: Confess your sin to God and acknowledge your need for Jesus.
 - Consider journaling . . .
 - Write out specific confession of sin.
 - Write out specific promises of grace.
 - Consider resources . . .
 - Musical worship.
 - Prayer books.

- **A**____sk____: Intercede for specific needs in your life and others' lives.
 - Consider some _____structure_____.
 - By day.

- By person.
 - Family.

“The most important duty, respecting both the temporal and spiritual good of your children, is fervent supplication to God for them. Without this all the rest will be ineffectual. Means are unavailing unless the Lord blesses them. The throne of grace is to be earnestly implored that your efforts to bring up your children for God may be crowned with success.” – A.W. Pink

- Friends.
 - Co-workers.
 - Church.
 - Lost.
- By topic.
 - The poor and hungry.
 - The oppressed and persecuted.
 - Those in authority.
 - Peace among the nations.
 - The unreached.
 - Current events and concerns.
- Don't lose spontaneity.
 - As we listen . . .
 - The Spirit will _____ lead _____.

- Yield: Surrender your life to following Jesus wherever and however He leads you.
 - Pray through the details of your day.
 - Make sure to surrender your schedule.
 - Let concentrated time in prayer fuel _____ continual _____ time in prayer.
 - Let personal prayer before God transform corporate prayer with others.
 - Let communion with God lead to _____ proclamation _____ of the gospel.
 - Pray for opportunities to share.
 - Pray for boldness to speak.
 - Pray for people to believe.

80 MATTHEW 6; 9: Fasting for Reward

And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

(Matthew 6:16–18)

- Fasting is basic to following Jesus.
 - As basic as giving.

Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.
(Matthew 6:2)

- As basic as prayer.

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.
(Matthew 6:5)

- Fasting is fixed on seeking the Father.
 - We do not fast so that others might see us . . .
 - We fast so that we might know God.
- Fasting is feasting on fellowship with God.
- Why disciples of Jesus didn't fast then . . .

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from

them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.” (Matthew 9:14–17)

And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me “My Husband,” and no longer will you call me “My Baal.” (Hosea 2:16)

For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. (Isaiah 62:5)

- After a thousand years of waiting, the king had finally come!
- Why disciples of Jesus fast now . . .
 - ... and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11)
 - Those who celebrate the ascension of the King now crave the consummation of the kingdom!
 - More than we want our hunger to cease, we want His kingdom to come.
 - More than our stomachs long to be full, our souls long to see Christ.

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20)

- Why disciples of Jesus won’t fast in eternity . . .

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds

of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." (Revelation 19:6–9)

81 MATTHEW 9: Praying for Laborers

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

(Matthew 9:35–38)

- The condition of the lost . . .
 - See their size.
 - Feel their suffering.
 - Realize their _____ separation _____.

For you have forgotten the God of your salvation and have not remembered the Rock of your refuge; therefore, though you plant pleasant plants and sow the vine-branch of a stranger, though you make them grow on the day that you plant them, and make them blossom in the morning that you sow, yet the harvest will flee away in a day of grief and incurable pain. (Isaiah 17:10–11)

I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land, and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it. (Joel 3:2–3)

Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great. (Joel 3:13)

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field

is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.” (Matthew 13:36–43)

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.” So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, “Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.” So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse’s bridle, for 1,600 stadia. (Revelation 14:14–20)

- The commission of Christ . . .

- Jesus beckons us to prayer.

“The key to the missionary’s difficult task is prayer. Ask God to inspire and send laborers willing to go to unreached peoples and places. Ask God to open doors in difficult places and the hearts of people who need to hear His gospel. Ask Him to sustain believers already serving Him on mission.”
– Edgar Aponte

- Jesus summons us to go.

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and

John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Matthew 10:1–7)

82 MATTHEW 14: Praying with Faith

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

(Matthew 14:13–21)

- Takeaways from the story . . .
 - The compassion of Jesus is in you.
 - The resources of Heaven are available to you.
 - The plan of God is to use you in ways that are far beyond you.
- Ties to prayer . . .
 - Prayer unlocks Jesus' compassion in you.
 - Prayer opens heaven's resources to you.
 - Prayer involves you in God's plan to bless others.

83 MATTHEW 17: Beholding God's Glory

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead." And the disciples asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

(Matthew 17:1–13)

- God reveals His glory in the face of His Son.
 - Moses had reflected divine glory.

Moses said, "Please show me your glory." And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen." (Exodus 33:18–23)

The Lord said to Moses, "Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. No one shall come up with you, and let no one be

seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain." So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone. The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. (Exodus 34:1–8)

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. (Exodus 34:29–33)

◦ **Elijah had proclaimed divine glory.**

There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9–13)

- Jesus now reveals divine glory.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. (John 1:14–18)

- He radiates the splendor of God.

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . . (Hebrews 1:3)

- He unveils the presence of God.

And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. (1 Kings 8:10–11)

- He embodies the pleasure of God.

I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." (Psalm 2:7)

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. (Isaiah 42:1)

- He speaks the Word of God.

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen . . . (Deuteronomy 18:15)

- He is the prophet promised by Moses.
 - The Father sent Jesus to deliver His people from sin.

And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” (Luke 9:30–31)

- He is the messenger preceded by Elijah.

Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.
(Malachi 3:1)

Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.
(Malachi 4:4–6)

- The cross of Jesus paves the way for prayer that beholds the glory of God.

But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands. (Matthew 17:12)

84

MATTHEW 22: For the Love of God

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”
(Matthew 22:34–40)

- A wholehearted pursuit of God is our divine _____ duty_____.

- A wholehearted pursuit of God is our deepest delight.
- We have been created for a relationship with God marked first and foremost by love.

85 MARK 9: Help My Unbelief!

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "'If you can!' All things are possible for one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

(Mark 9:14–29)

- Our confession in prayer: I believe!

- Our cry in prayer: Help my unbelief!
- The more we pray . . .
 - The more our faith grows.

"Beware in your prayers, above everything else, of limiting God, not only by unbelief, but by fancying that you know what He can do. Expect unexpected things, 'above all that we ask or think.' Each time, before you intercede, be quiet first, and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!" – Andrew Murray

- The more God's provision flows.

"God is like an eternal, unfailing fountain. The more it pours forth and overflows, the more it continues to give. God desires nothing more seriously from us than that we ask Him for much and great things." – Martin Luther

86 MARK 11: A House of Prayer

- The "Two Pieces of Bread" . . .
 - Beginning: Mark 11:12–14

On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And he said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it. (Mark 11:12–14)

- End: Mark 11:20–26

As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe

that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” (Mark 11:20–26)

- Pray with faith according to God’s Word.
- Pray with forgiveness for others in the world.

- The “Meat in the Middle” . . .

And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.” And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. And when evening came they went out of the city. (Mark 11:15–19)

- Pray with desire for the holiness of God in our hearts.
- Pray with reverence for the greatness of God in our lives.
- Pray with zeal for the glory of God among all the nations.

- The Point . . .

- Faith in God yields _____ fruit _____ for God through lives of prayer.

87 LUKE: Jesus’ Example of Prayer

“Though infinitely better able to do without prayer than we are, yet Christ prayed much more than we do.”

– Charles Spurgeon

- Prayer precedes Jesus’ anointing for ministry.

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit

descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21–22)

- Jesus prioritizes withdrawing for prayer amidst ministry.

But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray. (Luke 5:15–16)

- Jesus prays before choosing His disciples.

In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (Luke 6:12–16)

- Jesus prays for His disciples to understand who He is.

Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." (Luke 9:18–20)

- Jesus is transfigured while praying.

Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. (Luke 9:28–29)

- Jesus' prayers led to the disciples' desire to learn to pray.

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1)

- Jesus prays for His disciples' faith not to fail.

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me." (Luke 22:31–34)

- Jesus instructs His disciples to pray that they might not succumb to temptation.

And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation." (Luke 22:40–46)

- Jesus prays for the Father to remove the cup of suffering and death from Him.

And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." (Luke 22:41–42)

- Jesus prays for the Father's forgiveness of those who crucify Him.

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they

crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. (Luke 23:32–34)

- Jesus entrusts Himself to the Father with a final prayerful breath.

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44–46)

88 LUKE 2: Waiting in Prayer

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."
(Luke 2:25–35)

- Prayer _____ waits _____ with . . .
 - Sensitivity to God's Spirit.
 - Confidence in God's Word.
- Prayer that waits culminates in praise and _____ worship _____.

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. (Luke 2:36–38)

89 LUKE 18: Persevering through Prayer

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"
(Luke 18:1–8)

- We pray . . .
 - Constantly.
 - Confidently.

- We believe . . .
 - God is absolutely just.
 - God hears all our cries.
 - God will answer in due time.

"It is very apparent from the Word of God that He often tries the faith and patience of His people, when they are crying to Him for some great and important mercy, by withholding the mercy sought for a season; and not only so, but at first He may cause an increase of dark appearances.

And yet He, without fail, at last prospers those who continue urgently in prayer with all perseverance and 'will not let him go except He blesses.'"
– Jonathan Edwards

- We wait . . .
 - With persevering faith.
 - With eternal _____ perspective _____.

"When Christ delays to help His saints now, you think this is a great mystery, you cannot explain it; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. Be still, and know that Christ is God." – Robert Murray McCheyne

90 LUKE 18: HUMILITY IN PRAYER

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

(Luke 18:9–14)

- The key to prayer is humility before God.

"The bigger we see God from a biblical perspective, the smaller we become in our own eyes." – Robert Smith

- The result of prayer is humility before others.

91 LUKE 10: The Priority of Prayer

- Sit at His feet.

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38–42)

- Fall at His feet.

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." (John 11:28–32)

- Worship at His feet.

Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me." (John 12:1–8)

- Sitting at the feet of Jesus precedes serving in the world for Jesus.

92 JOHN 14–16: God-Led Prayer

- *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.* (John 14:12–14)

- We pray with the leadership of the _____ Spirit _____.
- We pray in the name of the _____ Son _____.
- We pray for the glory of the _____ Father _____.

- *If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.* (John 15:7)

- We pray according to the _____ Word _____.

- *Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, “Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me’? Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”* (John 16:19–24)

- We experience full joy when . . .
 - We experience communion with the Trinity.
 - God gives us what we _____ ask _____.

Excursus: PRAY the Word

“Prayer that is born of meditation upon the Word of God is the prayer that soars upward most easily to God’s listening ears.”

– R.A. Torrey

“The word of God is the food by which prayer is nourished and made strong.”

– E.M. Bounds

“Formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible. But I often spent a quarter of an hour to an hour on my knees struggling to pray while my mind wandered. Now I rarely have this problem. As my heart is nourished by the truth of the Word, I am brought into true fellowship with God. I speak to my Father and to my Friend (although I am unworthy) about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word.”

– George Müller

- As you read the Word, PRAY . . .
 - Praise: Worship God for who He is.
 - Repent: Confess your sin to God and acknowledge your need for Jesus.
 - Ask: Intercede for particular needs in your life and others’ lives.
 - Yield: Surrender your life to following Jesus wherever and however He leads you.

“Praying over the Word has the effect of shaping our minds and hearts, so that we desire what the Word encourages us to desire, and not just what we desire by nature. That is why the prayers of Bible-saturated people sound so different. Most people, before their prayers are soaked in Scripture, simply bring their natural desires to God. In other words, they pray the way an unbeliever would pray who is convinced that God might give him what he wants: health, a better job, safe journeys, a prosperous portfolio, successful children, plenty of food, a happy marriage, a car that works, a comfortable retirement, etc. None of these is evil. They’re just natural. You don’t have to be born again to want any of these. Desiring them—even from God—is no evidence of saving faith. So if these are

all you pray for, there is a deep problem. Your desires have not yet been changed to put the glory of Christ at the center.” – John Piper

• Practical Suggestions . . .

- Pray with a _____ journal _____ in hand.
- Pray with the Word on your _____ knees _____.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. (John 15:12–17)

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JOHN 17: Jesus' Pattern in Prayer

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you . . ."

(John 17:1)

The Father Gives the Son . . .

- Authority to grant eternal life.

. . . since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given . . . him. (John 17:2)

- Followers out of the world.

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. (John 17:6)

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. (John 17:9)

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am . . . (John 17:24)

- Work to accomplish in the world.

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. (John 17:4)

- Words to proclaim in the world.

For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. (John 17:8)

- His name.

And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. (John 17:11–12)

- His glory.

The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one . . . (John 17:22)

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:24)

The Son Gives His Followers . . .

- Eternal life.

. . . since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. (John 17:2)

- The Word of the Father.

For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. (John 17:8)

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (John 17:14)

- Manifestation of the Father.

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. (John 17:6)

I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:26)

- Glory from the Father.

The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one . . . (John 17:22)

The Son Asks the Father . . .

- To _____ glorify _____ Him.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you . . ." (John 17:1)

| *And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. (John 17:5)*

- To keep His followers in His name.

| *And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. (John 17:11)*

- To keep His followers from the evil one.

| *I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. (John 17:15)*

- To sanctify His followers by His truth.

| *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)*

- To unify His followers for His glory.

| *. . . that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:21)*

| *"His (Jesus's) prayer in John 17 made it clear that His heart's desire is that we are one just as He and the Father are one. His will is for one Church that crosses ethnic, cultural, and class lines and is focused on bringing Him glory until He returns to redeem His bride. This picture of the church is what must fuel our prayers." – John Perkins*

Jesus' Pattern in Prayer . . .

- Prayer is acknowledging God's gifts to us.
- Prayer is asking for God's gifts for others.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.

(Matthew 26:36–44)

- Prayer involves honesty in the face of sorrow.
- Prayer involves humility before the _____ will _____ of the Father.

"Jesus stared death square in the face, knowing his fate was inescapable. How did he face it? On his knees in prayer. . . ."

– John Onwuchekwa

Acts

95 ACTS 1; 2; 6: A Church Devoted to Prayer

All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.
(Acts 1:14)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.
(Acts 2:42)

But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.
(Acts 6:4)

- They were utterly dependent on God's _____ power _____.

All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. (Acts 1:14)

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1–4)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts 2:42)

. . . praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. (Acts 3:1)

But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. (Acts 4:4)

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness . . . (Acts 4:29)

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:31)

Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. (Acts 6:3–4)

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)

And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:59–60)

And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. (Acts 8:1–4)

But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem." (Acts 9:13)

And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized . . . (Acts 9:18)

The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. (Acts 10:9)

"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days. (Acts 10:47–48)

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them . . . (Acts 16:25)

And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. (Acts 16:33)

- They were utterly desperate for God's grace.

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8)

When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose . . . (Acts 11:23)

And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. (Acts 13:43)

So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (Acts 14:3)

. . . and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. (Acts 14:26)

But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will. (Acts 15:11)

And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed . . . (Acts 18:27)

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts 20:24)

And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:32)

- They were utterly dedicated to God's mission.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

- Devotion to prayer springs from . . .
 - Dependence upon God's power.

"When God has something very great to accomplish for His church, it is His will that there should precede it, the extraordinary prayers of His people." – Jonathan Edwards

- Desperation for God's grace.

"If a church is to be what it ought to be for the purposes of God, we must train it in the holy art of prayer. Churches without prayer meetings are grievously common. Even if there were only one such, it would be one to weep over. In many churches the prayer meeting is only the skeleton of a gathering; the form is kept up, but the people do not come. There is no interest, no power, in connection with the meeting. Oh, let it not be so with you! Do train the people to continually meet together for prayer. Rouse them to incessant supplication. There is a holy art in it. Study to show yourselves approved by the prayerfulness of Your people. If you pray yourself, you will want them to pray with you, and when they begin to pray with you, and for you, and for the work of the Lord, they will want more prayer themselves, and the appetite will grow. Believe me, if a church does not pray, it is dead. Instead of putting united prayer last, put it first. Everything will hinge upon the power of prayer in the church." – Charles Spurgeon

"When God is about to bestow some great blessing on His church, it is often His manner, in the first place, so to order things in His providence as to show His church their great need of it, and to bring them into distress for want of it, and so put them upon crying earnestly to Him for it." – Jonathan Edwards

"We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity, but we accomplish little; many services, but few conversions; much machinery, but few results." – R.A. Torrey

"This much is sure in all churches, forgetting party labels; the smallest meeting numerically is the prayer meeting. If weak in prayer, we are weak everywhere." – Leonard Ravenhill

◦ Dedication to God's mission.

"It is as though the field commander (Jesus) called in the troops, gave them a crucial mission ("Go and bear fruit"), handed each of them a personal transmitter coded to the frequency of the general's headquarters, and said, "Comrades, the general has a mission for you. He aims to see it accomplished. And to that end he has authorized me to give each of you personal access to him through these transmitters. If you stay true to his mission and seek his victory first, he will always be as close as your transmitter, to give tactical advice and to send in air cover when you or your comrades need it." – John Piper

96 ACTS 4: Prayer Amidst Persecution

When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and our plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

(Acts 4:23–31)

Why Do We Pray for the Persecuted Church?

- We are one family.

If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (1 Corinthians 12:26)

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. (Hebrews 13:3)

- We have one purpose.

Who Do We Pray To?

- The One who is _____ sovereign _____ over the world.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein . . . (Psalm 24:1)

- The One who is always faithful to His Word.

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. (John 14:12–14)

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. (John 15:7–8)

- The One who is familiar with suffering.

What Do We Pray For?

- The honor of Christ.
- The boldness of the church.
- The advancement of His _____ kingdom _____.

What Should We Expect When We Pray?

- Expect the Spirit to fill.
- Expect the gospel to succeed.

Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women . . . (Acts 5:12–14)

Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. (Acts 5:41–42)

- Christian suffering is inevitable.
- Christian mission is unstoppable.
- Satan's strategies to stop the church ultimately serve to spread the church.

Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. (Acts 8:4)

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. (Acts 11:19–21)

97 ACTS 9: Prayer for Resurrection

Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was

there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

(Acts 9:36–42)

- Through prayer, Dorcas physically goes from death to life.

Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. (John 5:8–9)

And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. (Mark 5:40–42)

- As a result, many spiritually go from death to life.

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ACTS 10–11: Prayers of All Peoples

- God hears the prayers of all peoples.

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." When the angel who spoke

to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. (Acts 10:1–8)

- God grants salvation to all peoples.

When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.” (Acts 11:18)

99 ACTS 12: Prayer for the Imprisoned

- Prayer to God is _____ surprisingly _____ powerful.

About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.” When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter’s voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported

that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place. (Acts 12:1–17)

"The angel fetched Peter out of prison, but it was prayer that fetched the angel." – Thomas Watson

- The Word of God is _____ completely _____ unstoppable.

Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. But the word of God increased and multiplied. (Acts 12:20–24)

100 ACTS 13: Changing the World Through Fasting and Prayer

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

(Acts 13:1–4)

- Prayer and fasting _____ unite _____ us around the Word of God.

- Prayer and fasting focus us on the glory of God.
- Prayer and fasting sensitize us to the Spirit of God.
- Prayer and fasting lead us to the mission of God.

Excursus: FAST

*My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth
will praise you with joyful lips . . .*
(Psalm 63:5)

Focus on God.
Abstain from food.
Substitute the time with prayer and study.
Taste and see that God is good.

*Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man
who takes refuge in him!*
(Psalm 34:8)

- Why fast?
 - Because we're hungry for God's Word in our lives.

But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work." (John 4:31–34)
 - Because we're hungry for God's power in His church.

Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalm 73:25–26)

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. (Acts 13:1–4)

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:23)

- Because we're hungry for God's glory in all nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth. (Isaiah 62:1–7)

- To express our delight in God's goodness.

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise

you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. (Psalm 63:1–8)

- More than we enjoy food, we enjoy _____ God _____.

Thus says the Lord of hosts: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace. (Zechariah 8:19)

- To confess our need for God's grace.

Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. (Joel 1:14)

Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. (Joel 2:15–16)

- More than we need a meal, we need His _____ mercy _____.

Then all the people of Israel, the whole army, went up and came to Bethel and wept. They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. (Judges 20:26)

Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God and went to the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib, where he spent the night, neither eating bread nor drinking water, for he was mourning over the faithlessness of the exiles. (Ezra 10:6)

- To seek and submit to God's will.

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good

on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him." So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty. (Ezra 8:21–23)

As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 1:4)

Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. (Daniel 9:3)

- More than we want our hunger to cease, we want His kingdom to come.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

- To anticipate the return of God's Son.

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast." (Matthew 9:14–15)

- More than our stomachs long to be full, our souls long to see Christ.

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20)

"Christian fasting, at its root, is the hunger of a homesickness for God." – John Piper

- When to fast?

"If you say, 'I will fast when God lays it on my heart,' you never will. You are too cold and indifferent to take the yoke upon you." – D.L. Moody

- On a regular basis.

- On special occasions.

- Who fasts?

- Individuals
- Families
- Small Groups
- Churches
- Countries

“There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer.” – Arthur Pierson

- How to fast?

- Begin small (a meal, a day).

“It’s silly when you put it in perspective. We think about missing a meal or two for the sake of becoming more like Jesus and we get anxious. And yet we willingly miss meals sometimes while shopping, working, recreating, or otherwise occupied. Whenever we believe another activity is at that moment more important, we will go without food fearlessly and without complaint. We need to learn that there are times when it can be not only more important, but much more rewarding to feast on God than food.” – Donald Whitney

- Progress slowly (a day, three days, seven days, more).
- Set parameters from the start.
 - What will you drink?
 - Water
 - Fresh Juices
 - Soup/Broth
 - When will you eat?
 - Set a goal.
 - Pray for grace!
- Plan your time intentionally.
- Coordinate with others humbly.
- Appreciate physical cleansing.

"There's more to a biblical fast than abstaining from food. Without a spiritual purpose for your fast it's just a weight-loss fast. And without a purpose, fasting can be a miserable self-centered experience."

– Donald Whitney

○ Prioritize _____ spiritual _____ cleansing.

- Sins
- Struggles
- Fears
- Frustrations
- Dissatisfaction
- Discontentment
- Use of Time
- Use of Money
- Worldly Desires
- Worldly Distractions

"[Fasting] brings up out of the dark places of my soul the dissatisfactions in relationships, the frustrations of the ministry, the fears of failure, the emptiness of wasted time. And just when my heart begins to retreat to the delicious hope of eating supper with friends . . . [fasting] quietly reminds me, not tonight. The hope of food gave you the good feelings to balance out the bad feelings. But now the balance is off. You must find another way to deal with it." – John Piper

○ Expect discomfort or hunger pangs.

- Potential physical side effects: weariness, coldness, bad breath, body odor, headaches, stomachaches, dizziness.
- Potential emotional side effects: impatience, irritability.

○ _____ Employ _____ discomfort or hunger pangs.

- Focus on urgent physical need.
- Focus on urgent spiritual need.

○ Prepare for fasting _____ wisely _____.

○ Break your fast _____ lightly _____.

- Start with soup, fresh vegetables, and then fruit.
- Introduce meats, dairy, fats, and oil days later and in small amounts.

101 ACTS 13–14: Praying for Missionaries

- Pray that they would be confident in God's Word.

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. (Acts 13:4–5)

- Pray that they would be filled with God's Spirit.

When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him (Acts 13:6–9)

- Pray for their victory in spiritual warfare.

. . . and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. (Acts 13:10–12)

- Pray for their success in gospel witness.
- Pray for peace with other believers.

Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem . . . (Acts 13:13)

- Pray for favor with unbelievers.

... but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it." (Acts 13:14–15)

- Pray that the gospel will be clear through them.

As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" (Acts 13:42–47)

- Pray that God will open hearts around them.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:48–52)

- Pray for their joy in the midst of suffering.

Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. (Acts 14:1–2)

- Pray for their kindness in the midst of slander.

So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (Acts 14:3)

- Pray for supernatural power to accompany them.
- Pray for Christlike humility to characterize them.

Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, and there they continued to preach the gospel. Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began walking. And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. (Acts 14:1–18)

- Pray for their patience.
- Pray for their perseverance.

But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. (Acts 14:19–20)

- Pray that God would use them to make disciples.

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:21–23)

- Pray that God would use them to multiply churches.

Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they remained no little time with the disciples. (Acts 14:24–28)

102 ACTS 14: Prayer, Fasting, Church Planting, and Pastors

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

(Acts 14:23)

How do I know God's will for my life?

- Church planters start the church through prayer and fasting.
- The church commits elders/pastors to God with prayer and fasting.

- Elders/pastors shepherd the church through prayer and fasting.

“It is our (the pastor’s) responsibility to talk to God on behalf of the people and to turn around and talk to the people on behalf of God.”
– Charlie Dates

“The enemy uses all his power to lead the Christian, and above all the minister, to neglect prayer. He knows that however admirable the sermon may be, however attractive the service, however faithful the pastoral visitation, none of these things can damage him or his kingdom if prayer is neglected.” – Andrew Murray

“A minister may fill his pews, his communion roll, the mouths of the public, but what that minister is on his knees in secret before God Almighty, that he is an no more.” – John Owen

“Because prayer for the church is secret and therefore unrewarded by men, we shall only undertake it if we long for their spiritual warfare more than for their thanks.” – John Stott

103 ACTS 16: How Do I Know God’s Will for My Life? (Part 1)

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

(Acts 16:6–10)

- As we walk with God, He directs the details of our lives . . .

So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us. (Acts 16:11–15)

As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. (Acts 16:16–18)

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God. (Acts 16:25–34)

- If you want to know the will of God, walk in obedience to the Word of God.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1–2)

- For the accomplishment of His _____ will _____ . . .

But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. (Acts 16:19–24)

- And the spread of His _____ worship _____ in the world.

But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace." But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed. (Acts 16:35–40)

- The question is not, “God, what is Your will for my life?”
- The question is, “God, what is Your will in the world, and how can I _____ align _____ my life with it?”

104 ACTS 20–21: How Do I Know God’s Will for My Life? (Part 2)

When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home. When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul’s belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’” When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, “Let the will of the Lord be done.”
(Acts 21:3–14)

When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. And

as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, for the mob of the people followed, crying out, "Away with him!"
(Acts 21:27–36)

*Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."
(Acts 19:21)*

*And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there . . .
(Acts 20:22)*

Three Biblical Truths . . .

- Spirit-directed Christians sometimes disagree.

And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. (Acts 15:39–40)

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks

to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.
(Romans 14:1–8)

- Spirit-led Christians oftentimes suffer.

. . . except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. (Acts 20:23)

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness . . .
(2 Timothy 3:16)

- Spirit-empowered Christians never need to fear.

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)

Four Pastoral Encouragements . . .

- Hold confidently to the Word of God.

- Pray continually in the Spirit of God.

. . . praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints . . . (Ephesians 6:18)

But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit . . . (Jude 20)

- Listen closely to the people of God.

- Take risks for the _____gospel_____ of God.

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts 20:24)

He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. (Acts 28:30–31)

Letters From Paul

*Brothers, pray for us.
(1 Thessalonians 5:25)*

105 ROMANS 8: Prayer and the Holy Spirit

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
(Romans 8:26–27)*

- The Holy Spirit is our Helper.
 - He helps us to pray with hope.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope . . . (Romans 8:18–20)

- He helps us to pray with patience.

*. . . that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.
(Romans 8:21–25)*

- The Holy Spirit is our Intercessor.
 - He leads us to pray according to God's will.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
(Romans 8:28–30)

- He leads us to be conformed to the image of God's Son.

106 MISCELLANEOUS: Unceasing Prayer

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*
(1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)

"If we think of prayer as the breath of our lungs and the blood from our hearts, we think rightly. The blood flows and the breathing continues—we are not conscious of it but it is always going on."
– Oswald Chambers

"Prayer can never be in excess."
– Charles Spurgeon

"To pray at all times is to live in continual God-consciousness, where everything we see and experience becomes a kind of prayer, lived in deep awareness of and surrender to our heavenly Father. To obey this exhortation means that, when we are tempted, we hold the temptation before God and ask for His help. When we experience something good and beautiful, we immediately thank the Lord for it. When we see evil around us, we pray that God will make it right, and we are willing to be used of Him to that end. When we meet someone who does not know Christ, we pray for God to draw that person to Himself and to use us to be a faithful witness. When we encounter trouble, we turn to God as our Deliverer. In other words, our life becomes a continually ascending prayer, a perpetual communing with our heavenly Father."
– John MacArthur

- We constantly _____ thank _____ God for others.

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers . . .
(Ephesians 1:16)

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3–5)

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel . . .
(Colossians 1:3–5)

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
(1 Thessalonians 1:2–3)

- We consistently intercede for others.

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding . . . (Colossians 1:9)

For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith? (1 Thessalonians 3:9–10)

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:11–12)

"Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?" – Corrie Ten Boom

"We should pray when we are in a praying mood, for it would be sinful to neglect so fair an opportunity. We should pray when we are not in a proper mood, for it would be dangerous to remain in so unhealthy a condition." – Charles Spurgeon

107 **EPHESIANS 1: Prayer for Open Eyes**

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might . . .

(Ephesians 1:15–19)

- Pray for a Spirit of _____ wisdom _____.
- Pray for the knowledge of God.
- Pray for eyes to be open to the hope we have.
- Pray for eyes to be open to the inheritance we have.
- Pray for eyes to be open to the _____ power _____ we have.

. . . that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:20–23)

- Christ has all authority.
- The church has all the fullness of Christ.
- Christ commissions the church with all His authority to go and make disciples in all of the world.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18–20)

108 **EPHESIANS 3: Prayer Beyond Our Imagination**

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
(Ephesians 3:14–19)

- Pray for strength through God's Spirit.
- Pray for faith in God's Son.
- Pray for grounding in God's great love.
- Pray for filling with all God's fullness.
- Pray for experience of God's abundant power beyond our imagination.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20–21)

109 PHILIPPIANS 1: Pray for Ever-Increasing Love

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

(Philippians 1:9–11)

- Pray for growth in love.
- Pray for growth in knowledge.
- Pray for growth in discernment.
- Pray for pure and blameless living until Christ comes to us.
- Pray for the fruit of righteousness that comes from Christ in us.

110 COLOSSIANS 1: Prayer for a Godward Life

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

(Colossians 1:9–14)

- Pray for wise understanding of the will of God.
- Pray for a walk that is completely worthy of God (fully pleasing to God).
- Pray for fruit in good work for God.
- Pray for growth in the knowledge of God.
- Pray for strength from the power of God.
- Pray for patient endurance.
- Pray for joyful thanksgiving.
 - For His inheritance.
 - For His rescue.
 - For His redemption.
 - For His forgiveness.

111 1 TIMOTHY 2: Prayer for Leaders

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

(1 Timothy 2:1–7)

The Initial Exhortation . . .

- Pray to God for all peoples.
 - Who we pray for . . .
 - Pray for every kind of person.
 - Pray for leaders in high _____ positions _____.
 - What we pray for . . .
 - Peace amidst persecution.
 - Salvation for _____ persecutors _____.

- The progress of the gospel in the world is _____ dependent _____ on the prayers of God's people in the church.

The Theological Motivation . . .

- Pray because God _____ desires _____ the salvation of all peoples.
 - This does not mean that all people will be saved.
 - This does not mean that God's will has been thwarted.
 - This does mean that God loves all peoples.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezekiel 33:11)

- Pray because God _____ deserves _____ the honor of all peoples.

Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other." (Isaiah 45:21–22)

- Worship is the fuel of praying in this world.
- Worship is the _____goal_____ of praying in this world.

- Pray because Jesus died for the _____rescue_____ of all peoples.

And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:8–10)

112 1 THESSALONIANS 3: Prayer for Love and Holiness

Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

(1 Thessalonians 3:11–13)

- Pray for increasing love . . .
 - For the church.
 - For the lost.
- Pray for blameless hearts . . .
 - Before God.
 - At the coming of Christ.

113 2 THESSALONIANS 1: Prayer for Grace to Glorify God

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by

his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
(2 Thessalonians 1:11–12)

- Pray for alignment with the calling of God.
- Pray for strength for the work of faith.
- Pray for much grace _____ from _____ Jesus.
- Pray for much glory _____ to _____ Jesus.

114 MISCELLANEOUS: Prayers for the Growth of the Church

- Pray for hope, joy, and _____ peace _____.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Romans 15:13)

- Pray for faithful and righteous living.

But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for. (2 Corinthians 13:7–9)

- Pray for _____ victory _____ in spiritual warfare.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints . . . (Ephesians 6:12–18)

- Pray for strength of faith.

For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith? (1 Thessalonians 3:8–10)

115 MISCELLANEOUS: Prayers for the Spread of the Gospel

- Pray for successful mission in _____ **difficult** _____ places.

I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. (Romans 15:30–32)

- Pray for personal _____ **boldness** _____ to proclaim the gospel.

. . . and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:19–20)

- Pray for open doors for the gospel and clear speech with the gospel.

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. (Colossians 4:2–4)

- Pray for the rapid and reverent spread of God's Word.

Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you . . . (2 Thessalonians 3:1)

“Could it be that many of our problems with prayer and much of our weakness in prayer comes from the fact that we are not all on active duty, and yet we still try to use the transmitter? We have taken a wartime walkie-talkie and tried to turn it into a civilian intercom to call the servants for another cushion in the den. We see repeatedly in Scripture that prayer is a walkie-talkie for warfare, not a domestic intercom for increasing our conveniences.” – John Piper

Letters From Others

116 HEBREWS 4: Draw Near to God (Part 1)

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(Hebrews 4:14–16)

- We have a great high priest . . .
 - Who has absolutely no sin like us.
 - Who is uniquely able to sympathize with us.
- We come before God . . .
 - In closeness.
 - With confidence.
- We receive from God . . .
 - His mercy.
 - His grace.
 - His _____ help_____.

117 HEBREWS 10–11: Draw Near to God (Part 2)

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience

and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

(Hebrews 10:19–23)

- We draw near to God in faith.

“Prayer, in many ways, is the supreme expression of our faith in God.”
– Martyn Lloyd-Jones

- We come before Him with sincere desire.

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’” Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. (Hebrews 3:7–12)

- We come before Him with confidence assurance.
- We come before Him with cleansed hearts.
- We come before Him with purified bodies.

- We hold fast to God in hope.

Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. (Hebrews 10:35–39)

- We may not be able to see Him . . .

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

- Yet we know our reward is found in Him.

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

118 JAMES 1: Prayer Amidst Trials (Part 1)

. . . for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

(James 1:3–12)

- Prayer amidst trial teaches us to grow in God's likeness.
- Prayer amidst trial teaches us to trust in God's wisdom.
- Prayer amidst trial teaches us to rely on God's resources.
- Prayer amidst trial teaches us to live for God's reward.

119 JAMES 5: Prayer Amidst Trials (Part 2)

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the

church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

(James 5:13–18)

- Pray when you are hurting.
- Pray when you are happy.
- Pray with the elders.
 - Is the oil medicinal?
 - Is the oil sacramental?
 - The oil is symbolic.
- Pray with the church.
- Confess your sins to each other.
 - Sin directly causes some sickness.
- Sin indirectly causes all sickness.
- Intercede on behalf of each other.
 - Don't underestimate the effect of prayer in your life.
 - Don't underestimate the effect of prayer in others' lives.

| *That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.*
| (1 Corinthians 11:30)

“The measure of our love for others can largely be determined by the frequency and earnestness of our prayers for them.” – A.W. Pink

- Pray ultimately for the _____ glory _____ of God.

“Should you pray for a miracle? Well, you’re free to do that, of course. My general impression is that the God who is able to do miracles—and he certainly can—is also able to keep you from getting the problem in the first place. So although miracles do happen, they’re rare by definition. A miracle has to be an unusual thing. Above all, I would say pray for the glory of God. If you think of God glorifying himself in history and you say, where in all of history has God most glorified himself? He did it at the cross of Jesus Christ, and it wasn’t by delivering Jesus from the cross, though he could have. Jesus said, ‘Don’t you think I could call down from my Father ten legions of angels for my defense?’ But he didn’t do that. And yet that’s where God is most glorified. God is in charge. When things like this come into our lives, they are not accidental. It’s not as if God somehow forgot what was going on, and something bad slipped by. God is not only the one who is in charge; God is also good. Everything he does is good. If God does something in your life, would you change it? If you’d change it, you’d make it worse. It wouldn’t be as good.” – James Montgomery Boice, diagnosed with liver cancer and died eight weeks after sharing this with his congregation

120 1 PETER 3: Prayer and Marriage

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

(1 Peter 3:7)

- Honor your wife . . .
 - And God will hear your prayers.
- Dishonor your wife . . .
 - And that will _____ hinder _____ your prayers.

121 1 PETER 5: Prayer and Anxiety

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

(1 Peter 5:6–7)

- Pray with humility.
 - He is sovereign over you.
 - He is gracious to you.
- Pray with honesty.
 - He _____ bears _____ your burdens.
 - He heals your hurts.

122 1 JOHN 5: Praying with Confidence

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

(1 John 5:13–15)

- We ask according to God's will.
- God hears all of our words.
- We receive all we need . . .
 - To walk in His will.
 - To experience eternal _____ life _____.

123 REVELATION 6: Prayer in Heaven

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

(Revelation 6:9–11)

- Believers who have died are worshipping.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22–24)

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants." Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great." (Revelation 19:1–5)

- Believers who have died are watching.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us . . . (Hebrews 12:1)

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her! (Revelation 18:20)

- Believers who have died are waiting.
 - They are clearly conscious.
 - They are audibly loud.
 - They are emotionally passionate.
 - They are distinctly individual.
 - They are completely unified.
 - They are continually interceding.
 - They thirst for final justice.
 - They long for full redemption.
 - They know God's character more deeply.
 - They love God's church more fully.
 - They are trusting in God's promises in the present.
 - They are anticipating God's plan for the future.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
(Revelation 7:9–10)

124 REVELATION 8: Prayer and the End of the World

When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

(Revelation 8:1–5)

- Our cries go up.

Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
(Matthew 6:9)

- His kingdom comes down.

"What are the real master-powers behind the world and what are the deeper secrets of our destiny? Here is the astonishing answer: the prayers of the saints and the fire of God. That means that more potent, more powerful than all the dark and mighty powers let loose in [this] world, more powerful than anything else, is the power of prayer set ablaze by the fire of God and cast upon the earth." – John Piper

125 REVELATION 21–22: The Culmination of All Our Prayers

Our Purpose . . .

- We have been created for a relationship with God.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:26–28)

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. (Psalm 63:1–8)

- To seek God.

Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!
(1 Chronicles 16:11)

You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." (Psalm 27:8)

◦ To know God.

Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 9:23–24)

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

◦ To enjoy God.

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? (Psalm 42:1–2)

◦ To worship God.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. (Psalm 146:1–2)

Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting. (Psalm 147:1)

◦ To revere God.

Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! (Psalm 33:8)

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

◦ To glorify God.

But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." (Isaiah 43:1–7)

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

◦ To love God.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:4–5)

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:1–4)

Our Problem . . .

- We have been separated from God by our sin.

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:22–24)

. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .
(Romans 3:23)

- The effects are everywhere in us.
- The effects are everywhere around us.

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:22–23)

Our Habits . . .

- We _____ pray _____ the Word continually.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)

- Praise: Worship God for who He is.
- Repent: Confess your sin to God and acknowledge your need for Jesus.
- Ask: Intercede for specific needs in your life and others' lives.
- Yield: Surrender your life to following Jesus wherever and however He leads you.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

- We _____ fast _____ from food regularly.

But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)

- Focus on God.
- Abstain from food.
- Substitute the time with prayer and study.
- Taste and see that God is good.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! (Psalm 34:8)

- We _____ pursue _____ God wholeheartedly.

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. (Psalm 27:4)

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:13)

Our Hope . . .

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:1–4)

- One day, we will be _____ with _____ God.

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

- As _____ priests _____ in the temple.

The inner sanctuary he prepared in the innermost part of the house, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord. The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high, and he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid an altar of cedar. (1 Kings 6:19–20)

And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. (Revelation 21:15–22)

- Like a bride with a husband.

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. (Revelation 19:6–8)

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2)

- As children of a Father.

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

- As heirs of a King.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8:1–9)

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein . . . (Psalm 24:1)

When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you! The wind will carry them all off, a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge in me shall possess the land and shall inherit my holy mountain. (Isaiah 57:13)

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (Matthew 25:34)

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:16–17)

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:9–10)

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead

to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.” (Revelation 11:15–18)

And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:5)

- As _____ participants _____ in a banquet.

You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:28–30)

And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” (Revelation 19:9)

- We will _____ behold _____ God.

Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent. (Exodus 33:11)

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. (Psalm 27:4)

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me! (Job 19:25–27)

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” (John 14:9)

They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. (Revelation 22:4)

- We will _____ worship _____ God.

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants." Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great." Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.
(Revelation 19:1-8)

No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. (Revelation 22:3)

- We will gather for corporate worship.

Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (Revelation 4:4-11)

And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped. (Revelation 5:8–14)

- We will shout as we consider God's incomprehensible works.

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth." (Revelation 11:15–18)

- We will sing as we behold God's incomparable worth.

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed." (Revelation 15:2–4)

- We will live in continual worship.

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

- We will serve God.

Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. (Revelation 7:15)

No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. (Revelation 22:3)

- We will be served by God.

Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. (Luke 12:37)

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)

When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you! The wind will carry them all off, a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge in me shall possess the land and shall inherit my holy mountain. (Isaiah 25:6)

- We will reign with God.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:26–28)

And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the

Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. (Daniel 7:27)

The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself. (2 Timothy 2:11–13)

The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Revelation 3:21)

- We will rest in God.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!" (Revelation 14:13)

"To come to Thee is to come home from exile, to come to land out of the raging storm, to come to rest after long labor, to come to the goal of my desires and the summit of my wishes." – Charles Spurgeon

- One day, all of our praying and all of our fasting in pursuit of God will culminate in the goal of our salvation:
 - Everlasting . . .
 - Uninterrupted . . .
 - Uninhibited . . .
 - Unimaginable . . .
 - Indescribable . . .
 - All-satisfying . . .
 - Communion with God.

- So our prayer from this day until that day is constant and clear . . .

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20)

NOTES

[1] George Müller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller, Written by Himself, Jehovah Magnified. Addresses by George Müller Complete and Unabridged*, 2 vols. (Muskegon, MI: Dust and Ashes, 2003), 2:392–393, 398. As cited in John Piper, *A Camaraderie of Confidence: The Fruit of Unfailing Faith in the Lives of Charles Spurgeon, George Müller, and Hudson Taylor* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 67–68.

[2] The majority of these general classifications of psalms are adapted from Graeme Goldsworthy, *Prayer and the Knowledge of God: What the Whole Bible Teaches* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

[3] Other examples of prayers exalting God for His faithfulness, compassion, and love in the book of Psalms include Psalm 5:7; 13:5; 33:5; 18, 22; 36:7, 10; 40:11; 42:8; 44:26; 59:17; 69:16; 89:1–2, 14, 24, 28, 33, 49; 103:17; 106:1, 7, 45; 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43; 136.

[4] Other examples of prayers of general praise to God in the book of Psalms include Psalm 9; 40; 44; 65; 71; 73; 75; 78; 86; 92; 103–107; 111; 118; 141.

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ON PRAYER, FASTING, AND THE PURSUIT OF GOD

For further study on the topics covered in Secret Church 19, see the resources listed below. Note, however, that neither David Platt nor Radical endorses everything contained in these resources. As always, we urge you to examine these resources and the topics covered in this study in light of the truths of God's Word.

- D.A. Carson, *Teach us to Pray*
- D.A. Carson, *Praying with Paul*
- Bryan Chapell, *Praying Backwards*
- Graeme Goldsworthy, *Prayer and the Knowledge of God: What the Whole Bible Teaches*
- Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*
- David Mathis, *Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines*
- Paul Miller, *A Praying Life*
- J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*
- Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol*
- John Piper, *Desiring God*
- John Piper, *A Hunger for God: Desiring God through Prayer and Fasting*
- David Platt, *Follow Me*
- Richard Pratt, *Pray With Your Eyes Open*
- A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*
- Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*

SOMALIS OF EAST AFRICA

Today over 24 million Somalis can be found throughout East Africa, a region they have lived in for millenia. While Somalis speak a common majority language, worship as Sunni Muslims of the Shafi school, and claim a common heritage, there is great diversity among the various subgroups throughout East Africa. Languages, cultures, and lifestyles may be delineated by strong clan lines, particularly in more rural areas.

Most Somalis are either pastoralist farmers or nomadic herders, a continuation of their traditional economy. Somali culture is known for its emphasis on camels, which often serve as their currency and life support. In fact, the name Somali is likely derived from the words *soo* and *maal*, which taken together means “go and milk.” Most Somalis remain in the countryside, though many Somalis have been moving to larger cities.

“To be Somali is to be Muslim,” is a common Somali proverb. Somalis were some of the first people in East Africa to convert to Islam, and today over 99.9% of Somalis are Muslim. To convert from Islam to Christianity, then, is at the very least to be ostracized from one’s family and clan. In many parts of East Africa, following Christ carries a death sentence, as Somali believers are constantly in danger of being persecuted, even by their own families. Radical Islamic extremist groups have terrorized Somalis and others in the region through intimidation and violence. Suicide bombs and other deadly attacks have claimed many lives.

In addition to various forms of persecution, warfare and difficult physical conditions have forced many Somalis to live as refugees throughout East Africa. Large populations of Somali refugees can also be found in the U.S., UK, Europe, and Canada.

Sadly, the majority of Somalis in East Africa are considered **unreached**, which means they have little or no access to the gospel (less than 2% evangelical Christians). And among these unreached, many are considered **unengaged**, which means there are currently no church planting strategies (consistent with evangelical faith and practice) underway to reach this people group. The following statistics from peoplegroup.org highlight the urgent spiritual needs of Somalis in East Africa:

People groups: 25

Population: 24,180,700

Unreached people groups: 25

UPG population: 24,180,700

Unengaged UPGs: 14

UUPG population: 7,340,200

Number of countries: 15

In light of the urgent spiritual and physical needs of Somalis in East Africa, please join us in prayer. Here are ten ways you can pray for the Somalis of East Africa:

1. Pray that God would sustain and strengthen Somali believers who are persecuted for their faith and that they would faithfully endure trials and suffering for Christ's sake.
2. Pray for the spread of the gospel through Somali believers, asking God to give them the courage to bear witness to the gospel.
3. Pray for churches to be planted among Somali believers so that they might serve and experience fellowship with one another.
4. Pray for pastors to be raised up who will proclaim the gospel and shepherd God's people among the Somalis.
5. Pray that believers from near and far cultures would be sent to proclaim the gospel among unreached Somalis.
6. Pray that God would open the hearts of many Somalis so that they might turn from Islam and embrace the gospel of Christ.
7. Pray that God would convert those who persecute Somalis, and if not, that He would overcome their attempts at murder, intimidation, and other forms of persecution.
8. Pray for Bibles and gospel resources to be made available to Somalis.
9. Pray that God would protect Somali refugees and that believers in this region would minister to their spiritual and physical needs.
10. Pray for the physical safety and provision of Somalis who are affected by war, famine, and other difficult physical conditions.

¹ Some sources list the total population of Somalis in East Africa at over 26 million. Sources used for this overview of Somalis in East Africa include Open Doors, peoplegroups.org, Joshua Project (joshuaproject.net), Pray Africa (prayafrica.org), and Council on Foreign Relations (cfr.org).

ABOUT DAVID PLATT

David Platt serves as pastor at McLean Bible Church in Washington, D.C. He is the founder and president of Radical.

Books by David Platt include *Radical*, *Radical Together*, *Follow Me*, and *Counter Culture*, as well as the following volumes in the Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary series: *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, *Exalting Jesus in James*, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, and *Exalting Jesus in Galatians*.

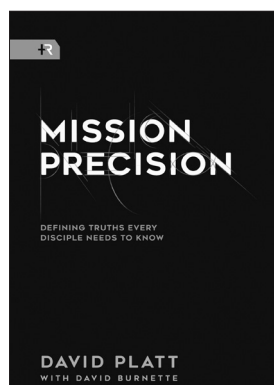
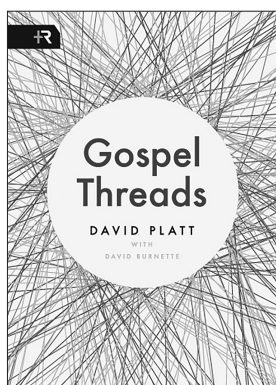
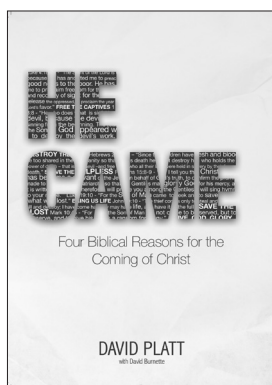
David Platt received his Ph.D. from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Along with his wife and four children, he lives in the Washington D.C. metro area.

ABOUT RADICAL

As the resource ministry of David Platt, Radical exists to serve the church in accomplishing the mission of Christ.

Radical serves local churches through free online resources (**radical.net**), through translated sermons, and through hosting Secret Church (**secrechurch.org**).

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