

• STRUGGLES • MY STORY • OF THE CHURCH •
• TRANSFORMATION • HISTORY • TRANSFORMATION • HISTORY •
**JESUS
AT THE
CENTER**
• OF PRAYER •

DAILY DEVOTIONAL
AND GROUP GUIDE

I'm convinced there are two things that Satan opposes more than anything—prayer and spending time in the Bible. Why? Because this is your source of power. If you don't charge your phone, it dies. Your phone isn't broken when it dies. It just needs to be recharged before it can function. The same is true with faith. Many people think their faith is broken when it just needs a daily recharge.

Over the next several weeks, we're going to guide you on a journey to recharge your faith through prayer. Whether you're comfortable with prayer or you've never really prayed before, this will be catalytic in helping your faith grow and keeping Jesus at the center. I want your confidence and batting average in prayer to go up, and that happens by faithfully showing up. The more you pray, the more you'll learn to hear God's voice. May His voice get louder and may the noise of the world grow quieter. May this be a season where your faith grows deep in Jesus.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'B' followed by a horizontal line and a cursive 'J'.

Bryan Jones, Senior Pastor

THE FATHER KEEPS US FROM FEAR

"So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom."

Luke 12:32 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Regardless of what type of earthly father you've had, the Bible calls God a Good Father. Kids should feel safe when they have their dad around. Often, the weight or fear we carry comes from not seeing God as a Father Who is near. We have a heavenly Father who watches over us.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Try to picture God as your Dad. Imagine sitting beside Him and sensing His presence. Relax and enjoy simply being in the presence of God.

Rejoice

Thank God that with Him, you don't have to be afraid.

Ask

Ask God to drive out any fears that keep you from His peace and presence. Ask God whatever is on your heart.

Yield

Think about all the things that cause fear in you. Give those to God. Ask Him if there's anything He wants to say about those things you're giving Him!

THE FATHER'S COMPASSION

For His unfailing love toward those who fear Him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The LORD is like a father to His children, tender and compassionate to those who fear Him. For He knows how weak we are; He remembers we are only dust.

Psalm 103:11-14 (NLT)

THOUGHT

We're all made in the image of God, but only those who've surrendered their lives to Jesus and are following Him are children of God. God has compassion. He's slow to anger. No sin or mistake can keep you from His compassion and love.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Spend time thinking about God's gentleness and compassion towards you and others.

Rejoice

Rejoice that because Jesus was crushed, we can have compassion. Thank God for His compassion that's free but comes at the great price of His Son. Rejoice that because of Jesus, you're a righteous child of God!

Ask

Ask God as a Father to reveal His compassion towards you and your struggles with sin. Ask Him to show His heart of love to you.

Yield

Truly yield anything you're holding back from Him. Surrender all He brings to mind that you're carrying with only your strength, and let His peace wash over you.

THE FATHER'S GOOD GIFTS

"You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him."

Matthew 7:9-11 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Every good and perfect gift is from God. God has given us our talents, abilities and opportunities. Most of the time, we're more aware of what we don't have than what we do have. Gratitude for God's blessings helps our hearts come alive.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Spend a few minutes just being with God. Ask Him if He wants to say anything to you. Sit in the truth that He desires good things for you!

Rejoice

Spend time thanking God for all His blessings. Some examples:

- House
- Food
- Clothing
- Friends and family
- Job
- Church
- Health
- Skills and talents
- Opportunities

Ask

Don't be afraid to ask God for what you want. Ask Him for the things He's placed on your heart. Unasked prayer is a far greater tragedy than unanswered prayer.

Yield

Yield to the truth that God's plans are better than yours. Sometimes things happen that we wouldn't have planned, but God can use all these things in mighty ways! Tell Him you trust Him today!

FATHER TO FATHERLESS

Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—this is God, whose dwelling is holy. God places the lonely in families; He sets the prisoners free and gives them joy. But He makes the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

Psalm 68:5 (NLT)

THOUGHT

God is near to the brokenhearted and hurting. No matter what you're facing, God wants you to know He's near. In our hurting, the enemy wants us to ask, *Where is God?* but the Spirit reminds us that God draws near and dwells with those who are crushed and broken from the pains of life.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Sit in the truth that God draws near to those in pain and miraculously gives them new freedom and joy. Think about how God has brought deeper freedom and joy to you.

Rejoice

Thank Him for His nearness!

Ask

Ask God to reveal how your earthly father has shaped how you see your heavenly Father in good and bad ways. Write them down. Ask Him to help you let go of anything negative impacting how you view God as your Father.

Yield

Give Him your disappointments. Don't let Satan use those to make you bitter. Allow God to bring greater freedom!

THE FATHER THAT MAKES US HEIRS

And because we are His children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are His child, God has made you His heir.

Galatians 4:6-7 (NLT)

THOUGHT

The Gospel states we're forgiven, and we've become heirs! In Roman culture, only death could set you free from your title as a slave. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, you're set free and now called an heir to the Kingdom of God.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Sit in the truth that as an heir, you have the authority of God, the power of God, the wisdom of God, the love of God, and the patience of God.

Rejoice

Spend time in prayer thanking God for giving you:

His authority

His power

His love

His wisdom

His patience

Ask

Ask God to help you better understand your identity in Him! As an heir of God, pray boldly for God's Kingdom to move in your life and the lives of others. Ask God, and don't hold back.

Yield

Stop operating on your power and strength. Surrender to Him and let His life flow through you.

THE FATHER OVER ALL

But we know that there is only one God, the Father, Who created everything, and we live for Him. And there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom God made everything and through Whom we have been given life.

1 Corinthians 8:6 (NLT)

THOUGHT

God is the One at the center of the universe. Everything comes from Him, and everything is made for Him. If He were not at the center of the universe, everything would fall into chaos, and if He isn't at the center of our lives, then nothing functions as intended.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Sit in the truth that God is the center of the universe. He created and controls EVERYTHING!

Rejoice

Thank Him that He holds all things together. Thank Him that everything functions as intended when He controls our lives and the world.

Ask

Ask that in a secular age, where people attempt to take Jesus out of the center of everything, His church remains resilient. Ask that God strengthens His people, ensuring He remains at the center of a culture moving away from the Truth.

Yield

Give whatever has kept you from speaking up about Jesus (comfort, approval, fear, etc.) to Him!

THE FATHER'S DISCIPLINE

Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then He will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine. My child, don't reject the LORD's discipline, and don't be upset when He corrects you. For the LORD corrects those He loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.

Proverbs 3:9-12 (NLT)

THOUGHT

If you're in Jesus, there's no such thing as punishment. Jesus took all our punishment on the cross. God doesn't punish, but He will discipline us out of love and delight. He sees when something is holding us back and deals with that issue in us.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Sit in the truth that God is a good Father.

Rejoice

Express gratitude that what the enemy intends for evil, God intends for good (Genesis 50:20).

Ask

Ask the Spirit to help you see God's discipline or correction in the light of His love. God is a Father Who wants our best. Ask Him to reveal how His discipline has grown your faith.

Yield

Don't fight or resist what God's doing in your life. God often won't heal what we try to hide from Him. Surrender to Him.

PRAISE HIS NAME

Therefore, God elevated Him to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11 (NLT)

THOUGHT

There's power in the name of Jesus. Think about it. People use His name to bless and curse others. Nobody stubs their toe and says, *Budda* or *Allah*. Jesus' name has a power that the world sometimes doesn't fully realize or understand.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Rest in the promise of Jesus' great name. No one compares to Him.

Rejoice

Thank Him that one day, every knee will bow before Him!

Ask

Ask Him to take your timidness and replace it with boldness. Think of the person least likely to worship Jesus. This verse tells us one day, they will bow. They will bow their knee before God. But ask Him that they do it on this side of eternity! Ask for that person to know Jesus.

Yield

Release to God anything (comfort, approval, fear, etc.) that's preventing you from sharing Jesus with others.

PRAISE HIS POWER

Now all glory to God, Who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Whatever you think God can do, it's too small. Paul shares that whatever you can think or ask is still not big enough for God. Prayer is about remembering His power so we know that anything we ask is possible!

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Sit and rest in the mighty power of Jesus.

Rejoice

Thank God that whatever good picture you have of Him is too small! Praise Him that whatever good plans you have, they are too small!

Ask

Ask God if your heart is aligned with His. Ask Him to increase your faith to believe in His mighty power. Ask Him for the big things He places on your heart.

Yield

Don't limit your prayers. Ask God to do the unthinkable. When our hearts are aligned with His, then He will powerfully move. Align your heart with His.

PRAISE HIS PLANS

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for Me wholeheartedly, you will find Me. I will be found by you," says the LORD.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 (NLT)

THOUGHT

God has good plans for His children. He wants us to flourish and succeed, but He's most interested in our hearts. God's more interested in who we become than what we get done. His plans are sometimes different than ours, but they're always better.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Sit in the freedom that God is guiding and directing your future.

Rejoice

Thank God that His plans for you are good. Thank Him that you have a future and a hope. Thank Him that if you seek Him wholeheartedly, you'll find Him!

Ask

Ask God to give you confidence in His plans. If you feel like your life isn't going the way you wanted, ask Him to reveal what He's doing in this season!

Yield

Open your hands as a sign that you're surrendering your plans to Him. Ask for joy as you trust Him.

PRAISE HIS CONSISTENCY

So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, Who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.

James 1:16-17 (NLT)

THOUGHT

God doesn't evolve or change. He can't grow or learn, as He is perfect. His character is perfect and worthy of praise. He is trustworthy, reliable and consistent. He doesn't change.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Reflect on all the changes you've seen in your life and our world. Sit in the truth that God never changes.

Rejoice

Thank God that you can trust Him fully because He never changes! Thank Him for His consistency and faithfulness.

Ask

We can only experience God when we seek Him with our whole hearts! Ask Him to make you consistent in your time with Him! Ask God to help you fully seek Him.

Yield

Ask God if there's anything you're withholding and attempting to control yourself. Surrender that to Him. Surrender your future to Him.

PRAISE HIS KNOWLEDGE

How great is our Lord! His power is absolute! His understanding is beyond comprehension!

Psalm 147:5 (NLT)

THOUGHT

It's amazing to think God doesn't learn. It's also encouraging to know the One guiding your life knows everything. He can see everything, so you can trust that He sees what you don't.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Think of the most intelligent person you know. God has given them that knowledge. Sit in the wisdom of God.

Rejoice

Thank God for His wisdom and the wisdom He gives to those who seek Him. Thank Him that He is a God of clarity, not confusion.

Ask

Ask God to help you grow deeper in your knowledge of Him. Whatever you're wrestling with, invite Him to speak into those situations. Sit and listen. Write down what He shares with you.

Yield

Whatever He spoke to you, surrender those things. Be faithful to act on what He shared with you.

PRAISE HIS EXISTENCE

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through Him, and nothing was created except through Him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

John 1:1-4 (NLT)

THOUGHT

It's a very moving and sobering thought that Jesus always existed—that He has no beginning, no birthday. If He has no beginning, that means He has no end.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Reflect on the reality that Jesus has no beginning and no end. He has always been. Rest in that truth.

Rejoice

Thank God that He has no beginning and no end. Thank Him that everything has life and breath because of Him. Thank God that His light is brighter than the darkness.

Ask

Ask God to help you see Him as the most powerful being in the world.

Yield

Bring anything you're keeping from Him in darkness into the light. He knows. He forgives. He heals.

PRAISE HIS CHARACTER

But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

Psalm 86:15 (NLT)

THOUGHT

It's one thing to have a powerful being, but another to have a powerful being who's good. We can trust God because of His character. Most people don't do well with power. However, God wields it perfectly.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Think of God's patience with us. Think of God's patience with our culture.

Rejoice

- Thank God for His compassion.
- Thank God for His mercy.
- Thank God for His patience.
- Thank God for His love.
- Thank God for His faithfulness.

Ask

Ask God to help you demonstrate the very things you gave thanks for above. Ask Him to help you have compassion, mercy, patience, love and faithfulness for others today.

Yield

Any area of your life you prayed above that doesn't look like God, surrender to Him.

FIRST IMPORTANCE

"But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."

Matthew 6:33 (CSB)

THOUGHT

Placing God's Kingdom in the proper place of first importance helps everything else align properly. I find it interesting when my circumstances are good, but my relationship with Jesus isn't, something always feels missing. In the same way, when my relationship with Jesus is in a good place, and my circumstances are bad, I still have peace and joy. The challenge is to ensure Jesus is at the center of my life and not just a part of it!

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Take a moment in the busyness to slow down and reflect on the joy and life Jesus brings. Let your heart delight in who He is.

Rejoice

Thank Jesus that you were important enough to Him to leave Heaven's glory and comfort and give His life for you to know Him. Rejoice that this great God has chosen us to be His sons and daughters.

Ask

Take a moment to write down your tasks for the week. Look at what's consuming your thoughts and energy. Ask God to help you prioritize those tasks so He can be at the center of your life this week.

Yield

Now receive that reordered list back from Him in prayer. What moved to the top of the list? Share the list with someone close to you and ask them to pray for you as you seek God first this week.

AUTHORITY

"I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on Earth will have been bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth will have been loosed in Heaven."

Matthew 16:19 (CSB)

THOUGHT

Often, prayer can feel less than exciting because we're ignorant of our authority in Kingdom prayer. Think of yourself as an embassy. An embassy isn't governed by the area or province it's in. It's governed and given authority by the place it's from. Jesus says once you become His follower, you're governed by His Kingdom, and you're to live out your faith on Earth. It's important to know, though, that you've been given His authority to help bring His Kingdom to this Earth, and one of the ways you do that is through prayer. So, lean in today, knowing that God is listening and ready to send the resources of Heaven to help as we pray in the Spirit!

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Take a moment and reflect on who you are in the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God, there aren't any all-stars or captains. Everyone is given the full authority of God when they're surrendered to Him. Reflect on this.

Rejoice

Thank God for trusting you and wanting to partner with you. Thank Him that He's given you Kingdom authority in prayer.

Ask

Ask God if there's anywhere you're operating in your strength. Ask Him to reveal where you're using your authority instead of His. Now ask Him for His will to be done in that area.

Yield

Surrender whatever the Spirit reveals you're trying to carry or move forward in your strength. Let the Spirit breathe fresh life and encouragement into you today. We become less so He can become more in our lives!

SECURITY

"In the days of those kings, the God of the heavens will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, and this kingdom will not be left to another people. It will crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, but will itself endure forever."

Daniel 2:44 (CSB)

THOUGHT

Think of all the businesses, kingdoms and products that have come and gone. When I was little, I would've thought Toys "R" Us or Blockbuster would have been around forever. People in Jesus' days thought the Roman empire would live on throughout the ages. If you were betting on which kingdom would continue, Jesus or the Roman Empire, during the peak of Roman power, not many people would've said Jesus. Yet His Kingdom is still on the move. His Kingdom is still advancing. His Kingdom will never be shaken. What a comforting thought that though businesses, kingdoms, products and people rise and fall, Jesus' Kingdom will never end!

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Think about the firm foundation of Jesus' Kingdom—how people throughout the ages have given their lives to build His Kingdom. Sit and reflect on how His Kingdom has endured the test of time, skeptics and opposition. Rest in the truth that His Kingdom is unshakable.

Rejoice

Rejoice and thank God that He's rescued you and has invited you to be a part of a Kingdom that has no end.

Ask

Take a moment and ask the King of Kings to share a view of the Kingdom with you. What does He point out? What do you see?

Yield

How does being a part of this enduring Kingdom change how you live? What can you do differently today as a result? Knowing there's no power like Jesus, how does that enable you to take risks for Him?

INTERCESSION

First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone,

1 Timothy 2:1 (CSB)

THOUGHT

Part of being a citizen of God's Kingdom on Earth bears a responsibility and privilege to lift others in prayer. The Apostle Paul says in Philippians 1:19 that he was delivered as a result of others' prayers. Think about that! As we intercede, with the authority we've been given, Heaven is strengthening and working under the surface. What a humbling thought to think of getting to Heaven one day and seeing the impact of the prayers we prayed for others. If God has placed someone on your heart, be faithful to pray for them. Don't underestimate the power of intercessory prayer.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Reflect on the promise that the Spirit of God intercedes on our behalf (Romans 8:26). What an encouraging thought that the Spirit of God knows exactly what to pray for even when we don't. You are loved, seen and prayed for. Sit in that.

Rejoice

Thank God that He entrusts us with the responsibility of interceding on behalf of others.

Ask

Ask God today to place one person on your heart so you can pray for them. Ask Him if there's anything specific He wants you to pray. Take a moment to still your mind. Slow down your thoughts and ask Him to bring someone to mind.

Yield

Try doing this several times throughout the day. Like anything, the more you do something, the more comfortable you'll feel. The more time you spend interceding, the louder God's voice will become. Yield to the reality that He has called every one of us to lift others in prayer. May you fully embrace your role as an intercessor.

SUPERIORITY

"Heal the sick who are there, and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near you.'"

Luke 10:9 (CSB)

THOUGHT

The call of Jesus isn't just a call to die. It's a call to live. It's important to note God never calls you to leave something behind unless He calls you to something better. What is that better thing? It's Jesus. He's superior to anything and everything in the world. When we make Jesus lesser than the things of this world, we've reduced Jesus and failed to see Him for who He is!

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Think of all the things you want in this world. As you think of those things, say in your heart and mind, Jesus is better. Reflect on the great truth that if you have Jesus, you have everything.

Rejoice

Celebrate that your King is not like other kings, using their servants for their selfish gain, but instead, uses His power to love and serve others. Thank Jesus that there is no one like Him.

Ask

Ask God to awaken your heart to deeper levels of devotion and passion. Ask Him to give your spiritual windshield wipers to remove anything that blocks your view of Him.

Yield

Ask God how to create better spiritual rhythms that allow you to keep Him at the center of your life. Yield to whatever He says, and don't waiver. Make a commitment that once He speaks, you'll faithfully follow!

LOVE FOR THE LOST

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

Luke 19:10 (CSB)

THOUGHT

Jesus Christ came to the Earth for those who are lost and to save them from their way of living. May we be reminded WHY Jesus came to this earth. He didn't come to condemn those who weren't following Him. He didn't come just to gather the Christians together. He came so that those far from Him might find eternal life.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Think back on your life before Christ. Picture God as He pursued you. Think about what you felt when God awakened you to His love.

Rejoice

Thank God for sending Jesus and His Holy Spirit to rescue and transform your life. Thank Him for the life that you now have in Him!

Ask

Ask God for one environment in your life (work, school, neighborhood, restaurant, etc.) that you can use as a mission field to share the Gospel. Ask Him to give you a boldness in that space.

Yield

Everyone is called to be a light. God has uniquely placed you where you are for such a time as this. Think about it. You've been part of God's plan to help draw others to Him since the beginning of time. Only the Spirit of God can transform a life, but you are called to be a light. Please don't dismiss this calling. It's for everyone.

UNION

"I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in Me through their word. May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us, so that the world may believe You sent Me. I have given them the glory You have given Me, so that they may be one as We are One. I am in them and You are in Me, so that they may be made completely one, that the world may know You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me."

John 17:20-23 (CSB)

THOUGHT

The ultimate aim of the Kingdom of God is a relationship with God. It's to have such a deep union with God that Jesus lives in and through us. Our goal is to get to such an intimacy with Jesus through His Spirit that we don't have to wonder what Jesus would say or do—His life flows out of us. It takes time, but God is faithful to grow us when we stay in step with Him.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Meditate on God's desire to draw closer and closer to you. What an amazing thought that God loves and believes in you so much that He wants to invest all His resources into making you a mighty man or woman of God.

Rejoice

God wants more in His relationship with you! Rejoice that God has good plans for you.

Ask

Request God to give you a clearer picture of intimacy with Him. Ask for some practical ways to live this out faithfully.

Yield

Take a step in one of the ways that God showed you when you asked. Celebrate taking that step into a deeper relationship with Him.

GOD PROVIDES FOR OUR NEEDS

And this same God Who takes care of me will supply all your needs from His glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen.

Philippians 4:19 (NLT)

THOUGHT

When we seek the Kingdom of God first, He promises He'll provide all our needs. It's easy to become situational atheists, believing God holds the whole world in His hands, but He doesn't hold my life. In Matthew 6:11, Jesus says in the Lord's Prayer, "*Give us today our daily bread.*" This is a reminder that God supplies all His children's needs.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Reflect on the fact that God knows what you need before you ask. He knows every detail of your life. He's interested and invested in your life. What an amazing truth!

Rejoice

God owns everything. Everything belongs to Him. Thank God that He has glorious riches, meaning He has an abundance. Thank Him for His power and generosity to us.

Ask

List all the things you're worried about or are consuming your thoughts. Ask God to speak directly to each item you wrote down and write down His responses!

Yield

Whatever God spoke to you, commit in your heart to follow Him! Be faithful to obey His commands.

GOD PROVIDES REST

Then Jesus said, "Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you. Let Me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

THOUGHT

God doesn't want us to wait to go to Heaven one day. Instead, He wants to bring Heaven to our lives and this earth. Part of the way He does that is by giving us rest and peace. In God, there is unlimited freedom and peace.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

God isn't burdensome. He doesn't need anything from you. He chooses you because He loves you. Sit a moment and practice being with God instead of working for God.

Rejoice

Rejoice that God wants to give you rest. Rejoice that God is:

- Humble.
- Gentle at heart.
- Easy to be around.

Ask

Ask Him to carry your heavy burdens today.

Yield

Sit and wait until your soul is at peace and rest. Turn on some soothing worship music and listen to the words. Sit and let His peace and rest fill you.

GOD PROVIDES DELIGHT

Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you your heart's desires.

Psalm 37:4 (NLT)

THOUGHT

I love what C.S. Lewis says, *God is the most delightful being in the universe.* Whatever joy and delight you have doesn't even compare to God's. God doesn't want you to only do things for Him. He wants us to delight in Him.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

We don't often think of God enjoying life or smiling. For whatever reason, we picture Him as burdened and always on a mission. God is the most joyful being in the universe. On the seventh day of creation, He rested, not because He was tired but to delight. Reflect on the joy of God. Let it warm your heart.

Rejoice

Rejoice that God is a happy God who wants us to be happy and joyful. Rejoice that His plans and His presence create a deep joy.

Ask

Ask God to fill you with deeper joy. Ask Him to help you smile, laugh and see Him in those moments.

Yield

This will be hard for some but yield to the picture of God delighting in you as His child. Picture the way He cares for you and looks favorably over you. God doesn't just love you. He also likes you. Let His delight awaken you to the depth of His goodness and love. Sit and receive this gift.

GOD PROVIDES A WAY FOR GODLY LIVING

By His divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know Him, the One Who called us to Himself by means of His marvelous glory and excellence. And because of His glory and excellence, He has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share His divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

2 Peter 1:3-4 (NLT)

THOUGHT

God has given us everything we need for Godly living. No one is lacking any gift or resource to follow God. You just have to be submitted to Him.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Sit in the truth and hope that He has equipped you with the tools to follow Him in this dark world. You don't have to wonder if you can stay faithful. He's given you everything you need to grow deeper in Him.

Rejoice

Rejoice that God called you to know Him and promised to help you live for Him.

Ask

Ask God to deepen your belief in His power and plan for your life.

Ask God to help you trust Him one day at a time so you don't get paralyzed by the future.

Ask Him to strengthen your belief that His riches aren't just for others. They are for you TODAY.

Ask the Spirit to remind you that He is the One Who changes you. Put your longings and desires in His hands. Ask the Spirit to give you greater faith to overcome and grow in every area you experience.

Ask God to deepen your belief in His power and plan for your life.

Yield

Godly living isn't for select people. It's for everyone. God's given you everything you need (grace, love, power, hope, patience).

GOD PROVIDES PEACE

The LORD gives strength to His people; the LORD blesses His people with peace.
Psalm 29:11 (NIV)

THOUGHT

Peace isn't found in our circumstances. Instead, real peace is found in Christ. I love how John Ortberg said it: *Peace doesn't come from finding a lake with no storms, it comes from having Jesus in your boat.* Some people have great circumstances, but still, peace evades them, while others have difficult circumstances with a peace that comes from life with Jesus.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Practice being still with the Lord. Spend a few minutes in His presence. Sit and think about the peace that Jesus brings.

Rejoice

Thank Him for the peace that you have in the storms of life because of Him. Thank Him that His peace is available to every one of us today.

Ask

Ask Him to give peace to you and others in your life. Ask Him if there's anything that you're trying to carry or control in your strength.

Yield

Give Him whatever you're trying to control. Give Him control of your life, health, finances, family and future. Let His peace wash over you as you return those things to Him!

GOD PROVIDES A FAITHFUL PROMISE

And I am certain that God, Who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Steph, my wife, will often remind me there are unfinished projects I've started. Usually, I've forgotten because I'm already on to the next thing. I'm good at starting things and need more practice finishing them. This verse reminds us that God never starts a work in us and forgets or gets too busy to complete the task. Rest assured, God is working and will continue to work in your life in mighty ways when you keep Him at the center.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Reflect on God's goodness to mature and grow your faith. Reflect on the fact that He never sleeps or slumbers.

Rejoice

Thank God that He's always working for your good. Thank Him for the ways He's already grown your faith. Thank Him for the victories in your life. Thank Him for the victories you haven't seen yet but will one day!

Ask

Ask Him to grow your faith in mighty ways this year. Ask Him to give you confident hope that spiritually, the best days are ahead when you keep Him at the center of your life.

Yield

Spiritual adrenaline allows us to do what we can for a season, but transformation is what the Spirit does in us over a lifetime. Let the Spirit have His way in your life.

GOD PROVIDES THE SPIRIT

"I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. But when the Father sends the Advocate as My representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—He will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you."

John 14:25-26 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Jesus says something shocking in John 16. He says that it's better for Him to go away. What?!? Jesus is saying that after His death and resurrection, anyone who's a child of God will have the Holy Spirit dwell in them. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God dwelled in the Temple. In the New Testament, WE are now called God's temple, the place where His Spirit dwells.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Sit and reflect that the Spirit of God is with you. You're the temple of God if you are a Christ follower. Miraculously, God is with us and chooses to dwell within us.

Rejoice

Thank God that He's given you the Spirit of God to help you walk with Him. Thank Him that the Spirit will always be with you no matter where you go or what happens.

Ask

Ask God to increase the Spirit's voice in your life! Ask Him if anything will help you hear His voice clearer. Ask Him to help you tune out the sounds of this world and tune into His voice.

Yield

Listen for the Spirit to hear if there's anything He wants to say to you and if there's anything you need to surrender to Him.

THE KINDNESS OF REPENTANCE

Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that His kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

Romans 2:4 (NLT)

THOUGHT

All of us have knowingly and willingly disobeyed God, yet He responds to us with love. He's slow to get angry and quick to forgive—what a blessing! May this grace and mercy transform our hearts and minds.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Take a moment to reflect on how patient (or impatient) you are with those you love. Then think about how vast God's patience is with us.

Rejoice

Thank God for the undeserved kindness, grace and mercy He's shown you. Be specific when you can.

Ask

Ask God to transform you by renewing your mind (Romans 12:2) and creating a loyal spirit within you (Psalm 51:10).

Yield

Let God grant you freedom from the sin struggle you've been wrestling with.

FORGIVENESS DRIVES LOVE

"I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown Me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love."

Luke 7:47 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Forgiveness changes everything. When someone's been forgiven, they can't help but be transformed by this radical grace. The woman who anointed Jesus' feet understood the enormity of Jesus' forgiveness (Luke 7:36-50). Do you?

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Consider your posture toward Jesus—are you resting at His feet to worship Him? Take a few moments to do so now.

Rejoice

Tell God how much you love Him and why. Like the woman in Luke 7, when we're forgiven much, we show much love.

Ask

Ask God to grant you the ability to show your love for Him daily, so others are drawn to Jesus through your faithfulness.

Yield

Give God any hesitation you may have to love Him lavishly in front of others. Allow Him to make you bold for the sake of His Kingdom!

NEVER TURNED AWAY

But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

1 John 1:9 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Confession can seem like such a scary, churchy word. Yet, at its core, confession is healthy and healing. By admitting and owning our shortcomings, we acknowledge our need for Jesus to forgive us. He won't turn us away. It's in confession that we find freedom.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

What small area of your life have you been keeping from God? What sin have you been holding on to or trying to hide from Him? Reflect on whether you're giving Jesus everything or only a portion of who you are.

Rejoice

Thank God for His faithfulness to forgive us without fail. Where we may struggle to forgive someone, God promises to always meet us in our brokenness with grace and redemption.

Ask

Invite the Spirit to point out anything in you that is offensive to Him (Psalm 139:24).

Yield

Let God grow within you a trust in who He is and how He loves you. Release your anxious and insecure thoughts of rejecting Him.

THE BEST NO

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.
Romans 8:1 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Arguably the most beautiful chapter in the New Testament, Romans 8, is full of encouragement. It begins by reassuring us that as Christ's followers, we're not condemned. Hallelujah! Thank God for this beautiful truth.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Take a moment to remember to Whom you belong. Not this world. Not your employer. Not even yourself. You belong to Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:10).

Rejoice

Tell God how thankful you feel that you're not condemned. Thank Him for casting your sins as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12).

Ask

Ask God to help you live in the confident assurance of being His. Ask the Spirit to insulate you from attacks in a world of shame and condemnation.

Yield

Give God any feelings of inadequacy with which you've been wrestling. His love for you has never been based on your ability to be perfect. He loves you and chooses a relationship with you simply because of that love.

RECONCILIATION

And all of this is a gift from God, Who brought us back to Himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him.

2 Corinthians 5:18 (NLT)

THOUGHT

We speak of coming to faith in Christ as passing from death to life. It's a drastic transformation that fundamentally impacts every part of who we are. This gift of life isn't primarily about us—it's about the glory of God. It's also meant to be the starting point of sharing His love with others.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

How has God uniquely crafted you to advance His Kingdom? How can you function as His ambassador in your family, neighborhood, work and everyday interactions?

Rejoice

Thank God for bringing you back to Himself through Christ. Reflect on the love and trust He must have in you to call you to this task of reconciling others to Him.

Ask

Ask the Spirit to give you boldness and confidence as you proclaim the Good News through words and actions. Invite the Spirit to burden your heart with someone you might share the Good News with this week.

Yield

Think about any obstacles that might hinder you from sharing Christ. Give those to God. Ask the Spirit for power to proclaim the Good News (Acts 1:8).

URGENCY OF FORGIVENESS

"So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God."

Matthew 5:23-24 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Sometimes we get so caught up in doing things for Jesus that we forget to live like Jesus. We must prioritize forgiveness and the restoration of relationships. Our horizontal relationships on Earth impact our vertical relationship with our Father in Heaven.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Take a moment to consider all your relationships. Is there someone you need to seek forgiveness from? Is there someone you need to forgive? Before you go any further in this devotion, take the step to seek forgiveness and restoration.

Rejoice

Thank God for the gift of second chances. Thank Him for the grace and mercy He's shown you. Thank Him for the graciousness and forgiveness of those who love you.

Ask

Invite the Spirit to help you prioritize forgiveness. Ask for a supernatural awareness of where there is brokenness in your relationships so you might seek reconciliation. Remember we're called to do that so we can live in peace with everyone (Romans 12:18).

Yield

Think of that one person with whom you fear you'll never experience reconciliation. Leave your fear at the feet of the Savior. Trust Him with this situation. Ask Him to intervene and be sensitive to any guidance the Spirit reveals toward your next steps.

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit should be evident in our lives. In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus says, *"The highway to hell is broad, ... but the gateway to life is very narrow... and only a few ever find it."* If you've ever questioned your path, consider what Paul tells us the Spirit produces in our lives.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Are you a person marked by the Fruit of the Spirit? In what areas of your life do you need to invite the Spirit to bear this fruit more fully? Ask Him to show you!

Rejoice

Thank God for how He's changed you. Your transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit, making you more and more like Jesus throughout your life (2 Corinthians 3:18). What an incredible privilege!

Ask

Ask the Spirit to produce even more fruit in you. Our goal is to glorify God in every aspect of our lives. We want to live and love like Jesus. Where does God want to grow you further?

Yield

It's easy to look at these nine qualities and feel like a disappointment for failing to see them more clearly in your life. You aren't perfect. That's why Jesus came to redeem us! Trust God to continue loving you through your shortcomings, and ask Him to make you more like the Son every day.

PROTECTION

"And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one."

Matthew 6:13 (NLT)

THOUGHT

This plea comes from a heart that wants to remain close to God and knows sin damages our intimacy with Him. It's preferable to be protected from opportunities to sin. It's better to obey God's guidance and avoid sin than to compromise and struggle against temptation.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Think about situations that tempt you to sin. Recognize the areas—people, places and conditions—you're susceptible to temptation so you can avoid them.

Rejoice

Thank God for intervening in past situations that could have yielded damaging, life-altering circumstances.

Ask

Ask God to enable you to stay alert to attractive traps, giving you discernment to recognize when the evil one is trying to seduce you into sin.

Yield

Yield to the Holy Spirit's attempts to redirect your path away from Satan's enticements. Return your focus to your connection and commitment to God.

PRIDE

If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall.

1 Corinthians 10:12 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Pride in our strength makes us vulnerable to temptation. When we stop relying on God to resist enticement to sin, we become easy targets for Satan, who knows our weaknesses.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Are there areas of your life where you don't rely on God because you think you can handle the challenges that arise?

Rejoice

Thank God that the Spirit intercedes for you about issues and needs you're unaware of or are too blind, stubborn or proud to seek God's help humbly (Romans 8:26).

Ask

Ask for awareness of your continual need for God in every area of your life.

Yield

Give God every area of your life regularly through prayer, especially those areas where you think you're sufficient.

EXCUSES

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. ...
1 Corinthians 10:13a (NLT)

THOUGHT

When we submit to temptation and engage in sin, we often become defensive about our failure, claiming that our trial was too much for anyone to resist. The Bible tells us that many others have suffered the same type of enticement, so resistance is possible through reliance on God.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Is there any area of your life or circumstances where you feel your temptations and trials are worse than what others experience?

Rejoice

Thank God that you're not alone in your suffering and trials.

Ask

Ask God to give you insight into how others endure their trials, perhaps by connecting you with people withstanding similar tests.

Yield

Refuse to view yourself as a victim who's treated worse than others by God or by other people. Reject self-pity. Realize God's children are not victims. Instead, rely on God and trust Him for support.

FAITHFULNESS

And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand.

1 Corinthians 10:13b (NLT)

THOUGHT

God will not allow any temptation to be too strong to resist. No one, not even Satan, can make us sin. We sin because we choose to sin.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Recognize that your areas of weakness and susceptibility to sin are a result of your choices.

Rejoice

Thank God that He protects you from temptations that would overpower you.

Ask

Ask God for awareness of decisions you're making that are leading you toward disobedience.

Yield

Give God control over all your decisions. Trust in His faithfulness to always provide you with what's best for your life.

RESPONSIBILITY

When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure.
1 Corinthians 10:13c (NLT)

THOUGHT

God will provide a way to escape temptation, often by passing through the test without submitting to the temptation. God enables our escape, but we're responsible for taking the way out.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Think about the way God wants you to escape or persevere through the trial you're facing.

Rejoice

Thank God for never leaving you hopeless or alone under challenging situations.

Ask

Ask God to reveal the way to escape or how to endure through your temptation or trial.

Yield

Commit to follow God's direction completely in every situation you encounter.

ALERTNESS

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Satan and his demons are adversaries of God's people. They desire to damage and destroy Christians' lives, often by working through people who oppose us.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Remember that Satan has been defeated by Jesus, so through faith and prayer, he can be defeated in your life.

Rejoice

Thank God you can resist Satan so he cannot control your life.

Ask

Ask God to help you recognize satanic attacks, especially when they come through people.

Yield

Dismiss tendencies to blame people for personal attacks and instead consider Satan's role in these encounters.

TRIALS

These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

1 Peter 1:7 (NLT)

THOUGHT

Persevering by faith through trials and temptations proves our faith is real. When we refuse to compromise our faith by rejecting enticements to sin, we'll be rewarded when Jesus returns.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Pause

Reflect on what God thinks about you because of how you face trials and temptations.

Rejoice

Thank God He's aware of your life and concerned about every trial you encounter.

Ask

Ask God to help you persevere through trials and temptations, remembering that your faith is being strengthened and it will bring you praise, glory and honor.

Yield

Stop thinking that your daily behavior doesn't matter to God. It's essential to Him!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THOUGHT

Spend time each day this week praying through the Lord's Prayer. Over the last six weeks, the focus has been on each portion of the Lord's Prayer. Now, let's pray it in its entirety.

Look at each section below and pray what God puts on your heart. Reflect on each area of the Lord's Prayer. Remember, prayer is a two-way street. We speak in, and we listen. Most of us have overused mouths and ears that have been in retirement! We need to hear from God more than He needs to hear from us. Write down what He says to you. Also, if you feel comfortable, take other verses you've read and pray them through the elements of the Lord's Prayer below.

PRAYER PRACTICE

Proximity - *"Our Father in Heaven,*

Praise - *may Your name be kept holy.*

Priorities - *May Your Kingdom come soon. May Your will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Provision - *Give us today the food we need,*

Peace - *and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.*

Protection - *And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one."*

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DIGGING DEEPER

A Discussion Guide for Groups

God designed us to live in relationship with Him and each other. We were not meant to spend our lives alone but to do life together. It's in community where we find belonging and experience transformation.

In the book of Ephesians, we learn that God's desire is that we...

... all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, Who is the head of His body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Ephesians 4:13-16 (NLT)

The following section is designed for you to learn and grow with others. If you're not already connected with others on your faith journey, we encourage you to find a group by visiting brookwoodchurch.org/groups.

Video resources can be found with each Message by visiting brookwoodchurch.org/media.

WEEK 1: PROXIMITY

"Our Father in Heaven, ..."

Matthew 6:9a (NLT)

OPEN

What words would you use to describe your prayer life?

PRAY

Pause for a few minutes to quiet your heart and mind. Then ask God for insight and direction as you study and reflect on this week's lesson.

CONNECT

Watch this week's video, then use the following questions for reflection and conversation. Consider these Scriptures as you study and reflect: Psalm 46; John 17:1-5; James 4:8.

1. What stood out to you from the video? Did anything specific catch your attention?
2. What words or phrases come to mind when you think of a good father?
3. In what ways have you experienced God as Father? Share examples.
4. When have you known the Father's delight?
5. What happens when we lose focus on God? Share an example from your life and what happened.

6. Describe a time you experienced the Father's discipline. How did you respond to His correction?
7. If God were to lean in, look you in the eyes and speak, what would you want Him to say?
8. How do you cultivate intimacy with God?
9. Why do you think understanding God being our Father and our adoption as sons and daughters (Galatians 4:1-7) is vital to the *health* of our prayer life?
10. How has your relationship with your earthly father helped or hindered your view of God as Father? Describe.
11. Where in your life do you feel fatherless?
12. What do you need to bring to the Father this week? Share this with others and pray together.

GUIDED PRAYER

Scripture tells us God will never leave us or forsake us. Focus on the proximity of God. Ask God to help you feel His presence and keep you focused on Him throughout the week.

WEEK 2: PRAISE

"... may Your name be kept holy."

Matthew 6:9b (NLT)

OPEN

How was your time in prayer this past week?

PRAY

Pause for a few minutes to quiet your heart and mind. Then ask God for insight and direction as you study and reflect on this week's lesson.

CONNECT

Watch this week's video, then use the following questions for reflection and conversation. Consider these Scriptures as you study and reflect: 2 Kings 6:16-17; Psalm 20:7-8; Matthew 14:17-21.

1. What stood out to you from the video? Did anything specific catch your attention?
2. What does it mean to you that God is holy?
3. How does a person keep God's name holy?
4. In what ways have you experienced the power of God?
5. *God's hands can do what ours cannot.* What area of your life do you tend to be most self-reliant?

6. In what area of life are you most desperate to experience the power of God?
7. Why is it sometimes difficult to trust God?
8. Describe a time you trusted God during a struggle.
9. If God knows everything, what's the purpose of prayer?
10. What's the most beautiful, awe-inspiring thing that draws your attention toward God?
11. God is over all creation and at the same time as close as a friend. Which do you tend to focus on—His bigness or His nearness? What are ways you can grow in seeing Him in both of these ways?
12. If you were to select one story or season in your life when you were most overwhelmed by God's presence, which would you pick? Describe what happened and what it was like.

GUIDED PRAYER

Make a list of names, titles and metaphors of God. Spend time praising God for who He is and how He's worked in your life.

WEEK 3: PRIORITIES

"May Your Kingdom come soon. May Your will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven."

Matthew 6:10 (NLT)

OPEN

What's been on your mind the most this past week?

PRAY

Pause for a few minutes to quiet your heart and mind. Then ask God for insight and direction as you study and reflect on this week's lesson.

CONNECT

Watch this week's video, then use the following questions for reflection and conversation. Consider these Scriptures as you study and reflect:

Psalms 10:16-18; Matthew 6:25-34; Colossians 3:1-14.

1. What stood out to you from the video? Did anything specific catch your attention?
2. What things in the world do you most wish God would make right?
3. God is already King. In what sense are His Kingdom and perfect will still in the future?
4. Describe a time you felt lost and without God. Can you look back and see where He was at work? How did this help you understand the will of God in your life?

5. In our self-centered culture, we're often preoccupied with our little name, empire and will rather than God's. We sometimes focus on me-centered prayers. How can we combat this tendency?
6. The concept of *kingdom* is foreign in Western culture. What might be a more helpful way to say or describe that?
7. Sometimes we reduce Christianity to information we should believe. But what is Christianity supposed to do to a person?
8. How can you rearrange your day/week to spend more quality time with God?
9. How might the prayer *Your Kingdom come* change how you pray?
10. How would you describe God's will for your life? What does it look like for God's will to be done in your life?
11. What's one thing you sense God wanting to change in your life?
12. What would it look like for God's will to be done at Brookwood? What are ways we can seek this together?

GUIDED PRAYER

Praise God for His sovereignty, that He has supreme power and authority. Share your priorities for this week with the person beside you. Pray for each other, asking God to refocus your priorities to align with His will and build His Kingdom.

WEEK 4: PERSONAL/PROVISION

"Give us today the food we need,"

Matthew 6:11 (NLT)

OPEN

How has your prayer life changed over the last few weeks?

PRAY

Pause for a few minutes to quiet your heart and mind. Then ask God for insight and direction as you study and reflect on this week's lesson.

CONNECT

Watch this week's video, then use the following questions for reflection and conversation. Consider these Scriptures as you study and reflect: Exodus 17:9-11; Colossians 1:16-17; 2 Peter 1:1-8.

1. What stood out to you from the video? Did anything specific catch your attention?
2. What's the difference between the phrases *pray before you say* and *say before you pray*?
3. When was the last time you felt like God was enough?
4. How often do you feel a deep sense of dependence on God?
5. Share a time God spoke to you.

6. What are the basic needs God satisfies for you every day for which you're thankful?
7. List 10 things for which you're most thankful. Spend time thanking God together.
8. What burdens are you carrying that you wish someone knew about?
9. Do you feel free to ask God for help, or do you feel like you're bothering God—that He must have more important things to do than care for you? Explain.
10. Praying daily reminds us that God is the one who provides. Does the rhythm of your life include regular prayer? How can you strengthen an ongoing practice of prayer?
11. How are you a person of both *prayer* and *action*?
12. How might having a solid confidence that God will provide what you need change how you pray?

GUIDED PRAYER

Identify the daily bread that each member of the group needs. Have each person pray for the person on their right.

WEEK 5: PEACE/PEOPLE

"and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us."

Matthew 6:12 (NLT)

OPEN

Describe a time you felt the kindness of God.

PRAY

Pause for a few minutes to quiet your heart and mind. Then ask God for insight and direction as you study and reflect on this week's lesson.

CONNECT

Watch this week's video, then use the following questions for reflection and conversation. Consider these Scriptures as you study and reflect:

Luke 23:34-38; John 5:23-24; 14:12; 1 John 1:5-10.

1. What stood out to you from the video? Did anything specific catch your attention?
2. What's the connection between our sin against God and the sin of others against us?
3. How is receiving forgiveness related to offering forgiveness? How have you seen that play out in your life?
4. How does it feel to be forgiven?
5. What happens over time when we harbor bitterness?

6. How often do you experience God's peace? What are some roadblocks for you?

7. Describe a time you offered forgiveness and truly released that person for something they said or did. What are ways you leaned on God during that time?

8. When have you had difficulty offering or asking for forgiveness? What things are hard to forgive?

9. Are you currently harboring resentment towards someone? How can you release that to God and move forward in your life?

10. What are you holding onto that you need to release? What impact would that have on your relationships?

11. After forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration can be difficult. Share a time when reconciliation either happened or didn't and how you handled it.

12. Is there someone you need to ask or offer forgiveness?

GUIDED PRAYER

Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:15 that "*if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.*" Ask God to reveal anyone from whom you've withheld forgiveness. Pray over each other, asking God to help you release the hurt and replace it with His peace. Praise Him for the mercy and grace He gives us.

WEEK 6: PROTECTION

"And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one."

Matthew 6:13 (NLT)

OPEN

What pulls you away from God?

PRAY

Pause for a few minutes to quiet your heart and mind. Then ask God for insight and direction as you study and reflect on this week's lesson.

CONNECT

Watch this week's video, then use the following questions for reflection and conversation. Consider these Scriptures as you study and reflect:

1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:13-18; 1 Peter 5:8-9.

1. What stood out to you from the video? Did anything specific catch your attention?
2. Where have you taken your desires for God and attached them to people, places, outcomes and things, demanding they come through for you in a way they never can?
3. Think of an area where you struggle with temptation. What need are you trying to fill?
4. When have you experienced the influence of Satan? What in your life is being attacked?

5. Have you ever tried to get closer to Jesus but felt like something was in the way? If so, can you identify what that was? Explain.
6. How can you use Scripture and prayer to help overcome temptation?
7. What does Proverbs 3:5-6 say will happen when we acknowledge God? What correlation does this have with keeping away from sources of temptation?
8. When tempted, what other tools can you use to grow closer to God?
9. Describe a time God helped you overcome temptation.
10. How would your relationship with God be different if you were more aware of the enemy?
11. In what ways do you need God to rescue you?

GUIDED PRAYER

Thank God for His protection and power that allows you to resist the enemy's temptations. Ask Him to reveal any areas of weakness. Pray together for strength to face the challenges you encounter.

WEEK 7: GUIDED PRAYER

OPEN

What's been one of the most helpful aspects of this series about prayer?

PRAY

Pause for a few minutes to quiet your heart and mind. Then ask God for insight and direction as you study and reflect on this week's lesson.

CONNECT

Watch this week's video, then use the following questions for reflection and conversation. Consider these Scriptures as you study and reflect: Philippians 4:4-9; Colossians 4:2-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

1. What stood out to you from the video? Did anything specific catch your attention?
2. What resonated with you most during this series about prayer? What will you take with you?
3. How has this series helped you understand the purpose of prayer?
4. How has your prayer life changed during this series?
5. Which aspect of the Lord's Prayer do you think you need to grow in understanding and incorporating into your prayers?
6. How are your core beliefs about who God is and what you believe about yourself shaping/driving your prayer life?

7. What would praying more continually throughout the day look like?
8. How does it either encourage or challenge you to know that prayer is both a responsibility and a privilege?
9. How have your doubts and fears kept you from praying? Describe a situation when your doubts and fears led you into a deeper, more intimate prayer time.
10. What roadblocks get in the way of having more intimate conversations with God?
11. Each part of the Lord's Prayer is an admission of surrender. How can prayer keep you from trying to control your life and circumstances?
12. How will you continue growing in your union with God?

GUIDED PRAYER

Read the Lord's Prayer out loud. Reflect on each section and remember all God has revealed during this series. Celebrate how your prayer life has strengthened and grown.



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580 Brookwood Point Place • Simpsonville SC 29681
864.688.8200 • brookwoodchurch.org