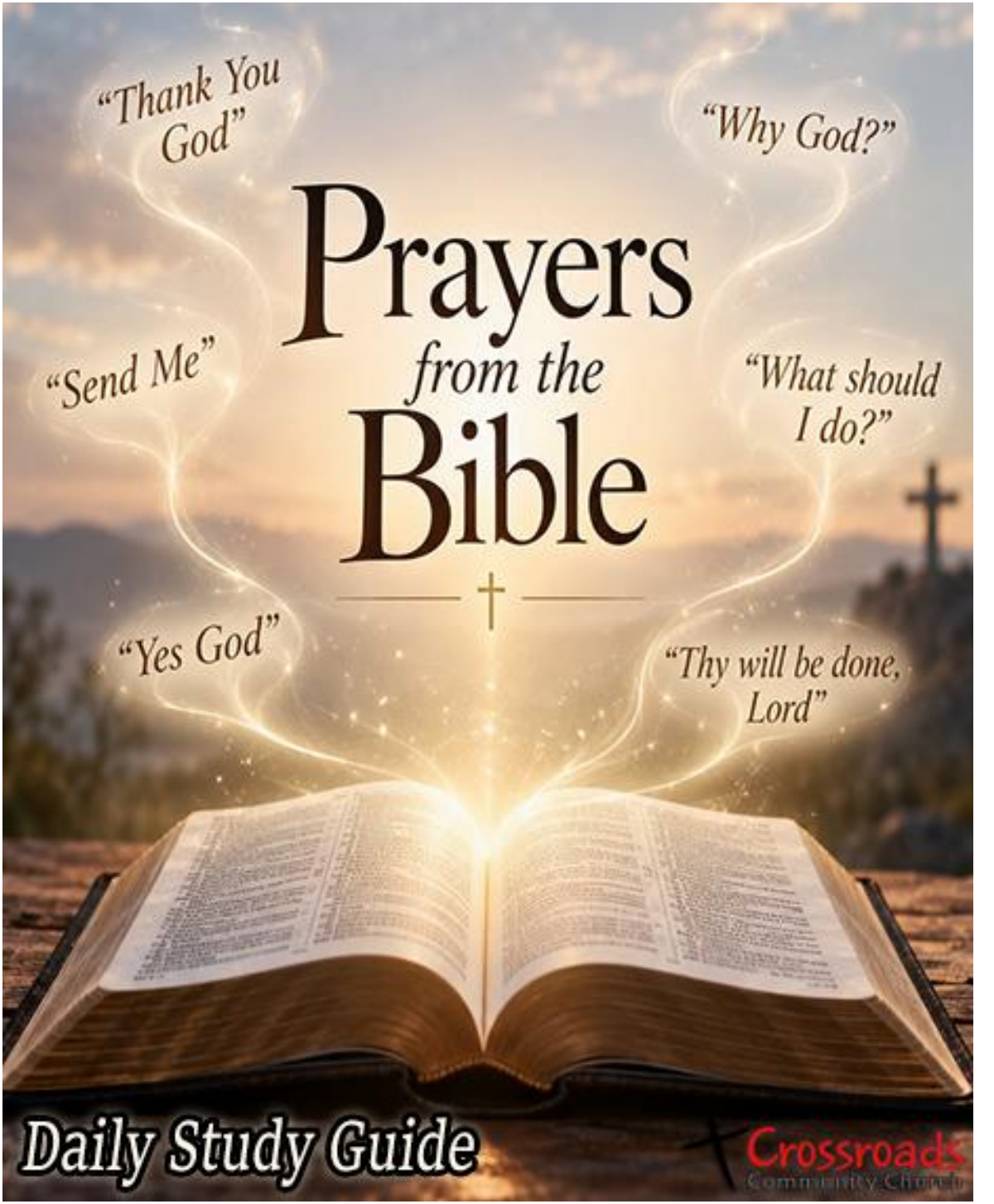

"Thank You God"
"Why God?"
Prayers from the Bible
"Send Me"
"What should I do?"
"Yes God"
"Thy will be done, Lord"
Daily Study Guide
Crossroads
Community Church

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Welcome to Crossroads Community Church Study Guide, we are glad you joined us!

We offer this series study guide to be used as a resource for deeper understanding in tandem with weekend messages and it is our hope that you will find this useful in your faith journey and spiritual growth.

We believe The Bible, God's word, is inspired by Him, through the Holy Spirit and is sufficient for everything you need in life – *guidance, wisdom, strength, encouragement and HOPE.* His word reveals His nature and character and His plan of redemption through His Son Jesus Christ, through whom we can have eternal salvation when we choose follow Him. We also believe the Bible remains relevant in our world today and its power is experienced when personally and consistently applied and practiced.

Part of your journey may include choosing a Bible translation and there are many. To help you choose, it is important to know that a "translation" is a word-for-word while a "paraphrase" is thought- for- thought. If you are new to Bible reading or don't yet have one, we offer FREE Bibles that are English Standard Version translation – a very easy to read Bible. Other options are Bible Apps you can download to your phone, or sites like: www.Bible.org, www.biblegateway.com or www.blueletterbible.org.

We invite you to join us for weekend services:

Saturday Evening at 5:30pm. Question and Answer period after service.
Morning Social at 10:00am: A time to connect with others over coffee and donuts
Sunday Morning at 10:30am
Promiseland Kids' Ministry: Toddler – Sr. High, Sunday at 10:30 am offers Christian education and worship for children and youth

If you have missed a service, you can view it on our YouTube Channel, "Crossroads Ridgecrest", or go to www.crossroads-ridgecrest.org.

If you would like to see a catalog of past Study Guides by Topic that you can request, visit the Connections Counter to sign up.

If you have any questions or would like to make an appointment, please call (760)384-3333, Weds – Thurs. 10am-4pm, or email ccc@ccc-rc.org

WHAT IS PRAYER?

The easy answer is, prayer is the time we talk to God. However, many people aren't sure what that really means. What do we talk about? What words should we use? What can we say? What can't we say? These are all good and valid questions.

In this devotional, we will learn what prayer is AND what it isn't. We will use the examples of prayer from Jesus and others who went to God in good times and bad that we can use in our own prayer life.

The wonderful news is that God wants to talk to us as well!

Jeremiah 33:3 says, *Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.*

Using the prayer Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 6:5-14, we will learn about prayers of Thanksgiving and Praise, requests for needs, forgiveness and mercy and prayers for temptation, trials and persecution.

Although this is not an exhaustive list of prayers, we hope it will enrich your time with God as you go to Him in prayer.

Session 1

How to Pray

Chapter 1

Think: When you think of prayer, what comes to mind?

_____

How do you define it?

_____

What were you taught about prayer?

_____

A lot of us grew up knowing at least a few prayers… the Lord's prayer, a nighttime prayer, and a meal prayer, but beyond that we may not have ever experienced the wonder of true, real intimate prayer with our heavenly Father. For many people, prayer can either be elusive or life changing or something in between.

As we learn more about prayer in this devotional guide, we will discover the many ways we can pray, what we can pray for and the heart we should have when we pray. We will use the four distinct portions of what we know as The Lord's Prayer, how Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, as a guide for establishing some basics.

However, to begin, let's go back in time to learn about how prayer began. In Genesis, when God created man and woman, they enjoyed a real, personal, and intimate relationship; and communication between God and His creation was natural and common (See Genesis 1:26-29 and Genesis 3:8-13). After the fall of man, when sin entered the world, the relationship man had with God was damaged, and it also impacted relationships between people. By the fourth chapter of Genesis, we see the result… read Genesis 4:4-10, what took place in these verses?

_____

In no time at all, sin took hold of humanity and by the end of this chapter, we see a defining moment. Read Genesis 4:26, what did the people begin to do?

_____

In other translations, it says people began to "worship" the Lord. Scholars agree that this is the moment when a more intentional act of prayer and worship began. It seems that even though the relationship between man and God was hindered by sin, the desire to talk to and connect with Him remained. It also seems that "calling out to God" is a natural

response to the increase of sin! The more sinful the world became, the more people were compelled to call out to God. What are some reasons you call out to God?

_____

_____

Read: Matthew 6:5-8

Engage: It is not only important to know what prayer IS, but also equally as important to know what it ISN'T. Just before Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He warned them what not to do. What are His instructions in today's verses?

_____

_____

The Jewish tradition of prayer was three times a day; morning, noon, and night (See Daniel 6:10 and Psalm 55:17) but this was not meant to draw attention to oneself. By Jesus' time, some of the Jewish people were positioning themselves to be somewhere during the time of prayer where they could pray in public to be seen by others. Praying in public is not inherently bad, it is the motive behind it that is important. In verse 5, what is the reward these people receive?

_____

What are we to do instead in verse 6?

_____

Does this mean that whenever you pray you have to find a closet or private area? What does Jesus mean by "empty phrases" and "many words" in verse 7?

_____

_____

There are some who practice a type of chanting prayer where a word or words are repeated over and over. In today's church this is called contemplative prayer (www.gotquestions.org/contemplative-prayer.html) and is a type of prayer that is more of a mystical experience and has no biblical foundation. There are also those who make a long pretense of prayer using big "Christianese" words to sound impressive. God doesn't need or want this type of shallow prayer. It is true that some are gifted by the Holy Spirit with what is called intercessory prayer, or praying on behalf of others, and

can spend hours in prayer (See Romans 8:26-27, Luke 2:36-37) but the motive is focus on God and others.

In this devotional, you will be encouraged to write prayers to the Lord focusing on what was learned. Today we focused on the start of prayer and how not to pray. Before we dive into what Jesus taught about prayer, take some time to write a prayer below, asking God to examine your motives in prayer and how you would like your prayer life to change.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *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. 6 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 6:5-6*

Chapter 2

Think: It is important for us to understand that even as Christians, we still sin. The true believer does all they can to avoid temptation and sin, but the hard truth is that even as a new creation spiritually, we are still wrapped in a body of flesh. The point is what is our attitude about this? Do we shrug it off and treat it lightly or do we understand the need to confess and remove temptation? This is important because unrepentant sin hinders our prayers!

Read: Psalm 66:16-19

Engage: In these verses, what does King David want to teach us about prayer?

_____

According to verse 18, what prevents God from hearing our prayer?

_____

(Also see Isaiah 1:15)When we pray, we are entering into God's presence and so we must check ourselves when we do. King David understood that going to God stained with sin wasn't the problem – that's how we all come to God, with the need to be washed clean by the blood of Christ! We also come to Him in our struggle against sin asking for the strength to fight. The problem occurs when we want to approach a holy God while knowingly holding on to sin and expecting Him to help us. This means, before we ask God for anything, we must examine our heart for any sin we are refusing to let go of – we see it but choose to do nothing about it. This is not only about sins of commission like anger, lust, or gossip, but also the sins of omission like apathy or doing nothing to grow in our faith.

Examine your heart for any sin you have been holding on to or ignoring, then write your prayer.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. Psalm 66:18*

Chapter 3

Think: Have you ever known a person whose life was so transformed by God that absolutely everything about them radically changed? How they think, talk, act, and respond to life has a new direction, passion, and purpose? Hopefully YOU are that person! Today's verses are written by a man who went through such a transformation, James, the half brother of Jesus. What is unique about this is that until Jesus was crucified, resurrected, and appeared to James, he didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah (See John 7:5). Yet James's change of heart was so radical that early church history says he was such a man of prayer that he had calluses on his knees so thick they looked like the knees of a camel! History also says that he was martyred for his faith, being pushed off the high point of the temple, but the fall didn't kill him, so they beat him to death, but all the while, he was praying for his attackers. This gives us insight into the passion behind his words today as it seems he can relate to the problem and solution. That is the beauty of how God uses our past to help us understand His plan of redemption as well as our ability to relate to and guide others to His incredible gift!

Read: James 4:1-10

Engage: As we learned yesterday, holding on to sin can hinder our prayers, but it also causes problems in other ways. How does this portion of scripture demonstrate this?

_____

_____

What was the problem with the prayers of the people he is addressing (vs. 2-3)?

_____

What was their focus?

_____

What does it mean to ask "wrongly"?

_____

There are many people who are not Christian who pray to God when they have exhausted all other options. For them, their prayers usually center around selfish requests, but the fact is they don't know any better. When we first become Christian, we don't know how to talk to God and that's ok – it is something we learn over time – but it is something we must strive to learn. James gives four things we must do in verses 7-8, what are they?

_____

_____

_____

_____

A rich prayer life starts with humility – God never rejects a humble heart. This world is competing for our attention and loyalty and there are things in this life that have our full attention – things that may hinder our prayers that we don't realize are there. The only way we can know is to humbly come before God and let Him expose these things… are you willing? This can be scary because God may show us something we don't like, but we must focus on the result He wants to accomplish in us. What is that result in verse 10?

_____

To be exalted is not necessarily an earthly kind that includes status or wealth – true exalting, and what should be our sole focus – is exalting to eternity with Him. *IF*, He chooses to also bless us financially or in any other material way, while we are on this earth, we must continue to practice humility.

Using the four actions in verses 7-8, Submit – Resist – Draw Near – Cleanse, write a prayer asking God to reveal and help you do this. Be specific in what, where and how you need to do this.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7*

Chapter 4

Think: We've covered some of what the Bible teaches about how not to pray and what can hinder our prayers. Today's passage, written also by Jesus' brother James, now teaches how we should pray and the difference of outcome when our heart is humble before God. In your own prayer life, what are some outcomes you are hoping for?

_____

_____

What are you seeing so far?

_____

_____

We will cover several areas in the next few weeks that James mentions here today, but one thing we must be careful of is not to think of God like a magic genie. Changing our heart should be done out of love for the Lord, not to manipulate Him into giving us what we ask for. In addition to this, what all Christians must learn and practice, is what is called praying in God's will. The best example of this came from Jesus when He was in the garden of Gethsemane just before He was crucified. Turn to Mark 14:32-36, as you read these verses, what did Jesus ask of His Father?

_____

in verse, 36 what did He submit to?

_____

One of the key components to prayer is the submission, or willingness to accept, to God's answer – even if it's not what we wanted. Again, we will cover this later, but there can be no better example than this one! Even though it was planned from the beginning of humanity that Jesus was sacrifice Himself to offer salvation to the world, it didn't stop Him from asking His Father if there were any other way. He completely submitted Himself to the will, or plans and purposes, of God… for you and everyone you love. Stop now and take a moment to thank Him from you heart.

Read: James 5:13-18

Engage: Praying in God's will simply means we want what He wants in any situation we are praying about. Yet like Jesus we are encouraged to pray big, bold prayers! As you read this portion of James's letter to the church, what does he encourage us to pray for?

_____

Here, the word "suffering" indicates a person going through a trial, hardship, or affliction. Clearly the word "ill" indicates physical maladies, and we can and should ask the elders of the church to pray for them. Crossroads has had the privilege of some of our church family asking to be prayed for and the elders have gathered around and prayed… for healing, successful surgeries, and so on. This can bring great peace to the one being prayed for! However, in James's letter, some of what he says can and has been interpreted to mean God guarantees healing. We know this isn't always the case, so what does James mean? Scholars agree that physical healing can happen but the more important spiritual healing that leads to salvation is also in view here.

Are you suffering hardship? Are you battling a physical illness or know someone who is? Have you been praying for them? Write your prayer below, using Jesus' and James example today, how can you pray God's will for them and/or yourself?

My Prayer:

Memorize: *And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." Mark 14:36*

Chapter 5

Think: The ability to communicate to anyone around the world 24 hours a day is a marvelous feat for mankind. If we were to study the history of communication, from letters to the pony express to the telephone and now computers, cell phones and so on, we would think that our ability to communicate clearly and accurately would improve – but has it? However, access doesn't always come with excellence. In fact, it seems the more technology offers multiple ways to communicate with each other and the world, the worse things get. Despite all this, for many people, knowing that reaching out to another is as

easy as a quick text, brings comfort in a world that can feel very lonely and isolated. Depending on your age, your experience with the changes in forms of communication will vary – for those who are older, how has texting and email impacted your connection with people?

_____

_____

For all of us, how frequently do you rely on texting or email to communicate?

_____

_____

Do you use texting for quick informational needs, or do you use it for important conversations? What would your life be like without a cell phone?

_____

_____

How do you think your cell phone and texting has impacted your communication overall?

_____

_____

Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:12–24

Engage: In ancient Bible times, letters were the only way for the churches to communicate with each other. The Apostles and other church leaders would address issues and give instructions and encouragement through these letters, and they would be shared with other churches. Today's verses come from a letter to the church in Thessalonica and this chapter is addressing what to look for when Christ returns. It is also an encouragement for godly living while they (and we) wait. At this point you may be asking what this has to do with prayer. As you read through these verses, list the instructions that are given.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do these apply today? What are we instructed to do in verse 17?

_____

How frequently?

_____

The life of a believer should demonstrate all these qualities and actions throughout the day, and when it comes to prayer, like our cell phones, it is something we have 24/7. God was the first 24-hour hotline! We are told to pray without ceasing, but what does this mean? We know we can't always stop what we're doing to pray but we can talk to God anytime we need to – even in the middle of a conversation with someone! Often called "open eye" or "popcorn" prayers, these are prayers we offer when wisdom, patience, or strength is needed in the moment, but they can also be a simple "thank you" when you receive a blessing. Do you currently do this? If so, how does it help you?

_____

_____

To pray without ceasing is living in the constant awareness that God walks with you at all times and you have access to Him for all your needs, concerns, questions, and praises. We should have consistent times of more formal prayer, but we now know that prayer can also be that open comm line to the Lord and He can be reached whenever we need Him! How can this encourage those who feel isolated and lonely?

_____

_____

How does this encourage you?

_____

_____

Our prayers throughout the day may often be focused on asking God to help us live the way these verses tell us to. As you write your prayer below, ask God to help you with this and thank Him that He gives you the ability to do so by the power of the Holy Spirit in you. Additionally, if you are not in the practice of talking to God throughout your day, what can you do to start?

_____

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

Chapter 6

Think: When you have gone through an extremely busy or trying season, how do you refresh and unwind?

_____

_____

Some like to take time off and go away for a few days while others like to decompress at home. There are many ways a person can renew themselves, but there is one way that is the only way our minds, hearts, and spirits can be truly renewed… PRAYER!

What we have studied so far has focused on us going to God to tell Him what we think or need. Today we will focus on what God wants to say to us through prayer. However, this is not meant to say that we will hear an audible voice, but leadings or promptings through the Holy Spirit. What we may not realize is that prayer is as much listening for God as it is talking to Him.

Read: Luke 5:12-16

Engage: When Jesus began His earthly ministry, for three years He tirelessly taught His disciples and the crowds, He healed people, He cast out demons and ministered to the weary and lost. In today's verses, what took place between the man with leprosy and Jesus?

_____

What did Jesus tell the man to do and why?

_____

_____

The law Jesus is referring to is found in Leviticus 14 where God gave Moses instructions for those healed of leprosy. This demonstrates the fact that Jesus never went against the law of Moses the Pharisees accused Him of doing. After the man was healed, what was the result?

_____

Do you think Jesus ever got physically and mentally weary? Why/why not?

_____

_____

Even though He was the Messiah, He was also wrapped in a body of flesh that needed refreshing. He wasn't on a 9-to-5 schedule, didn't get weekends or flex-Fridays off, and people constantly surrounded Him to have their needs met.

Jesus experienced all the things we do, including mental fatigue. It may be hard to imagine but Hebrews 4:15 tells us that He can sympathize with us in every way. This should give us great hope that He not only understands our battle but has the key to endurance and overcoming the temptations and battles in life. He always shows us the way and today He shows un in verse 16 of Luke 5… what is it?

It is noticeable in the Bible that before and after a time of intense ministry, Jesus would prepare and refresh through prayer. What do you think His prayers were like? We can only imagine, but there's a good chance that He prayed for wisdom, strength, or instruction but He also likely spent much time just listening to His Father, His Abba, for encouragement, assurance, and communion. When we have daily devotional, it is not a matter of "checking the spiritual box", but a time of real communion, or fellowship, with the Lord. Reading our Bible and praying to the Lord can be one of the most fulfilling and refreshing times in our day – preparing us for the day ahead as well as sitting with our Abba to hear from Him. As you write your prayer below, ask God to help you listen for His voice, His leading, His encouragement, and wisdom. Note how just spending time in communion with Him changes your outlook.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" Psalm 46:10*

Session 2

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Praise

Chapter 1

Think: At the time of this writing, the Thanksgiving holiday is just around the corner. As families prepare a special meal and enjoy time together eating lots of delicious food, there is likely little thought as to how and why this holiday exists. We were taught in school that the current thanksgiving we enjoy hails from the first meal between the Pilgrims and native Americans in 1621. It was made a national holiday in 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln as a way to improve relations between the North and the South as well as the US and tribal nations. However, the tradition of celebratory meals to express gratitude was not invented by man but established by God!

In the Old Testament, Leviticus 23, God set appointed feasts and festivals throughout the year that were intended to be a time of worship and thanks to the Lord for His provision as well as a time to remember all God had don't for His people and a time to atone for sin (see www.gotquestions.org/Jewish-festivals.html).

This week we will focus on prayers of thanksgiving and praise. This is something we find all throughout the Bible, expressed for individuals, corporately by God's chosen people and even nationally by the kings of Israel. As was stated in the first week, we will be using what we know as the "Lord's Prayer" as our guide.

Read: Matthew 6:9-10

Engage: When you pray, what are the first words you say?

For many, prayer begins with, "Heavenly Father. For some it might be "Dear Lord", and others have been heard starting prayer with "Hey God". Have you ever wondered why we start this way? How did Jesus start the prayer today?

Prayer begins with addressing who we are praying to!

In the Jewish culture, to call God (YHWH) Father was unheard of. The word for Father here was an intimate word that indicated personal relationship and was saved for dads and their children – so to call God Father was a foreign idea to the Jews. What is unique about this is Jesus said "Our" Father, not My Father thus indicating that this intimacy of relationship could be enjoyed by anyone who wished! So as this prayer begins, it starts with a personal moment followed by the acknowledgment of God's glory and holiness. Why do you think it's important to address God first in this way?

Since God is the creator of all things, who holds the worlds and eternity in His hands, it is only right that we acknowledge and worship Him first – before we start making requests. We need to be reminded of His power and majesty to have the right attitude in our prayer. This takes us into the next verse regarding the kingdom and His will.

When we pray, we must also be reminded of His eternal kingdom and His will to be done in whatever we are praying for. His heavenly will is our earthly gain! When we can accept this, we are free to express complete gratitude and praise knowing that He is in control and His plans are perfect. How does this prepare us and adjust our mindset and worldview when we pray?

In your prayer below, express your heart of thankfulness that you, as a Christian, can call Him Father. Also include the desire to see God's will be done in whatever circumstance you are praying for.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Hebrews 13:15*

Chapter 2

Think: Have you ever had an experience where you were mentally and/or physically exhausted but had to continue moving forward? When we are in that moment, we doubt our ability to keep going, so we often ask God for the strength we need. Looking back, did you press on? How?

_____

_____

Hopefully, we can look back and see that it was God who kept us going in His strength and might.

King David was chosen by God to be king over Israel when he was a youth. He didn't take the throne for several years after being chosen, and during that time he endured more than a few trials. The king at the time, Saul, tried to kill him, he had many enemies who tried to kill him, and he spent years on the run and in hiding until the day he was able to rule.

David was a warrior, but he was also a musician and poet, and this is seen in the Psalms. They record many prayers and songs written to express his thoughts and feelings, lessons learned, and most importantly psalms of praise and thanksgiving.

Read: Psalm 21

Engage: In today's Psalm, what is David thankful for?

_____

We may not be blessed with the riches of King David, but we are blessed in many ways. What are some things in your life that you are thankful for?

_____

_____

_____

Do you recognize these are from God?

One of the amazing traits of David we can learn from is that he acknowledged the fact that the people who were after him were, in reality, enemies of God. So often when we encounter a person who dislikes us or persecutes us for our faith, we assume it's all about us! That is partially true, but the truth is they are enemies of God. When we know this, we are then able to respond to any insults or other forms of hurtful words or actions with

complete peace and love rather than defensiveness or retaliation. It is God's strength in us that we can do this and that is worthy of praise!

In your prayer below, write all that you are thankful for. Also thank Him for the strength He gives you and that God will deal with your enemies so you can respond in love and grace.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength! We will sing and praise your power. Psalm 21:13*

Chapter 3

Think: If you had to describe God, what words would you use?

_____

_____

For many people, God is described as love, mercy, grace, forgiving, provider, holy, etc. Those are good and true, but the focus is on what He ***does*** rather than on who He ***IS.***

Now write the words you would use to describe Him based on *WHO* He is. Now we might include words like; all-knowing, all-powerful, eternal, good, just, perfect, and holy. The truth is, there aren't enough words in the world to describe all of God!

Read: Psalm 95:1-7

Engage: It is easy to be thankful when everything is going well, and good things are coming our way. However, there are times when we need to sit in God's presence and thank Him for being… Him! In today's reading, King David expresses this a specific way. List the reasons he gives to sing praise to the Lord.

_____

_____

_____

In the first verse, how is God described?

_____

In ancient times, high cliffs and mountain walls (rocks) were often a place of safety and protection. During David's life he often sought protection among the mountains and in caves, so the word "rock" here literally means rock, or cliff. God provided protection for David through nature. David's focus wasn't on the literal rock but the God who created that rock for Him. In our life, there are times we feel like we need protection, a safe place. Briefly describe a time in your life when you experienced that.

_____

_____

_____

Did you look to God for protection? Why/why not?

_____

_____

_____

If you did, how was that protection provided?

_____

_____

David gives us a wonderful example of how we can praise and thank God for who He is – period. We will continue to explore other aspects to be thankful for, but today as you write your prayer below, simply focus on who He is as God. (For more on this, go to: www.gotquestions.org/Rock-of-salvation.html)

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Oh come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Psalm 95:1*

Chapter 4

Think: In our time, the issue of trust is a difficult subject. When people are hurt, their trust is challenged and with good reason. There are a lot of people and things we can't trust… the news, politicians, the internet, social media, sometimes even friends and family. All of this can also impact our ability to trust God. Do you trust God completely? Why or why not?

Sadly, so many people have been hurt by the church that they walk away from the one source we can trust in – God. If you have been hurt by someone in the church, please know that they aren't a reflection of who God is. there are many people in the church who are in various stages of faith, and even those faithful to God still make mistakes. Our prayer is that this won't be an obstacle to anyone's faith, and we are here to talk through this if you or someone you know needs a little help.

King David had many reasons not to trust people, but he knew the One he could trust completely – God! Our trust in Him transcends any and all other trust issues we may have.

Read: Psalm 28:6-9

Engage: In Hebrews 13:15, we are told that the sacrifice of praise is the fruit of our lips. Why do you think it is called a sacrifice?

_____

In the Old Testament sacrificial system, the sacrifice brought to the Lord was to be perfect and without blemish (in the case of animals) or the first and best of the harvest and other offerings. The importance of this is the attitude in what we bring to God. Even when we praise Him, whether in prayer or song, we must bring our best to Him, uncontaminated by anger, jealousy, unforgiveness, etc. This was so important that in Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus taught that we must reconcile with anyone who has something against us before we can offer our gifts and sacrifices to God.

Again, we see an example in the Psalms of giving thanks and praise to God even in difficult times. How is this expressed in verse 6?

_____

In verse 7, how is God described?

_____

What does David say about trust?

_____

There will be those moments in life that in spite of what's happening, our sacrifice to God is praise because we know we can trust Him.

Additionally, in today's verses as well as yesterday, David uses sheep and shepherd as an example of the relationship between God and His people. Before David was king of Israel, he was a shepherd

and he often refers to this in his writings. The sheep – shepherd relationship is a perfect example of trust in a relationship. Sheep trust their shepherd for every need… food, water, and protection from enemies. The shepherd lays his life down for his sheep and they will only answer to his voice when called. This is the kind of trust we can have in God! In your prayer below, thank God for all the reasons you can trust Him. If you struggle with this, ask Him to help you learn He is completely trustworthy. When you give Him thanks and praise, be mindful of your attitude in it as you are bringing a sacrifice to Him.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Hebrews 13:15*

Chapter 5

Think: If you have spent much time reading the Bible, you may have noticed some repetition. That is not an accident or meant to be boring! You may have also noticed that in life, history repeats itself and we are doomed to repeat it if we don't learn from it. What is something you need to be reminded of consistently?

_____

All of humanity suffers from poor memory, especially when it comes to matters of faith. God's own people often had to be reminded of all He did for them because they so quickly and easily strayed from obeying Him. We see throughout the Bible that there are songs, prayers, and declarations that are similar, for the purpose of reminding people throughout the generations of God's goodness and our need to live faithfully. In today's Psalm, you will see this declaration by David reminding Israel of God's goodness and activity in their history. For another great example of this, read Psalm 106.

Read: Psalm 107:1-22

Engage: As you read this Psalm, what were the reasons and moments David gave to praise the Lord?

_____

_____

As we've already mentioned, praise is a sacrifice and we must be able to look at our past, even the ugly and sinful parts, to remember and remind ourselves how God saved us. What was a time in your life where you can look back and see that God was at work and saved you?

_____

_____

_____

What did you learn?

_____

_____

_____

Many of us have some frightening and painful stories, but we can be thankful that God saved us when we called to Him. As you write your prayer below, give thanks and praise God for all the times in your life God has been there for you or spared you from sure pain or damage. The key is not to focus on the situation but praising Him for saving you and teaching you through it. It is also important that we don't take God for granted and continue bad history assuming He will always pull you out of the fire. If we continue to push and go our own way, He will let us – but only for the purpose of bringing us back to our senses.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. 1 Corinthians 10:11*

Chapter 6

Think: When you see a beautiful sunrise or sunset, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

_____

The colors and the patterns in the clouds can be overwhelming and inspire a moment of praise! But have you considered that we aren't the only ones who praise God? God created the earth, the heavens and all living things so we shouldn't be surprised that we are not alone in this. In fact, there has been a growing interest in plant music – taking the plants natural electrical and biological activity and attaching electrodes to translate it into sound. Does this mean the plants are really singing? If you're the plant person who sings to their plants, then maybe they are. The truth is all creation praises its creator whether we realize it or not.

Read: Psalm 19:1-6

Engage: Even without vocal cords, God's creation worships and praises Him through their beauty. The mountains seem to reach up to Him, the streams flow with the rhythm of a worship song and the birds each have their own melody praising Him. In Psalm 19, David expresses this beautifully… in these verses, how does creation praise Him?

_____

_____

We are also given a glimpse of praise and worship in the heavenlies. Read Isaiah 6:1-3, who is praising God?

_____

Describe the angels and their worship. When God is so much more than we can imagine or put words to, our only response should be HOLY, HOLY, HOLY!

Ridgecrest may not be the most beautiful city in the world, but we do have some of the most breathtaking sunrises and sunsets. We have a beautiful view of the Sierras and are just a short drive away from some of the most amazing rivers and lakes. If you live in Ridgecrest, God intends for you to be here. In your prayer below, thank God for Ridgecrest. Take time to really look at the beauty of nature in our desert community and thank Him. The next time we have a moonless night, go outside and look into the night sky and see the expanse of stars – all of which He knows by name (Psalm 147:4)!

My Prayer:

Memorize: *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Psalm 19:1*

Session 3

Prayers for Daily Needs

Chapter 1

Think: In today's economy it is common for people to worry about the cost of food, gas, and other essentials. However, the worry and stress of being able to pay bills and feed our family isn't a new one. In Jesus' time, if a person had a physical disability and couldn't work, they often begged at the temple to earn money. In Ridgecrest, many people continue to struggle to make ends meet and the challenge of homelessness continues to grow.

Several churches, including Crossroads, have food pantries and/or meals to help support those in our community who struggle to buy food. The Joyful Bites ministry at Crossroads provides snack boxes for kids, Senior Baskets, and Meals to Go on a regular basis to show God's love and provision. The Salvation Army continues to try to meet needs for food and utilities as well, but even local resources and churches are feeling the pinch. If you are interested in how to support this and other local ministries, contact the church Weds – Fri at (760)384-3333.

Read: Matthew 6:11

Engage: As we continue to look to the model of prayer Jesus gave His disciples, we come to verse 11. What does this portion of prayer focus on?

_____

When God rescued His people from Pharaoh in Egypt and brought them through the wilderness, He provided food for them. This food was called *manna* and God provided what they needed each day. Read Exodus 16:4-5, what are God's instructions for gathering the manna?

_____

What was His purpose?

_____

Our faith in God is always tested when trusting that He will provide what we need – it's an exercise in trust and obedience. Our challenge is in the expectations. Just like the Hebrews in the wilderness, we must learn to be satisfied with what God gives us on a

daily basis. We can and should have long term goals, but we must also be thankful for His daily provision.

Do you worry about finances, food, bills, etc.? Do you trust that God will provide? What are your expectations?

_____

What is your role in this?

_____

As God provides, we must be faithful to not overspend or spend on things that are unnecessary, especially if finances are tight. “Keeping up with the Jones’s” has brought many to financial ruin.

As you write your prayer below, thank God for providing for you. Examine your perspective and motive for asking God to provide for your needs as well as how you currently handle finances. Ask Him to show you if anything needs to change and help you be completely satisfied with what He has given you.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content. Philippians 4:11*

Chapter 2

Think: As we face hard times financially, one of the first things that may change is our generosity toward others. We tend to pull back on donations to charities or tithing, or we may feel more protective over what we do have. Have you ever experienced this? If you have done this, what was your motive?

_____

This concept can even be true of our efforts to share the Gospel or serve on a ministry team. As our schedules become increasingly overloaded, we tend to pull back on things we don't see as important as others. Often as families with children grow busier with extra-curricular activities, volunteering and bible study decreases. Although we do experience seasons of life that are busier than others, if we stop serving God, studying His word with others, or even coming to church, we are cutting off the one thing we need most to stay sane! In the parable of the Sower, Jesus taught that the seed that was sown among the thorns was the examples of the person who received the word but the cares of the world choked them out and they were unable to produce any spiritual fruit (Matthew 13:18-23). Part of the challenge in these seasons, is trusting that God will provide all we need to continue to be fruitful in our faith while maintaining balance in our personal life. Easier said than done!

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Engage: As you read today's verses, view them from both the material view and the spiritual view. Take some time to evaluate how you are doing in these areas right now. This isn't meant to condemn, but to be honest with yourself. How do you prioritize your life? Do you find that the busier you get the more you need God or do you spend less time with Him? If you are challenged financially, do you maintain your generosity as best you can or do you decrease or stop all together?

In today's reading, what is the point stated in verse 6?

_____

Regardless of the amount or time given, what should our attitude be?

_____

What does God provide in verses 8-11?

How does it encourage you to know that God can supply you with all you need to be generous in every way?

As you write your prayer below, thank God that He will supply you with everything you need to generously sow into others. Think about the ways you can or want to do this and pray specifically, thank Him, for the time, ability and resources to do this.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *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*

Chapter 3

Think: The latest statistics from the World Health Organization in 2023 state that approximately 470 million people suffer with some form of anxiety disorder. This was just as the world was trying to get back to "normal" from a few years of Covid and all the fear and horror that came from that. However, ever since then, it seems it has been one disaster after another and with technology giving us the bad news 24/7, our minds never get a break. It's no wonder people struggle with anxiety so much!

In this, we should understand that the general term for anxiety is to worry about something – often a perceived worry, but also often a real concern. This doesn't include several terms for anxiety used by the psychological community.

Once again, we find this is not a new phenomenon for people. Biblically speaking, to be anxious about something was to care about or have concern for something, however if people focus on the problem consistently, they can become consumed with worry until it impacts their daily lives.

Worry and anxiety are a normal part of being human and is not in itself a sin; it is when we allow it to drive our decisions, attitude, take over our thoughts, or prevent us from normal activities that it becomes a sin issue. This is a caution for Christians… if we claim to follow Jesus, but are a slave to worry, what kind of testimony do you think this presents to the world?

Do you think it gives hope to those watching? If a person is new to Christianity, or struggles with anxiety, fear, or worry they can have great hope that God can heal them and give them the tools needed to overcome these very powerful feelings!

In today's verses, the apostle Paul gives the best "formula" to overcome worry and anxiety, and part of the purpose isn't just to make us feel better but present a better testimony to those watching us.

Read: Philippians 4:6-9

Engage: The apostle Paul knew a thing or two about anxiety. He suffered a great deal for the name of Christ (See 2 Corinthians 11:23-28) as well as his concern for the churches he established. So, his instructions on how to overcome anxiety come from experience… in verse 6, how does he teach us to pray?

A prayer of supplication is a humble request for our needs. Some people struggle with the fact that if God knows everything why we need to ask. Consider this… parents know their child needs food, comfort, or assistance, but will often wait for the child to ask for these things. Why?

_____

_____

It's about relationships and learning to recognize need and our own limitations. Paul encourages us to make our requests but with what?

_____

Why do you think asking with thanksgiving is important?

_____

_____

This goes back to trust and knowing God. Rather than always being worried that He won't answer our prayers or meet our needs, we can be thankful He always will – even if it's not the outcome we hoped for. We know He will always do what is best for us (our spiritual growth) and the situation (His glory) and it is *that* knowledge that guards our heart and mind in Christ. (See www.gotquestions.org/prayer-of-supplication.html)

Paul then goes on to give details about how to change our mindset when we find ourselves hyper focusing on our worries. Write each thing we are to think about listed in verses 8-9.

_____

_____

Why do you think these are an important part of the process?

_____

_____

What is happening here is the deliberate shift of focus from the problem to something better. Even modern psychology has stumbled onto this and found it useful. However, Paul is specific about the things to focus on – godly things not just random things. The practice of this not only helps our thinking but teaches us to focus on the things of God and the hope He promises!

In your prayer below, write your specific request to the Lord, with thanksgiving. Then using each word Paul uses (true, honorable, etc.), write how each word can be applied to the details of your prayer. In the future, if you are in a battle with anxiety (or depression, lustful thoughts, gossip, anger, etc.), practice these verses.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6*

Chapter 4

Think: There is no end to the confusion and misinformation about prayer. There are some secular, or "spiritual" advisors that will tell people it is wrong to pray for the same thing all the time. What do you think? There are also some in the Christian church who believe that to pray for the same things consistently means a person lacks faith. However, we see some examples in the Bible that we can look at and learn from. Turn to Luke 2:36-38, who do these verses talk about?

_____

What did she do night and day?

_____

These verses follow the account of Joseph and Mary bringing the infant Jesus to the temple as required by the law of Moses. Anna was a prophetess looking for the day the Messiah would come – and she was able to see it happen! Do you think this was what she was praying for each day? Is there anything wrong with that? Should we be praying for His return daily? What are some things you pray for every day?

_____

_____

Even though we see that we can pray daily for the same thing, there may be times, God makes His decision clear in certain matters and to continue to pray for them is not required. Again, we will learn from the apostle Paul.

Read: 2 Corinthians 12:7–10

Engage: Do you or someone you know and love need physical healing? Do you pray for healing? How often?

_____

Has God answered that prayer?

This is one of the most difficult situations. We want perfect health for ourselves and our loved ones… why is that?

_____

Obviously, physical or medical conditions can make life painful and difficult, but have you considered that if God says "no" to healing, there is a reason? In today's verses, what caused Paul's affliction?

_____

What was the purpose?

_____

How many times did he ask God to heal him?

_____

What was God's answer?

_____

How did Paul handle that?

_____

We may have the privilege of knowing people who are amazing warriors, demonstrating peace and joy while struggling with severe health issues. They see it as an opportunity to glorify God, but do you think they have also prayed for healing? If you or someone you know has consistently prayed for healing and it seems the Lord is saying "no", at what point do your prayers change from "please heal me/them" to "please use me/them"? Are you able to look at your situation and recognize that without the "thorn" in your flesh you would be like Paul… prideful? Do you think you would cling to God as closely if you were healed? How has your physical struggles impacted your relationship with God?

_____

_____

In your prayer, thank God for anything you suffer with. Ask God to help you have the same courage and heart as Paul, being grateful for your weaknesses. Also ask God to shine through you during this time.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12:9*

Chapter 5

Think: A frequent mistake or misunderstanding by believers is that how God worked in one situation is how He will work in all situations. This couldn't be further from the truth! In fact, as we read through our Bibles, it seems God "changes things up" quite frequently – why do you think He does that?

_____

_____

To put it bluntly, it is a way to keep us on our toes!

What typically happens when people get accustomed to doing, hearing, or seeing the same thing all the time?

_____

They can get bored or they lose passion or interest. In the Christian faith, we see repetition in the lessons, but there are always different details to show us that we can't assume how God will respond. This was the lesson for the disciples in today's reading.

Read: Mark 9:17-29

Engage: In the times of the disciples, there were many Jewish exorcists, and they believed you had to know a demon's name before you could cast it out. This made the situation in today's reading particularly difficult. What had the father asked the disciples to do for his son?

_____

What was the result?

_____

When the disciples asked Jesus why they couldn't cast the demon out, what did He tell them?

_____

This may seem a little confusing. Earlier, Jesus had given the disciples the authority to cast out demons, so why were they unsuccessful?

_____

They had a lesson to learn. We are not told what their lesson was, but we might be able to get an idea in Luke 10:17-20. In this passage, what were the disciples excited about?

What did Jesus tell them they *should* be happy about?

It has been said that it was possible that the disciples' failure to cast out the demon from the boy was because they began to become prideful in their abilities. However, this wasn't just a lesson for them, it was a lesson for everyone watching… and us.

A side note on this is that the King James and New King James versions of the Bible include fasting along with prayer. Although we don't see it in other translations, it doesn't mean it is wrong, it was likely due to the early church's emphasis on fasting. The point is that as we pray for daily or long-term needs, there will be those times that the kind of prayer required is one that draws our attention to the Lord and His desire for the situation over an extended period. This kind of prayer is more than a petition or supplication; it is a type of personal sacrifice to shift our desire and understanding for the situation. This isn't a guarantee, nor does it mean we spend all day every day in prayer and fasting, it is a matter of entering into God's presence where the focus is on Him and His will. In today's reading, it was God's will for the boy to be healed but it was also His will to teach the disciples that it wasn't always going to be easy.

If you have been praying for something for a long time, take a moment to check your attitude and motives. Have you ever fasted along with your prayer? If so, what did God reveal to you?

As you write your prayer, ask God to show you if your heart and perspective in the matter needs to change.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer." Mark 9:29*

Chapter 6

Think: Are you a list maker? If so, what is usually at the top of your list of things to do?

_____

For most, we put the most important things at the top – things that are time sensitive or require quick action. If this describes you, how do you feel when you can check things off your list?

_____

Does it make the rest of the day go more smoothly? Is your mind more at peace? If you are that person who is spontaneous and flexible, how do you prioritize when necessary?

_____

_____

A few days ago, we learned through the apostle Paul that the key to overcoming anxiety requires prayer, thanksgiving, and shifting our focus. Today, Jesus teaches us a couple of things we can focus on to help.

To remind us, the primary cause of anxiety is the intense focus on problems, real or perceived. We must always remember, we CHOOSE what we will give our attention and thoughts to and in the case of life coming at us, we can also choose to give it to the Lord. He already has a plan and He has gone ahead of us to show us the way.

Read: Matthew 6:25-34

Engage: This portion of scripture comes from the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was surrounded by thousands of people desperate for hope and help. Many of these people were very poor or taken advantage of by the Roman government and had to scrape just to get by. Just before these verses, Jesus was teaching on what true riches were – the treasure of eternity with God.

So many people, then and now, focus on temporal or immediate needs and neglect the need of the soul. Have you ever been so focused on a problem in front of you that you forgot to seek God in the situation? How did your mental health do?

_____

If you have struggled with this, you're not alone. As Jesus was teaching the crowd He was emphasizing the importance of priorities – rather than making life about pursuing material things, make life about pursuing God and our thoughts won't be consumed with worry. He used two examples, what are they?

_____

_____

How does He show God's provision through each?

_____

_____

What is His point in verse 33?

_____

Seeking God first includes prayer. It is a life devoted to prioritizing God in every aspect and determining to focus on Him and His righteousness as much as we can throughout our day. Is God your priority? How is that demonstrated in your life?

_____

Jesus is teaching us that when we put God first, seeking Him through prayer, bible study, serving, and watching how He provides for His creation, everything else will fall into place. To be clear, Jesus is NOT teaching that we should stop working or sit around doing nothing while we wait for God to hand us what we need. He is saying, study the birds and how they depend completely on God. They don't worry about food or stress about the future. He tells us to look at how beautifully God dresses the flowers which are temporary, so we don't

need to worry about Him clothing us. Interestingly, in the beginning God created food for man before man was created. Not only that, but the first thing He did after the fall, was provide a covering or "clothes" for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness.

It is incredible to think that from the moment of creation, our dependency on God is clear and obvious. He loves His creation so much, He will always provide what is needed so how can we do anything other than make seeking Him and His righteousness our top priority?

Lastly, Jesus says something that is not only profoundly true but a little funny. What does He tell us in verse 34?

It is amazing that 2,000 years ago Jesus was teaching us not to take on tomorrow's problems today. This leaves no doubt that the Christian life is not a life without problems, so don't be surprised when you think everything is smooth only to see that next bus heading your way (1 Peter 4:12)!

As you write your prayer, note how you plan to seek God first and His righteousness in every aspect of your life. This is always easy to do when life is smooth, so write your plan with a view to how you will seek Him first during trials and tribulation.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you 1 Peter 4:12*

Session 4

Prayers of Forgiveness

Chapter 1

Think: In the Old Testament, forgiveness of sins was done through the high priest of the temple and required an animal sacrifice – the shedding of blood. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that under the law, without the shedding of blood there was no forgiveness of sins. When Jesus sacrificed His life on the cross, He was the final sacrifice, and it is His blood that cleanses us from sin. There is no other way. This is wonderful news for us, however we must not think that because we are forgiven, we are all done.

There are many people who gladly accepted this gift from God, but struggle, and often refuse, to extend forgiveness to others. Do you or have you ever experienced this? What is a reason a person is unwilling to forgive?

_____

_____

This week, as we study the portion of the Lord's prayer on forgiveness, we will learn the importance of giving to others what we have been freely (and undeservedly) given.

Read: Matthew 6:12

Engage: In this verse, what does Jesus say we can ask for?

_____

What are we to also do?

_____

At this time, Jesus had not yet been crucified, so the Jewish people still lived under the law of sacrifice for sin. In most bible translations, the word used is "debt". This word means *something owed legally or morally*, and when it comes to our relationship with God, we DO owe Him in every way! The fact that Jesus is teaching His disciples that they can ask God directly for forgiveness may have been surprising to them. Before Christ, the people needed a mediator between them and God in order to approach Him, so the idea that they could ask God to forgive their moral debt was a wonderful gift, but it doesn't come without a cost. Although biblically speaking, the cost was blood sacrifice, for us today, when it comes to forgiving others, we still must make a sacrifice. What do we sacrifice when we are forgiving someone who has hurt us deeply or we have been wronged in some way?

_____

It will cost us our pride and selfishness when we must forgive someone. We often wrestle with the desire for justice for ourselves, but when we think about the fact that Jesus went to the cross willingly, without us deserving His sacrifice, we must follow His example.

Just like the way thanking God in our prayers will shift our view, committing to forgive as we have been forgiven should shift our motive and heart when we pray. In your prayer, be specific and thorough in listing the sins you want God to forgive. To be too general will minimize the severity of our sins and we lose the impact of how wonderful His forgiveness is. Additionally, if this list includes people you must ask forgiveness from, make a commitment to talk with them at your earliest opportunity. Finally, if there is anyone you need to forgive, or have been struggling with forgiving, take this opportunity to forgive them in your heart right away.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Matthew 6:12*

Chapter 2

Think: Forgiveness becomes an important subject when a person is facing death. While some people die continuing to reject God, there are also many "deathbed" confessions. There are also many people who wonder and worry about a loved one who died without knowing if they confessed Christ in time. This is a painful reality, and we wonder if there's a way to find out. The truth is there is no way for us to know on this side of eternity if a loved one made that commitment, but there is also great hope!

Read: Luke 23:32-43

Engage: In today's passage, we are at the scene of Jesus' crucifixion. There are two prayers in this passage, the first is found in verse 34. What does Jesus pray?

_____

Does this seem strange or unfair? There is so much here we don't have time to cover, but the understanding that Jesus prayed for the very people who nailed Him to the cross is astonishing! He demonstrates His command to love our enemies for all of us learn from. What does it mean they don't understand what they are doing?

_____

This doesn't mean they didn't know He was innocent, but that they were unaware of who He really was. In fact, before we submit to Christ, we don't understand the nature of our sin or even see sin for what it is, but we will still be held morally responsible. What is even more important to understand is that the Roman soldiers were not the only ones Jesus was praying for – YOU (and all of us) nailed Him to that cross! How is that possible? Jesus paid for the sins of all people past, present, and future, which means 2,000 years ago He died for your sins today. How does this impact you?

_____

_____

The question for us is can we also extend the same request for forgiveness on behalf of another person? Turn to 1 John 5:16-17, what do these verses say?

_____

_____

It seems the Bible teaches that in the case of another Christian trapped in a sin, we should pray for that person. There are also times we may need to get personally involved to help (See Galatians 6:1-5). However, the Bible teaches there is a sin leading to death that we should not pray for. Commentaries say this may apply to physical death brought on by sin, but spiritually speaking we can and should pray for the salvation of others. However, where this gets difficult is when we ask God to save someone who rejects Him and lives in defiance of Him, sinning willfully, and unrepentantly. Jesus already paid the price on the cross and God does all He can to make Himself available to people, but if a person refuses, we shouldn't ask God to save them from the judgement they chose.

Let's focus on hope now… Who is on either side of Jesus?

_____

In verse 39, how does one criminal react toward Jesus?

_____

What was the confession of the other criminal in verses 40-41?

_____

What did he ask of Jesus in verse 42?

_____

This was his prayer. What did Jesus tell Him in verse 43?

_____

It could be said this was a deathbed confession for this criminal and the result was amazing! However, it should be noted that he was truly repentant, not just trying to cover his bases. This is the hope that many parents, children, spouses, friends, and others hang on to for some who have died… the hope that in their last moments, they truly repented and confessed Christ. The hope is that even though it came at the moment of death, they will still spend eternity in heaven because of the grace of God.

In your prayer below, who are you praying for to be saved from eternal death?

_____

Is there hope for them? Of course there's always hope, but how can you pray for their salvation?

_____

Ask God to give you opportunities to talk to them about the love of Jesus and forgiveness of sins. If you need help with what to say, pick up the *"Am I Heaven Ready"* brochure at the Connections Counter or you can find it on our website at www.crossroads-ridgecrest.org, click on "Resources" then "Brochures and Guides"

My Prayer:

Memorize: *because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. Romans 10:9-10*

Chapter 3

Think: We all likely have that person in our life that we must forgive for the same thing over and over, day after day. If you do, do you ever feel like you want to stop? This goes back to day 1 where it was noted that people often struggle with forgiving others. In many cases, when a person continues to sin against us, we feel justified in withholding forgiveness. Why is that?

_____

It may be our form of punishment, or we may feel we don't have to anymore because the person doesn't deserve it. Either way, do we really have the right to put a limit on how many times we should forgive a person? How many times a day do you think God forgives you?

Read: Matthew 18:21-35

Engage: Just before we come to this scene between Peter and Jesus, He taught the disciples what to do when someone sinned against them. Turn to Matthew 18:15-17, briefly describe this process.

For those who struggle with forgiveness thinking it releases the offender from responsibility or consequences, we see that when it is a sin issue, it is absolutely appropriate to have a godly conversation to reconcile and hopefully correct the sinful behavior.

Peter continues the conversation by asking Jesus a question in verse 21… what is it?

Many Jewish rabbis taught that forgiving a person three times was the accepted limit, so Peter probably thought he was really doing well by offering up to seven! How does Jesus answer him in verse 22?

Jesus then explained the importance of this in the remaining verse. Briefly summarize what He taught.

Based on this story, how much does mercy have to do with forgiveness?

Mercy is the engine that drives forgiveness! It is God's mercy that compelled Him to offer His Son to pay our debt, and His mercies are new every day (See Lamentations 3:22-23). How does it impact you to know God's mercy toward you never ends?

_____

_____

What can you do to prevent taking this for granted?

_____

_____

The final verse from today, vs. 35, has a dire warning – what is it?

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Reading this, how does this help you understand the importance of forgiving others?

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How can you practice forgiveness from the heart rather than an act of lip service?

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Write your prayer today with a view toward the person you need to forgive from the heart who is also the person you must forgive several times a day every day. Take a moment to think of how you need to be forgiven each day and ask God and any other person for forgiveness. Thank God for His endless mercies that are new each day.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23*

Chapter 4

Think: When we talk about forgiveness, we tend to stay focused on our own personal issues. We don't necessarily think of asking God for forgiveness on behalf of a group of people especially if we don't include ourselves in that group. However, there are many examples in the Bible where a prophet, priest, or king would pray on behalf of the nation of Israel because of their rebellion and unfaithfulness – even if they weren't the ones needing forgiveness. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 tells us we are to pray for our leaders so we can live godly, peaceful lives. Today we will learn that we should also confess and pray for the forgiveness of our leadership and nation.

Read: Daniel 9:1-19

Engage: The nation of Israel was God's own chosen people. He saved them from slavery in Egypt and lead them into the promised land. One of His commands was to avoid taking on the practices of the nations around them by worshipping their pagan gods or marrying into other nations who did. The reason for this was to prevent the people from straying away from the Lord. Sadly, they didn't obey. Time and again they did exactly what God told them not to and worse yet, they often tried to live with a foot in both worlds… claiming to be God's people while also serving pagan gods.

By the time of this prayer of Daniel, Israel had been taken captive in Babylon in 538-539BC. This was one of a couple of times the Hebrew people would be taken captive as the consequence of their sin against the Lord, and in that group, there was always a faithful remnant – those who didn't worship pagan gods. Daniel was one of the faithful remnant.

Reading this prayer in today's passage, who is he praying for?

_____

What are the specific confessions?

_____

Who does Daniel include in these confessions?

_____

Do you notice that he says “we” and not “they”? Why do you think he includes himself in the sins of Israel?

_____

Now, re-read today’s verses but as a prayer for the United States. Do we fit the description in his confessions? It may be easy to disassociate ourselves from national sin, but looking at Daniel’s prayer, we should be encouraged to follow his example. Just because we may not have actually committed the sin, doesn’t mean we shouldn’t take responsibility. It is also important to note that the “calamity” Daniel speaks of in verses 12-13 is referring to the blessings and curses for obedience and disobedience God told Israel hundreds of years earlier in Deuteronomy 28, so they had no excuse for not knowing – and neither do we as a nation. In today’s prayer, write a prayer of confession and request for forgiveness on behalf of our nation. Pray for godly leaders and that we would return to the Lord.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 1 Timothy 2:1-2*

Chapter 5

Think: "*Get me out of this Lord and I'll serve you forever*" … many prayers like this have been offered by people in a sticky situation. Have you ever said this prayer? At the time you said it, did you mean it? Sometimes the prayer goes something like, "*Lord, forgive me of this sin and I'll never do it again*" … have you said this prayer? Did you mean it? At the time, we probably feel like we really do mean it and have every intention to do better but soon find ourselves repeating the cycle. We are taught that change comes with true repentance, which is true, but there is another key ingredient to lasting change, practicing godliness in the very area we struggle with. This is forgiveness and mercy that produces fruit.

Read: Psalm 51:1-17

Engage: Approximately 1,000 years before Jesus, the king of Israel, David, fell into temptation and had an affair with a married woman, Bathsheba. When she found out she was pregnant, David tried to cover up the pregnancy by bringing her husband Uriah home from battle hoping they would be intimate and people would naturally think the baby was his. However, Uriah refused to sleep with his wife, so David had him put on the frontline of the battle to be killed. Part of David's story is that God had to send the prophet Nathan to confront David in his sin, but when he did, David responded with true repentance. The entire story can be found in 2 Samuel 11 and 12.

What is unique about this is that David wasn't only repentant before the Lord, he was active in doing all he could to make sure it didn't happen again. Verses 1- 12 in today's reading is David's prayer before the Lord. What does David confess?

_____

What does he ask God to do?

_____

What does he ask God to NOT do?

_____

We must remember that willful and unrepentant sin will damage our relationship with God and grieve the Holy Spirit in us (Ephesians 4:30), and David's fear was that God would remove His Spirit from Him. Then in verses 13-17, what does David commit to do as a result of God's forgiveness and mercy?

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True repentance should produce fruit (See Matthew 3:8) that is evidence of true change. For David, his commitment was to teach people God's commands… basically he used his own experience and testimony to teach and encourage others. That is what God wants to do with us too!

Christians are saved from eternal death, we are forgiven, but we will still be tempted and often still sin. The hope is we will, like David, do all we can to avoid sin. When we do, not only should we have a heart of repentance but create a plan to practice godly living – which can include teaching others how to live godly. Our sin may not be as bad as David's, but God sees all sin the same – sin is sin whether it's a little white lie, gossip, foul language, or addiction. Our response should be a broken and contrite (humble) heart and growing in spiritual maturity through the process.

As you write your prayer, use David's example of confessing any sin you have had trouble overcoming or any sin you may have failed to recognize, then ask God for forgiveness. After this, commit to God your plan to avoid that temptation in the future and how you can practice godly living to avoid sin. How can you teach and encourage others?

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Matthew 3:8*

Chapter 6

Think: As we have learned this week, asking God for forgiveness requires we recognize our need for forgiveness for sin. Sadly, even the word *sin* is rarely mentioned in many churches as they choose to focus on the feel-good aspects of God and ignore the reason why Jesus sacrificed His life. In addition to neglecting the reality of sin, many, inside and outside of the church teach we also must forgive ourselves when we do sin. However, is that biblically correct? Is there any verse or teaching in the Bible stating we must do that? Proverbs 30:6 warns those who add to God's words will be rebuked and found a liar. Some have even said we can't forgive others until we forgive ourselves, however, that would ignore and contradict the statement Jesus taught His disciples at the end of the prayer. Turn to Matthew 6:14-15, what does Jesus teach?

_____

If someone is waiting to forgive others, for any reason, they are blocking God's forgiveness for themselves.

Read: 1 John 1:5-10

Engage: It is the responsibility of every believer to study the word of God so they are not deceived by unbiblical doctrine. The teaching of self-forgiveness, like self-love, is heresy but we need to know why. In today's reading, John, the apostle, reminds his readers about the truth of salvation, or living in fellowship with God. To say we are Christian but continue to practice sin, is not only deceiving ourselves, but calling God what (vs 10)?

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There's another truth in verse 9, what is it?

_____

Not only does God forgive our sins, He cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Here, the word *cleanse* means to purify, so if God forgives and purifies us, why do we still wrestle with feeling the need to forgive ourselves?

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The truth is that what we are experiencing are feelings of guilt and/or shame. This is normal and actually good. What do we call people who do bad things but feel no guilt, remorse or shame?

In the world of psychology they are called sociopaths. Assuming we are not sociopaths, how do we handle these negative feelings? First, we need to trust that we are truly forgiven when we are truly repentant – God's word tells us so. We can also know that God doesn't hold our past sins against us, turn to Psalm 103:12 and Isaiah 38:17. What do these verses say God does with our sins?

In Isaiah 38:17, for whose benefit was bitterness?

It is the grief, guilt, or shame we seek to get rid of that is the very thing we need to remember so we don't repeat the same mistakes. This also answers the false teaching that God gives and forgets. God cannot forget otherwise He wouldn't be God, but like the verses teach, He chooses not to look at our sin, nor does He ever hold it against us. If you are struggling with this, the question to ask is, have you asked God for forgiveness? If you haven't, now is a perfect time. If you have, then what do you need to learn through the situation?

You can take comfort knowing that the feelings will subside over time, but don't be surprised if a painful memory seems to come out of nowhere. This is also normal, but there are two things to consider: one is that Satan is the great accuser, so if you are beating yourself up or feeling condemned, it may be him trying to drag you back. Second is that God will sometimes remind us of a past sin for the purpose of helping us to NOT go down that path. If it is from God, it will encourage faithfulness to Him rather than self-loathing. For more on this subject, check out this link: www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/say-no-gospel-self-forgiveness/

In your prayer, thank God for His forgiveness. Also thank Him that we DON'T have to forgive ourselves because we are washed clean by the blood of Christ on the Cross and there is nothing more we can add to that.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back. Isaiah 38:17*

Session 5

Prayers for the Spiritual Battle

Chapter 1

Think: Everywhere we look in the world, there are things that tempt us… whether it is that last piece of chocolate cake or inappropriate and explicit materials, it is truly a spiritual battle.

God knows what we face and He can give us all we need to thrive in a world designed for failure. One of the greatest weapons we have to fight this battle is prayer.

Read: Matthew 6:13

Engage: Reading this final verse of the Lord's prayer, you might get the idea that God purposely leads us into temptation, but do you think this is true? Would it be in God's character to do so? The verse itself seems to answer the question… why would Jesus teach us to ask God to not lead us into temptation then deliver us from the evil one? Commentary suggests the sentence is asking for God to help us NOT to be lead into to temptation, but protected and delivered from the enemy. We will learn more about this tomorrow, but in the meantime, have there been times you have prayed that God would save or protect you from Satan and His attacks? What was the result?

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It is important for us to know that how God chooses to answer those prayer is His sovereign choice, but it will ALWAYS be what is best for us.

When we ask God to protect us from temptation and evil, we shouldn't expect that He will pluck us out of the situation and spare us any pain. In fact, there are times He will allow us to be tempted. Turn to 1 Corinthians 10:13, what does this verse say is common to all people?

_____

What will He not allow?

_____

What does He provide and for what purpose?

_____

This verse teaches that not only will God allow temptation, but it is under His control. He is faithful to not let us be overcome by it, which indicates His desire is for us to win the battle! There will always be a way of escape, but it is our responsibility to look for the door.

In your prayer today, thank God that He will protect you and give you all you need to win the battle of temptation. Ask Him to help you see His path of escape.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *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*

Chapter 2

Think: *"The devil made me do it!"* That is certainly a possibly, but for Christians, we can't use that excuse when we allow ourselves to be drawn into temptation. Have you ever succumbed to temptation only to ask yourself later why you did? Sometimes, temptation and sin seem to sideswipe us and take us by surprise, but today we will discover that we can recognize the triggers to temptation and win the battle! Today's reading expands on

yesterday's lesson and we will learn more about how temptation works and some ways we can overcome it through prayer.

Read: James 1:1-15

Engage: Whether we like it or not, the life of a Christian will have seasons of trials, tribulations, suffering, and temptation. So, it is wonderful that God gave us His word to teach us, encourage and equip us to endure these moments. In today's passage, let's start with verses 2-4 and 13-15 as a single topic. In these verses, how are we to view trials?

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What is their purpose?

_____

What do we learn about temptation?

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Looking at these verses, we learn that often what Satan uses to tempt us, God will use as a test to strengthen our faith. Have you ever had the experience where you were tempted by something, but were able to withstand it and grew in spiritual maturity? How did that impact you?

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One of the things we usually pray for is wisdom for the situation. Although these verses aren't a formal prayer, they are a lesson on how to pray specifically for this. In verses 5-8, what can and should you ask God for in a trial or moment when you are battling temptation?

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What should our attitude be in this prayer?

_____

This takes us back to the instructions Paul gave in Philippians 4:6 to make our request known, with thanksgiving. Fear and worry lead to doubt – the antidote is thanking God He WILL give you everything you need, and it is godly wisdom that is required to overcome trials and temptations. Where is godly wisdom found?

In this, the point is not necessarily to make the trial stop, or the temptation to go away, but to have the strength to walk through it with peace and joy and bring glory to God in the process.

As you write your prayer, note the current trial or temptation you are facing right now. Do you need wisdom? Pray with the confidence of knowing that God is with you, guiding, equipping and giving you the wisdom you need. Ask God to reveal to you any triggers or situations that are areas of temptation or if they are self-inflicted, and make a plan to avoid them.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Galatians 5:16*

Chapter 3

Think: In 1995, a film came out called "Babe". It was about a piglet on a farm who grew up around sheep dogs. In an effort to make himself useful to farmer Hogget and avoid becoming Christmas dinner, Babe learned how to do the work of a sheepdog. In the movie, the relationship between sheep and sheepdog was one of fear. At one point one of the sheepdogs, "Fly" needed to talk to the sheep to find out who killed one of the sheep. It is

stated in the movie, *"Fly decided to speak very slowly, for it was a cold fact of nature that sheep were stupid, and there was nothing that could convince her otherwise."*

Throughout history it has been said that sheep are stupid animals. What is the basis of this opinion? Sheep are known to wander, and they are defenseless, needing protection and guidance, but those aren't qualities of stupidity, they simply show their need for care. In fact, they are quick to recognize danger and will only follow the voice of their shepherd… to call them stupid is an insult to God and people. In the Bible, God is often referred to as a Shepherd and in John 10:1-18, Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd… of who?

Those who follow Him. If we are called sheep, what does that indicate?

Does it make sense that the Bible would call us stupid?

As believers, we can wander, we need protection and direction, but when we truly know our Shepherd, it is His voice alone we answer to and follow. That shows wisdom and trust! (www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-sheep-arent-stupid/)

Read: Psalm 23:1-6

Engage: Centuries before Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd, David (who became king over Israel) was a shepherd. He tended his family's flock of sheep, protecting them from dangerous animals, guiding them to clean water and meadows filled with good grass. He would have made sure they didn't become infested with insects that would cause them harm. In response, the sheep would only answer to his voice, would willingly submit to him for care, and place their trust and lives in his hands. Does that sound stupid or wise?

King David experienced numerous trials and persecution at the hands of others. He had many highs and lows in his life, but he knew who to look to for protection, guidance, and leadership. He knew whose voice to listen for and answer to. David was also a poet and musician and although today's Psalm may not fit the traditional model of a prayer, it has brought many people peace during times of affliction, suffering, trials, and persecution.

This Psalm reminds us of the great work Jesus does for us as a loving Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep and walks with them through the darkest valleys. As you read these verses, write what He does for you as your Shepherd.

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For the current trial you are in, read this Psalm out loud. Does it bring you peace? As a prayer, this Psalm is a reminder of what God has already done as well as will do rather than a request.

There is so much depth in these verses that we don't have time to cover. If you would like to study more on what each verse means, take some time to read this commentary by pastor David Guzik, https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-23/. He references a book called, "A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23" by Phillip Keller, and it is highly recommended. It is a small book that will change your entire understanding of how intimately Jesus cares for each one of His sheep. As you write your prayer today, write it with today's Psalm in view.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. John 10:11*

Chapter 4

Think: In our lives, we will experience all sorts of trials. Before we become Christian, our view and understanding of where these come from and how to handle them comes from a secular worldview. A secular worldview, by definition, is our understanding of the world around us and our approach to it based on human experiences and worldly wisdom. The challenge with this approach is first, God is not part of it, and second, it is deeply flawed and prone to constant change. If you are Christian, think back to how you handled conflict and trials before knowing Jesus. What was your understanding of why it was happening?

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What was your standard of working through them?

_____

Did you use "weapons" to fight?

The beauty of life with Jesus is we will gain and entirely different worldview – a biblical one. This worldview is based on God and scripture alone and because God never changes nor does He lie to us (See Numbers 23:19 and Hebrews 13:8) we can trust His instruction, guidance and wisdom. As a Christian, how has your worldview changed?

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_____

How do you view hardships and conflict?

_____

_____

How do you handle them now?

_____

Read: Ephesians 6:10-20

Engage: The book of Ephesians is a letter, written by the apostle Paul to the new and growing church in Ephesus. Part of this letter is instruction and encouragement on how to view and engage the enemy in the battles of life. Living under Roman rule, soldiers were a daily presence in the life of a Jew and/or Christian and they would be very familiar with their armor. As new believers, they needed to learn how to view persecution and the weapons they have to fight the good fight!

The first lesson is understanding who we are truly fighting. In verse 12, who does Paul say we are not fighting and who we are really fighting?

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This means when we are in conflict with our spouse or coworker, we are not really fighting them, but our enemy the devil and his minions. Knowing this, how should this change our battle strategy?

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Because the focus of this study is on prayer, we won't focus on what each piece of the armor represent, but Got Questions offers an article for you to read on this www.gotquestions.org/full-armor-of-God.html.

In verse 18, what does Paul instruct the people to do as a final point in their armor?

_____

There is some debate whether Paul is teaching that prayer is part of the Christian armor or not. Since it is not linked to an example of the Roman soldier's armor it can be seen that way, but here is something to consider. Armor, whether ancient Roman or medieval metal armor has fasteners to keep the pieces together. They would be leather laces or straps or links, rivets or fasteners. Since Paul instructs us to pray at all times, we might consider prayer to be the thing that holds our armor in place and keeps us connected to our Commander. This is such a powerful teaching that King Gustavus of Sweden in 1630's is known for his stand on this, that "prayer was his greatest weapon". He often lead his troops in prayer before he lead them to battle. Throughout the Old Testament, the kings of Judah who continued to follow God and His ways, would pray and go to God for wisdom and instruction ***before*** going into battle – maybe this is what King Gustavus understood.

Whether we view prayer as a piece of the armor or not, prayer is vitally important when we are in a battle! Do you find you pray more or less when you are going through difficult times? How does prayer help you?

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Combined with the knowledge that we are in the middle of spiritual warfare on a daily basis, how does this impact your understanding of the struggle of personal conflict, illness, and other trials of life?

Whether your prayer is focused on relational conflict, an important decision, or persecution write your prayer below from this view.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *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*

Chapter 5

Think: We frequently pray for other people… our spouse, family, friends, etc. What are some reasons we pray for them?

You may have written things like salvation, a health crisis, financial dilemma, or a problem with a child. We have also learned that we need to pray for those who lead us. The question for today is, do you pray for our church? If you serve in the church, do you pray for the pastors and elders? Do you pray for those you serve with? If you do, what do you pray for?

Read: Colossians 1:9-14

Engage: Today's reading is a portion of another letter written by the apostle Paul to a new and growing church. Write the specific things he and those with him are praying for.

This is a beautiful example of how you can pray for our church and especially those you serve/work with. One of the things we must remember is that churches are filled with people – normal, flawed people. Even though we may be saved, we still wear a body of flesh that is prone to sin and on occasion, there can be tension and disagreement between believers. Even Paul experienced this… turn to Acts 15:36-40. What happened in these verses?

We offer this example, not to condone conflict between believers, but to show it can happen. As long as it's not a sin issue, we can agree to disagree. The good news is that these men later came back together.

Even if, and especially when, we are either in this type of situation or know of people who are, how should we pray for them?

We should always want for others what God wants for them – to grow in maturity, grow in love for God and others, wisdom, knowledge, and producing fruit that lasts – walking in a manner worthy of the Lord. Lastly, if we are praying this prayer for others, should we also strive to be faithful in each of these areas ourselves? Using each thing Paul mentions in his prayer for the believers, pray this prayer for each person(s) you serve with at church as well as any other Christians you may know.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *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, 10 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; 1 Corinthians 1:9-10*

Chapter 6

Think: Have you ever wondered if the gods of any other religions ever prayed for their followers?

What makes Christianity unique from all other religions, among many other aspects, is the fact that no other religion in the world has a God who prays for His followers. Not only do we have an infinite God, we have a God who loves His creation so much He died to save us from our sins, and before He did this, He prayed…

Read: John 17:1-26

Engage: As we close this week, and our study on prayers of the Bible, we will finish with the most beautiful prayer ever prayed… the one called the High Priestly Prayer. This entire chapter is a recorded prayer of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ before He went to the cross.

Just before this, in John 16, Jesus was teaching His disciples that it was for their sake, and ultimately ours, He would return to heaven so the Helper, the Holy Spirit, could come and dwell in them. Then in the very next chapter, and apparently in front of His disciples, He prays. This prayer would be like no other they may have heard from Him. In the first 5 verses, what does Jesus state and ask for?

_____

In the remainder of the passage, who does He pray for?

_____

What does He specifically pray for?

_____

What do you think the disciples thought about this?

_____

Jesus didn't only pray for the disciples He personally called and taught – look again at verses 20 and 21. Who did Jesus include in His prayer?

_____

From this moment on, the Gospel of Christ has been passed down through the years and for each person who believed and became a disciple, then going on to disciple others, has led directly to you! this means before he was crucified, Jesus prayed for every person who was involved in you becoming a follower of Jesus, and He prayed for you and every person you will disciple. How does this impact you?

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Many people struggle with sharing the Good News, fearing rejection or the ability to adequately teach the basics of salvation. However, when you know the God of the universe

prayed specifically for you as you share His message, and the unity of all believers, does it encourage you or change your perspective?

As you write this prayer, continue to pray for the unity of the church and Christians everywhere. Also, if you have struggled with fear of talking to others about Jesus, thank Him in your prayer that He prayed for you and will give you the courage and words you need.

My Prayer:

Memorize: *"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 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 17:20-21*

P.S.: For those of us who grew up reciting the Lord's prayer may be wondering where the ending is… "for thine is the kingdom, the power and glory forever, Amen". There is evidence to suggest this was not part of the original Greek manuscript and was added later. This doesn't change the unchanging, infallible word of God. If you pray the Lord's prayer and end it with this doxology, that is ok! For a little more about this, go to: www.gotquestions.org/for-thine-is-the-kingdom.html