



**Practice What He Preached:
PRAYER!**

**40 Days of
Prayer 2017**

Welcome to the 40 Days of Prayer!

Practice What He Preached: PRAYER!

Easy, easy, easy. That's what it was like deciding this year's emphasis for the 40 Days of Prayer. Let me explain. Usually, deciding the theme is pretty challenging, requiring a lot of thought, prayer, and planning. But not so this year. Why?

Last summer at Harvest, I began teaching through the commands of Jesus in a series called "Practice What He Preached." If we are going to be Jesus's disciples, we need to (1) obey everything he commanded, and (2) train others to obey too. I studied the Gospels looking for specific commands of Jesus and found thirty-six specific instructions He gave to followers. As I organized the sermon series, I decided to work through the Gospel of Matthew first, then to add a few other commands that came from one of the other gospels. This series would go from July 10, 2016 to April 9, 2017, and we are about two-thirds of the way there! However, to plan for the 40 Days of Prayer, I set aside the commands of Jesus that relate to prayer, and *voila*, there were six, just enough for the six weeks of the 40 Days of Prayer! That is what we will be engaging with this year—the teaching of our Lord on prayer, comprised of six different commands that all of us disciples are called to obey and share.

Each week we will cover one of these commands, but the weeks are structured in a unique way: On Thursdays we will begin a "new week" with three days of preparation for the passage of the week (Thursday – Sunday) that will be preached on Sunday, and on Mondays-Wednesdays we will continue following up with and applying that passage. This means that the 40 Days of Prayer—FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER—**actually begins BEFORE the new year arrives; it starts on THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29!!** Hopefully we are not wacko!

So, a typical "week" looks like this:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Thursday-Saturday | 3 days of studying a passage on prayer—and praying based on it |
| Sunday | Sermon on that same passage—and praying based on it |
| Monday-Wednesday | 3 days of continuing to study and apply that same passage—and praying based on it |

Did you notice the "and praying based on it" in each case? Every day, this guide will lead you to immerse yourself in a biblical passage (left side of the page) and then guide you into praying to God based on the truths that are found in that passage. Often, there are sample prayers given, and some people might be helped most by praying those same prayers word-for-word, while others will use them as an example and inspiration to assist their own words in prayer.

Specifically, the daily guides are structured as follows: The left side of the page consists of a Bible study guide centered on a few verses. We will lead you through the process of discovery so you can be fed and inspired by God's Word. *Also, there is an "answer key" at the back of the guide if you want to compare your work to the answers provided by the Harvesters who created these Bible study guides.*

But then, after you study and meditate on the verses assigned for that day, since prayer is much more than simply "asking," we encourage you to pray each day in three ways:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank him for?
2. **Confession and Help**—What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying his truth to my life?
3. **Intercession**—How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?

Once again, we provide a Parent's Guide (contained within this Guide) designed to help parents teach their children the commands of Jesus. There are six sections to the Parent's Guide—one for each week and biblical passage. We hope you will find them accessible, easy to use, and very beneficial. Often, parents know they are supposed to train their children spiritually but are not sure how to do so; this Parent's Guide gives you a practical tool to help in that.

I want to express my gratitude to all of those who had a part in helping create this Prayer Guide. Amy Granata, my awesome assistant, compiled much of the material and oversaw the production of it—no small task. The editors who make everyone's work better were Linda Singerle and Gabe Robinson. I appreciate the diligent work of all the Harvesters who wrote the daily (or weekly) study and prayer guides that form the heart of this project: (in order of their appearance) Dan and Jennifer Martin, Ryan and Maggie Kruse, Scott Torres, Bill Axline, Carol Garrott, Jerry Swisshelm, Cory Granata, Seth Howard, and Nick Macek. In addition, Greg and Linda Singerle wrote the weekly Parent Guides.

This Guide will be available online through our website, www.HarvestCharlotte.com, and will include real-time, current updates. Please go there during the 40 Days to share along the way and to learn about praises and prayer requests.

In addition to the Prayer Guide, which will help you as an individual, family, or small group, here are some of the opportunities for CORPORATE, churchwide prayer during this year's 40 Days:

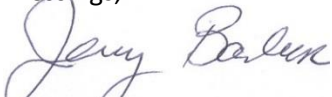
- For groups—we encourage you to use your regular meeting times during the 40 Days to concentrate on prayer rather than studying something else. It can be helpful for people to share what they are learning through the Guide and on Sundays, as the group members encourage each other and pray for one another.
- For men—Men's Prayer Night, Wednesday, January 11, 7:00 p.m.
- For women—Ladies' Prayer Night, Wednesday, January 18, 7:00 p.m.
- For ministry leaders—Leadership Community Lunch & Prayer Meeting, Sunday, January 29, 12:00 p.m.
- For EVERYONE
 - Prayer Meetings every Sunday morning 9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. in the Café
 - During Sunday morning worship services we will pray for a segment of the congregation each week.
 - Night of Prayer and Worship, Friday, February 3, 7:00 p.m.

****Other prayer initiatives may be introduced by leaders or members—stay tuned ☺**

Final thoughts: I encourage you to seek God to start 2017 out with MAJOR intensity towards Christ, his Word, and prayer. Lives are often changed for the better during these 40 days, and I'm sure God would like to work in and through you this year. I also encourage you to consider fasting during these 40 days as a way to focus more on God and prayer. Most of us are SO distracted by our schedules, cares of life, social media, etc., that it is a challenge to concentrate on the most important matters in life. Here is a great opportunity for a "reset." Choose to fast regularly during this emphasis. Whether it is fasting from food one day every week or fasting from an activity the entire 40 days (TV, shopping, Facebook, etc.), the goal is the same: GREATER CONCENTRATION ON CHRIST!

Jesus modeled prayer, loves prayer, and invites us to pray. Alone. Together. Will you respond?

Blessings,



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Introduction to Parents' Guide

Written by Greg & Linda Singerle

Before we begin these 40 days of prayer, teaching our children to obey the commands of Jesus, I want to ask a simple question to help prepare us. Why do we teach our kids obedience to His commands? One perfectly valid answer is that Jesus died for us and has asked us to teach them—although that answer isn't very fulfilling. God is good and has a good purpose in everything, so why did He ask us not only to obey what He taught but also to teach others to do the same? What is the purpose or outcome?

The first response I want to examine is a wrong response, although it might be a very popular one: We follow God's commands because that is how and why He blesses us and answers our prayers. We need to realize that this is law and not grace and that we, the Church, are not under law but grace (Romans 6:14). Note that this verse does not say "*the law*" (the Church was never under the Jewish law) but states "*law*," meaning the *principle* of law—I do something and then I receive something. Ever since the Church came into existence, Satan has attempted to bring the Church out from under grace and place us under law, where we have no power. Paul wrote to the Galatians to correct this error. Under grace, God's blessing is not contingent upon you or me doing anything (Romans 5:8). We must be very careful to teach our children grace and not law.

What is the principle of grace? The principle of grace is that God blesses and we respond. It starts with God's blessing. God initiates everything in all that He does, and we respond. This is part of God's character as a giver. The promise made to Abraham in Genesis 15 was not based on anything Abraham did. Abraham was simply the recipient of God's grace. Salvation also is a response to what God has already done and promised. We add nothing to it; rather, we receive it. Understanding and holding on to the principle of grace is key to spiritual growth. "I [Paul] planted, Apollos watered, but *God gave the increase*" (1 Corinthians 3:6, italics mine). Our devotion to God does not bring blessing. God blesses us and we, in turn, are devoted to Him. This is grace and hopefully you are practicing this as you meditate upon all that God has done simply because He loves you.

Jesus said in John 15:9-10, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love." (Jesus did not say, "If you keep my commandments, I will love you." Hopefully knowing that Jesus went to the cross settles the matter of Jesus' love for you.) Do you want your children to listen to and obey you? Why? When they do, things go well for them and they are joyful and safe. This is God's desire for us—that we do what He asked and abide in His love where we have joy and are safe. Look at the next verse, John 15:11: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." God states that He is the source of joy (Psalm 16:11) and that our joy is full when we abide in Him by listening and doing what He tells us, which is always best for us. This is what we are to teach our children.

Another amazing promise in Scripture perhaps does not get enough attention when it comes to abiding in God's commands: "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him" (John 14:21). We prove our love for God is genuine when we do what He asks. But further, the promise is that Jesus will manifest Himself to us! One version translates *manifest* as "make real." God is not only the one who blesses; He is the blessing itself! Do you want your kids to have a real and intimate relationship with Christ? Teach them to draw near to Him by abiding in His love.

Our focus for this 40 days will be some basic principles regarding prayer – how do I pray, why should I pray, what do I pray for, what should I expect when I pray, etc. These are principles we constantly need to revisit. Linda, Reece, Seth and I will be in Greece for the first half of this 40 days of prayer. One of my primary desires before even seeing the Scripture for the 40 days was for my family and me to really understand and commit ourselves to prayer. In my opinion, this is the area that needs the most attention in our family. As Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, we need to model prayer to our children. This means praying out loud with them as a family. If you do not already do this as a family, please make it a goal to pray together during the next 40 days (and beyond!).

Our approach to teaching our kids through these 40 days regarding the subject of praying is to pick out the principles Jesus was teaching and then discuss them with and teach them to our children. For each week, you will see a list of questions regarding what Jesus was teaching in that section of Scripture, prompting parents to think about what was Jesus asking and why He asks us to pray this way. Also provided to assist you are some of our own answers to these questions. They are not written on a child's level and therefore are not intended to be read to your kids. They are meant to help you prepare to discuss the subject with your kids. Think about our answers and your own as you determine how best to teach your children the principle in a way they understand. As with last year's guide, Dads, we expect you will take the lead and fulfill the command given to you to bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

We trust that God will bless you with a closeness to Him and among your family during this next 40 days. One last thought: childlike faith is an amazing thing—it is not limited in possibility. Perhaps as we attempt to teach our children about prayer, we will actually learn more from them!

Week 1: December 29 – January 4

Matthew 6:5-8

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Parents' Guide

Week 1: December 29 – January 4

Matthew 6:5-8

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

1. Parents, ask your children:

What does it mean and why does Jesus ask me...

| | |
|--------|--|
| Dec 29 | <i>to pray in secret and not to be seen?</i> |
| Dec 30 | <i>to pray expecting the Father to reward me?</i> |
| Jan 2 | <i>to not pray by heaping up empty words?</i> |
| Jan 3 | <i>to pray with simple words?</i> |
| Jan 4 | <i>to pray with confidence, knowing God already knows what you need?</i> |

2. Now encourage a heart check for the principle of prayer that you learned today. Ask each child to consider:

Do I pray in the way Jesus asks? Or do I need to change the way I pray so I am doing what He asks?

(Parents, feel free to model a response with observations about your own prayer life and habits.)

3. Now pray, putting into practice what you've just learned.

Suggested Answers for Parents' Guide for Week 1

Dec. 29

As in all things, Jesus is concerned with the heart. The warning here is not against praying publicly but praying in order to call attention to yourself.

Dec. 30

Hebrews 11:6 “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” From this verse we see that God is pleased by faith and that this faith should be displayed in a confidence that God is a reward. Said another way, it pleases God when you expect that He is going to reward you. Therefore, our prayers should be offered with this mindset.

Jan. 2

Flipping through channels, I once saw a TV show with several nuns repeating a rote prayer over and over. I flipped back a time or two and they were still praying in this way. I thought to myself, “How sad.” We have the privilege and excitement of communing with God in prayer, but these poor women have forsaken that, thinking that God will answer because of these empty words they kept heaping up. (Let alone that they were not even praying to God but Mary.) God would rather you say one thing from the heart than offer up lengthy prayers that do not come from the heart.

Jan. 3

We pray to an audience of one. A person who uses simple words is not concerned about any person who might be hearing a prayer (the attitude Jesus tells us to have when praying) but about God alone. This person understands that his or her standing before God comes from Christ alone. Therefore, the person is relaxed before God and can talk to Him as you would talk to a lifelong friend who knows you intimately and from whom there is nothing to hide.

Jan. 4

We will come back to this idea of praying with faith, confidence, and expectation because it is a theme that is repeated many times. Do you think God is trying to tell us something? But this verse raises a question: Why does God ask me to pray for something He already knows I need? I’m not sure I have the answer—or even if there is one answer or many. But one thing God wants us to continuously remember is that He is the source of everything since “he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything” (Acts 17:25). Asking God for what He already knows we need is to recognize Him as the source of all good things.

December 29: Matthew 6:5–8

Get Ready!

Written by Dan and Jennifer Martin

The Practice of Prayer

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

This well-known passage introducing what is often known as the Lord’s Prayer is a portion of the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5-7. Just prior to this section, Jesus spoke on giving, and after these words on prayer, He taught on fasting and storing up treasures in heaven. Jesus’s entire sermon spoke powerfully to His hearers. In fact, “the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law” (Matthew 7:28-29).

Today, let’s focus on the first four words of this passage: “And when you pray.” What thoughts does that phrase bring to your mind? What assumptions does Jesus seem to make? Is it out of order for Jesus to assume that prayer is natural for individuals who want to have a vibrant relationship with the Father?

John Bloom expresses the naturalness (yes, it is a word! 😊) of prayer this way: “Prayer is the native language of faith. That’s why when faith is awake and surging in us, prayer doesn’t feel like a burden or an obligation. It feels natural. It’s how faith most instinctively speaks” (John Bloom, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-to-do-when-we-re-prayerless>).

As we begin these 40 Days of Prayer, is that your present experience? Write out a few thoughts that describe your current prayer life as well as what you would like to see God do specifically related to your prayer life in these 40 Days of Prayer.

DIG DEEPER:

Study the following passages with an emphasis on consistency in prayer: Philippians 4:6–7; Luke 18:1–8.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Father, I praise you for the privilege of prayer. Thank You for providing me with this avenue for communion with You. Thank You for hearing me and inviting me into Your presence through prayer.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

God, I confess that I am easily distracted from prayer. At times, I find my prayer life to be cold and routine. Help me to be consistent in prayer. I want to be more like Jesus, spending regular time in prayer with You.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

As we begin these 40 Days of Prayer, help our church to be revived in and through prayer. Refresh us as we spend time in Your presence. Unite us with You as well as with one another.

Pray for our church family:

Jan Adair



Zeela & Rodney
Andrade
Keenan



Richard & Norma
Alamia
Brandon & Kaitlyn



Susan Austin



December 30: Matthew 6:5–8

Get Set!

Written by Dan and Jennifer Martin

Motives in Prayer

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Hypocrite. That’s a strong word. Before Jesus provides a model for prayer, He addresses wrong motives in prayer. And He makes the bold statement that those who pray with wrong motives are hypocrites. This wasn’t a new theme. In fact, Jesus speaks of hypocrisy related to giving in Matthew 6:2. In Matthew 6:16 He speaks of hypocrisy in fasting.

Take a moment to read each of those verses. What are the common themes that characterize hypocrisy?

How would you define hypocrisy?

Did “motivation” come out in your answers? We often associate hypocrisy with actions, and that is correct; hypocrisy is the action of pretending to be one thing while actually being another. But under that pretense is a motivation, a self-centeredness—the underlying motive for the façade.

Consider James’s words about wrong motives in prayer: “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures” (James 4:1–3 NIV).

“Hypocrite.” Jesus uses the term in a fourth section of the Sermon on the Mount. It is in Matthew 7:3–5. What is this passage about?

Obviously, God is never fooled by our pretense. Prayer that God honors is motivated by a humble desire to communicate and commune with Him.

DIG DEEPER:

Read Psalm 139. David is overwhelmed when he recognizes how intimately and completely God knows him. Allow that same sense to invade your heart today.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

I praise You for Your purity and light. You never act in pretense. I thank You that I can commune with You knowing that You have no hidden motives and that Your love toward me is genuine.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

God, I confess that You know me better than I know myself. I admit that I find it easier to find fault with others than in myself. Search me and open my eyes to my own motives in prayer. Help me to see selfishness and pretense. Help me to see myself as You see me and then to humbly confess and receive Your forgiveness.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Help us to walk in light and humility. Help us as a church to be quick to examine ourselves and slow to judge others. Help our public prayers, as a church, to be the outcome of our private prayer lives.

Pray for our church family:

Bill & Linda Axline



Bonnie & John Banse
Emily & Garrett



Matt & Kristin Baddeley
James, Connor, Grady
& Rosie



Jerry & Tish Barber



December 31: Matthew 6:5–8

Go!

Written by Dan and Jennifer Martin

Praying Simply

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Prayer is not about impressing God. Prayer is not about talking God into serving us like a heavenly bellhop. Prayer is not informing God. Prayer is not explaining things to God or helping Him understand a point of view He hasn't considered.

Reread the last portion of our Scripture passage. How do some people believe they can make God hear them?

Jesus's point in this passage is not that all prayers or times in prayer must be short. Luke 6:12 tells us that Jesus spent all night in prayer. Rather, the passage is a window into who God is. What truth about God makes long, flowery prayers irrelevant?

Even Jesus's very nature was that of a servant; as He talked to others, He never felt the need to impress or use speech that was hard for the common man to understand. Read Luke 22:41–44. Notice the passion of Jesus's prayer along with the simplicity of His conversation with the Father. What significant truths do you see in the prayer relationship between Jesus and the Father?

God has allowed us to spend three days considering Matthew 6:5–8. God's message to us is that we should pray with right motives and simple words. Ask him to confirm His Words as you receive tomorrow's sermon.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Nothing I need is a surprise to You, Father! You know my needs before I know them. I thank You for Your care and attention to my life. I praise You that I can rest in Your omniscience.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

I admit that at times I feel You don't know my needs. I feel the need to inform You and make sure You understand my dilemmas. I want to talk You into seeing things my way. Forgive me for my pride and doubting that You know my needs and always have my best interest at heart.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

God, help us to learn to pray with right motives and simple words. Help us to receive Your Word and to engage truth. Help us to mix what we hear with faith and action.

Pray for our church family:

Justin & Natalie Barber

Ayla
East Asia



Debra Barron

Jacob



Thelma Barber



Phil & Diane Bechtold



January 1: Matthew 6:5–8

Day 1

Written by Pastor Jerry

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Today’s sermon is based on Matthew 6:5-8, as you know from using this Guide the past three days. Today, meditate on the passage—read it over and over again and ask God to reveal his truth to you. Then make a few of your own observations about the passage:

-
-
-
-

What do we learn about GOD from this passage?

What do we learn about OURSELVES from this passage?

After listening to the sermon (live or via HCC website or phone app) and/or meditating on the text, what is ONE primary way that you can apply some truth mentioned here to your life THIS WEEK?

Based on what you have written above, can you write a brief prayer of response below, asking God in your own words to help you obey his Word and put it into practice?

Puritan Prayer:

The Valley of Vision is a collection of Puritan prayers and devotions. Each Sunday, we will provide one of those prayers that relates to our theme. These ancient prayers can be challenging because of their language, but they are very rich and full of meaning. We encourage you to read the prayer slowly, then to pray it to God yourself, followed by any other ways God leads you to commune with Him and pray for others. As you pray for the ministry listed at the bottom of this page, please remember to use Matthew 6:5-8 to help guide you.

Act of Approach (262-63)

BENIGN LORD,

I praise thee continually for permission to approach thy throne of grace, and to spread my wants and desires before thee. I am not worthy of thy blessings and mercies for I am far gone from original righteousness; My depraved nature reveals itself in disobedience and rebellion; My early days discovered in me discontent, pride, envy, revenge.

Remember not the sins of my youth, nor the multiplied transgressions of later years, my failure to improve time and talents, my abuse of mercies and means, my wasted sabbaths, my perverted seasons of grace, my long neglect of thy great salvation, my disregard of the Friend of sinners.

While I confess my guilt, help me feel it deeply, with self-abhorrence and self-despair, yet to remember there is hope in thee, and to see the Lamb that takes away sin.

Through him may I return to thee, listen to thee, trust in thee, delight in thy law, obey thee, be upheld by thee.

Preserve my understanding from error, my affections from love of idols, my lips from speaking guile, my conduct from stain of vice, my character from appearance of evil, that I may be harmless, blameless, rebukeless, exemplary, useful, life-giving, prudent, zealous for thy glory and the good of my fellow-men.

Ministry Highlight: Harvest Men

We strive to be like the mighty men of valor found in the Bible, battle-ready and equipped with the full armor of God. We are men of prayer, praising our creator and seeking the wisdom and righteousness that can only come from the Father through Jesus Christ. We are fathers, brothers, sons, husbands, friends. We are real men, with real problems, who believe in a real God. Opportunities:

- **Wednesday Evening 7 p.m. – Men's Bible Study Group & Prayer**
 - Held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month in the Prayer and Conference Room. We are currently working our way through Habbakuk. We conclude our time together praying for each other, the church family, and our community. Ed Fritz: edfritz@alumni.clemson.edu or (803) 984-8411
- **Saturday Morning 8 a.m. – Men's Discussion Group**
 - Held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month in the Prayer and Conference Room. The study is based on the book "Kingdom Man" by Tony Evans. Bob Spillane: robertspillane@icloud.com or (704) 953-2364
- **Facility & Grounds Team**
 - We have a dedicated team of men who assist with maintenance, mowing, etc. If you are interested in learning more or signing up for our weekend rotation of trimming/blowing/weed eating, please contact Joe Mercier: mercierj@hotmail.com or (704) 302-1565

January 2: Matthew 6:5–8

Day 2

Written by Dan and Jennifer Martin

Praying in Secret

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

From memory, what were two thoughts about prayer that stood out in Sunday’s sermon based on Matthew 6:5–8?

We’ve looked at this passage now for several days. Take a moment to read through these verses slowly. Focusing on verses 6-7 (on praying in secret), what practical lessons is He bringing to your mind?

List three things about God you see in this phrase: “*your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*”

Consider (meditate on) the following words from Psalm 62:1–2 (NIV):

Truly my soul finds rest in God;
my salvation comes from him.
Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

How does this speak to you in the context of praying in secret?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Father, I thank You that You don't require fanfare to be attentive to our prayers. Thank You that in those very personal moments alone with You, You hear me loud and clear.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

I confess that being quiet is hard for me. Help me as I struggle with the urge to go and do instead of stopping and being. Help me to value quietness and my time alone with You.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

We ask that You would help us, as a church, to find connection and purpose in quiet times with You. And just as Jesus pulled His disciples aside for private rest, help our church body to spend corporate time in quiet humility at Your feet. Help us to pray in secret, away from the eyes of the world, that we might see Your greater power at work among us.

Pray for our church family:

Jim & Jeanni Bennett
Hannah



Chris Bousman



Don & Edna Billington



Martin & Lisa Bramell
Sarah & Elizabeth



January 3: Matthew 6:5–8

Day 3

Written by Dan and Jennifer Martin

Empty Phrases

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Jesus mentions “empty phrases.” What do you think that means?

Can you think of empty phrases you use or have heard in prayers?

Why do you think Jesus instructed His disciples not to “heap up empty phrases”?

How can you be more intentional in using simple, conversational words and phrases in your prayer time with God?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

I praise You for each promise in Your Word and that not one of them will fail. Your words do not contain empty phrases but rich truths that, when applied, can drastically change my life and perspective.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

I confess that I like to do most of the talking in prayer. I feel like I must come up with the words. I need to listen. I need You, Holy Spirit! I don't need to "spout off" meaningless phrases in prayer. Help me to stop and simply allow You to do the talking through me.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

We pray for guidance not only in our prayers but also in our requests. We admit we like to cling to prayer as a way to get what we want, whether it be health, wealth, or deliverance. Help our prayers for others to be tempered with Scripture and truth as we intercede on their behalf.

Pray for our church family:

Andre & Yuba Bulyhin
Ukraine



Steve & Juanna
Carpman



Gail Calder



Abraham & Michelle
Chen



January 4: Matthew 6:5–8

Day 4

Written by Dan and Jennifer Martin

He knows our needs

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

As we conclude our meditation on this section of Scripture, is there a phrase that has stood out to you over the past week?

How has God used that phrase in your life?

Jesus’s conclusion on having right motives and using simple words in prayer is rooted in God’s knowledge and heart. Are there areas of your life that seem beyond God’s knowledge or care?

Based on the truth of the last verse in this passage, when does God know your needs?

God knows our needs before we even recognize our own needs! How you can find confidence for prayer in that truth?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

I praise You because You are the God who provides. You are always on time, never late. Thank You for the way You lead us into confidence in our relationships with You. You are our gentle Shepherd.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Worry is a sin, and I do that often when a need arises. My lack of trust is evidence that I don't believe Your Word. I pray for healing and a change of heart regarding my trust issues. You have never let me down, and You never will.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Your hand of blessing has been with us at Harvest from the very beginning. You have provided for our every need and more. You know the needs we'll face tomorrow and twenty years from now. We want to rest in Your knowledge and love. We want You to lead and empower our future. Would You do it, Father? Would You enable us to trust You for the incredible, for the sake of Your great name?

Pray for our church family:

Micah & Ruth Anna Chin
Elijah, Sophie, Noah & Lilah
Hickory Cove Bible Camp



Graham & Katie Clark
Titus, Hannah, Elise
& Baby



Maribell Chittenden



Jared & Becky Coleman
Andru, Justice & Jael



Week 2: January 5 – 11

Matthew 6:9-15

This, then, is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

Parents' Guide

Week 2: January 5 - 11

Matthew 6:9–15

This, then, is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

1. Parents, ask your children:

What does it mean and why does Jesus ask me...

| | |
|--------|--|
| Jan 5 | <i>to pray in a way so that God is revered?</i> |
| Jan 6 | <i>to pray for God's will to be done?</i> |
| Jan 9 | <i>to pray for our daily needs?</i> |
| Jan 10 | <i>to pray for God's heart of forgiveness?</i> |
| Jan 11 | <i>to pray that we would be delivered from the evil one?</i> |

2. Now encourage a heart check for the principle of prayer that you learned today. Ask each child to consider:

Do I pray in the way Jesus asks? Or do I need to change the way I pray so I am doing what He asks?

(Parents, feel free to model a response with observations about your own prayer life and habits.)

3. Now pray, putting into practice what you've just learned.

Suggested Answers for Parents' Guide for Week 2

Jan. 5

We know this as "The Lord's Prayer," but more accurately it is the Lord's *pattern* for prayer. We are to take this pattern and apply it to our prayers. One main thing we are to do is to pray in a way that acknowledges who God is, assuring that His name is *hallowed*, which means "made holy." We are to pray in a way that God's name is holy and not common, sacred and not ordinary.

Jan. 6

As Jesus demonstrated in the Garden of Gethsemane, while it is okay to have desires, we are to pray "not as I will but as You will." God knows everything; He knows what is best; and He loves us. When we pray for God's will to be done, we acknowledge all these things about Him. Remember, without faith it is impossible to please Him. Our prayer must acknowledge that we have faith in God by asking that His will be done.

Jan. 9

I think this is a little different than praying for what God already knows that we need. This is more a prayer of sufficiency and satisfaction in what God supplies. Paul tells Timothy, "But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content" (1 Timothy 6:8). God wants you to come to Him, acknowledging that all sufficiency and contentment are found in Him. Are you satisfied in Christ alone?

Jan. 10

There is a saying that we are never more like God than when we forgive. Based on the cross, I believe that to be a very true statement. Please note that this verse is not teaching forgiveness through works (forgiving others) but an attitude of forgiveness that is consistent with one who has been forgiven all his sins. (A good explanation of this is found in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant in Matthew 18.) However, forgiving is still very difficult at times, and we are to call upon God's help to first change our hearts so that we can forgive from the heart.

Jan. 11

We have a very powerful enemy. Parents, this enemy's desire for your children is spiritual death with him in a lake of fire. Please DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THIS ENEMY or your tremendous responsibility as the person God appointed to preach the gospel to your children until the time at which they acknowledge their need for Christ as their Savior. Many (if not most) people believe that God and Satan are equal in power. Nothing could be further from the truth. While our enemy is powerful, He is no match for our God! This prayer acknowledges God's power over Satan and that we are to resist the devil solely in God's power and authority.

January 5: Matthew 6:9–15

Day 5

Written by Ryan and Maggie Kruse

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,’ ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’”

OBSERVATION

1. Before giving the prayer, what statement does Jesus use as a preface?
2. To whom or to what are the petitions directed in this segment of prayer?
3. Where is the Father?
4. Whose desire is asked to be fulfilled in this prayer?

INTERPRETATION

5. What is the difference between Jesus telling us *how* to pray instead of *what* to pray?
6. Why do you suppose this prayer acknowledges that the Father is in heaven?
7. What does *hallowed* mean? Why do you think the prayer reads “hallowed be your name” instead of “we hallow your name”?
8. Why is it important to acknowledge God’s will and kingdom when we pray?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Father, thank You for sending Your Son to earth to teach us and lead us. We praise You for Your sovereignty in heaven over earth and for Your perfect will.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Forgive me, Lord, for not surrendering to Your will in areas of my life. Forgive me for my failure to reflect Your holiness in my life. Please draw me closer so that Your will for me is my deepest desire.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

God, please show Yourself holy in the work of Harvest Community Church. Help this church to facilitate Your will in our community. Lord, please manifest Your kingdom in the lives of those who are lost.

Pray for our church family:

Liz Covington



Scott & Chrissy Crew
Emmett & Ellory



Marcia Cox



Tim & Linda Daniel



January 6: Matthew 6:9–15

Day 6

Written by Ryan and Maggie Kruse

¹¹“Give us today our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

OBSERVATION

1. Who or what is the focus of the petitions in this segment of prayer?
2. Who is providing the bread?
3. How much bread is asked of God in this prayer?
4. Who is taking part in forgiveness?
5. Who is doing the delivering in this prayer?

INTERPRETATION

6. Why are we led to pray for daily bread instead of bread for the days ahead? Can you think of other places in Scripture that relate to this?
7. What are the debts mentioned in this prayer?
8. Why is the phrase “as we also have forgiven our debtors” important?
9. Considering James 1:13, why ask the Lord not to lead us into temptation?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Father, thank You for Your consistent and sufficient provision in my life. You have provided me with a family of believers who are encouraging me each day. You have given Your Son to atone for my sin. Thank You for protecting me, Lord, and for delivering me out of destruction.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

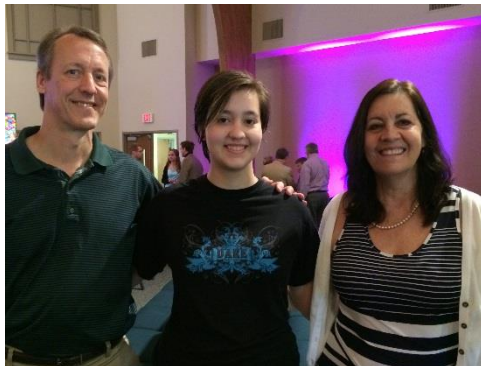
God, please forgive me for my lack of faith in You. I have become self-sufficient and need to rely on You daily. Please place me in circumstances that require me to rely on You. Help me to be merciful with my peers. Lord, you have extended unending grace upon me. I need Your help to extend forgiveness to those who have hurt me.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Lord, please help my grandfather and his children to have reconciliation. Help my dad to lead in that by forgiving his sister for the pain she has caused him. Help my brother to see You as his sufficient source of provision. Help him to turn to You for his satisfaction.

Pray for our church family:

Brian & Janice Dare
Ellie



Jo Ann Detloff



Chad & Rebecca DeCasas
Ella, Molly, Sadie & Cody



Joe & Karla Dowe
Noah McClanahan
& Tyler



January 7: Matthew 6:9–15

Day 7

Written by Ryan and Maggie Kruse

¹⁴For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

OBSERVATION

1. In these verses, what theme is repeated from the prayer studied in the previous days?
2. What appears different in John 5:24, Romans 8:1, and Ephesians 1:7?

INTERPRETATION

3. Considering the verses mentioned above that give no qualification of forgiving our peers, what do you think Jesus meant when He taught this?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Jesus, I praise You for loving a sinner like me. Before knowing You, I was helpless in my sin and a slave to my flesh. In light of my depravity, Your mercy is unfathomable and glorious. Though I am deserving of wrath, you chose to show me love and forgiveness. You are an example toward which I strive.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Please help me to be a merciful person in my actions and in my thoughts. Help me to stop holding grudges against people, but instead lead me to forgive them and have true reconciliation. Through this, help them to see Your love pour out of me.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Please help Harvest to be a church of forgiveness. We are a body of sinners. In times of disagreement, help us to love one another and forgive one another when we feel wronged. Through this unity, help us to advance Your kingdom here on earth.

Pray for our church family:

Stephen & Carrie Dye



Zelalem Feleke &
Emnet Demisse
Betselot & Christian



Nicki Fabry



Ondrej & Milina
Franka
Serbia



January 8: Matthew 6:9–15

Day 8

Written by Pastor Jerry

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,’¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ ¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Today’s sermon is based on Matthew 6:9-15, as you know from using this Guide the past three days. Today, meditate on the passage—read it over and over again and ask God to reveal his truth to you. Then make a few of your own observations about the passage:

-
-
-
-

What do we learn about GOD from this passage?

What do we learn about OURSELVES from this passage?

After listening to the sermon (live or via HCC website or phone app) and/or meditating on the text, what is ONE primary way that you can apply some truth mentioned here to your life THIS WEEK?

Based on what you have written above, can you write a brief prayer of response below, asking God in your own words to help you obey his Word and put it into practice?

Puritan Prayer:

The Valley of Vision is a collection of Puritan prayers and devotions. Each Sunday, we will provide one of those prayers that relates to our theme. These ancient prayers can be challenging because of their language, but they are very rich and full of meaning. We encourage you to read the prayer slowly, then to pray it to God yourself, followed by any other ways God leads you to commune with Him and pray for others. As you pray for the ministry listed at the bottom of this page, please remember to use Matthew 6:9-15 to help guide you.

In Prayer, 264-65

LORD,

In prayer I launch far out into the eternal world, and on that broad ocean my soul triumphs over all evils on the shores of mortality. Time, with its happy amusements and cruel disappointments never appears so inconsiderate as then. In prayer I see myself as nothing; I find my heart going after Thee with intensity, and long with vehement thirst to live to Thee. Blessed be the strong gales of the Spirit that speed me on my way to the New Jerusalem.

In prayer all things here below vanish, and nothing seems important but holiness of heart and the salvation of others. In prayer all my worldly cares, fears, anxieties disappear, and are of as little significance as a puff of wind. In prayer my soul inwardly exults with lively thoughts at what Thou art doing for Thy church, and I long that Thou shouldest get Thyself a great name from sinners returning to Zion. In prayer I am lifted above the frowns and flatteries of life, and taste heavenly joys; entering into the eternal world I can give myself to Thee with all my heart, to be Thine for ever.

In prayer I can place all my concerns in Thy hands, to be entirely at Thy disposal, having no will or interest of my own. In prayer I can intercede for my friends, ministers, sinners, the church, Thy kingdom to come, with greatest freedom, ardent hopes, as a son to his father, as a lover to the beloved. Help me to be all prayer and never to cease praying.

Ministry Highlight: Harvest Ladies

- **Sunday 6:15 p.m. – Moms in Prayer**
 - This prayer group meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month from 6:15-7:15 PM in Room 103 during the school year. This is open to all women to pray for their children, grandchildren, etc. Carolyn Harrell: tallyharrell@yahoo.com or (704) 490-7907 or Brenda Murphy: bmurphy@finnordna.com or (980) 621-1121
- **Monday 6:30 p.m. – Sharing Hearts**
 - Women gathering once a month to study, share and learn from women of the Bible. Meets off-campus from 6:30 – 8:00 PM the first Monday of each month. Maribell Chittenden: mwc@carolina.rr.com or (704) 604-8715
- **Tuesday 11 a.m. – Healing Hearts**
 - A support group for women who have experienced loss. Meets off-campus at 11:00 AM the last Tuesday of each month. We go out to lunch together after our meeting. Judy Sellers: wgsjds@hotmail.com or (704) 264-5772
- **Tuesday 7 p.m. – Hebrews: Christ preeminent**
 - This Bible study on the book of Hebrews meets most Tuesday evenings in the cafe. Heidi Reckard: heidi.reckard@gmail.com or (704) 661-3975 or Jennifer Jolly: jennifer@goGod.org or (704) 287-2092

January 9: Matthew 6:9–15

Day 9

Written by Ryan and Maggie Kruse

⁹*“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’”*

APPLICATION

1. List three attributes of God. Spend a few moments dwelling on these before you pray today. How does this help you when you pray?
2. Christ’s words in verse 10 show His anticipation of God’s kingdom to come. On a scale from 1 to 10, how do you honestly rate your anticipation for God’s kingdom to come to earth (1 – Didn’t even know He was coming; 10 – Let Him come right this second!)?
3. What are some practical ways you can build your faith this week and better anticipate His coming?
4. How does verse 10 put your life and priorities into perspective?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

God, I praise you for who You are. You are holy and set apart from all creation. There is none like You, Lord! You are our Sustainer, and You uphold all things with the Word of Your power. Thank You for Your loving-kindness that You bestow on us, though we do not deserve it.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Lord, I pray that you will help me to anticipate Your coming. So many things in life distract me from Your ultimate plan for humanity, and I confess that I get wrapped up in temporary things. Please give me an unwavering focus on You, that I might see Your will played out in my life and in our world.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

I pray that there would be a movement of greater anticipation of Your kingdom among the church body in the United States. Our culture and the distractions of life have swallowed us in many ways. Help us to remember that Your plan is still in motion, as it has been from the beginning of time. Let us look to Christ's example and ask to see Your kingdom come to earth.

Pray for our church family:

**Peter & Miriam
Fretheim**
Nigeria



Dave & Carol Garrott



Ed & Jennifer Fritz
Phoebe



Ruth Garrott



January 10: Matthew 6:9–15

Day 10

Written by Ryan and Maggie Kruse

¹¹ 'Give us today our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

1. What are some “daily bread” requests that you have lifted to God in the past? (In this context, “daily bread” means something that you need from Him *today* and cannot do on your own.)
2. Write down one request you need to depend on God for today. Make your request known to Him, and before you go to bed tonight, try to see how God was faithful to your request.
3. Read Job 23:10–12. How does Job’s perspective of daily bread and his faith challenge you?
4. As Christ followers, all of our sins were forgiven at the cross. Why do you think Christ models for us a daily confession of our debts?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

God, thank You for providing for my needs. You are a good God. I am amazed that the God who holds the world in His hands would want to hear my requests for daily nourishment and protection. Thank you for being a God who cares about the details.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

I pray that You will help me confess my sins daily to You. As I recall my debts against You, please reveal to me ways that I can become more like You. Convict me, Lord, and bring my habitual sins to the surface.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Lord, I pray You would help my husband and me to rely on You for our daily bread. Help us to realize that we do not have the power to sustain our needs. It is You who provides for us. All that You have graciously given us is not to our credit.

Pray for our church family:

Ann & David Gatewood
Sarah Willis



Walt & Janet
Gillespie



Phil & Julie Gillespie
Michigan State
University



Glendyne Glassman

January 11: Matthew 6:9–15

Day 11

Written by Ryan and Maggie Kruse

¹⁴For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

1. In light of today's verses, read Matthew 18:21–35. Where do you see mercy in this parable?
2. Of all the petitions made in the Lord's Prayer, why do you think Christ chose to reiterate the importance of forgiveness? (There's no right or wrong answer here—just your thoughts.)
3. Self-evaluate: How do you model Christ in your forgiveness of others who trespass against you?
4. Of course, forgiveness from God is not based on our works or the number of debtors we forgive, but on God's grace alone. When we confess before God and receive His forgiveness through faith, it becomes our desire to forgive others as we grow in Christ. How do you think our forgiveness of others helps us become more like Christ?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Jesus, I worship You for Your unmatched forgiveness and mercy. Thank You for forgetting our debts and trespasses against You. Thank You for showing us what true forgiveness looks like with no strings attached. All we have to do is receive.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Lord, I am sorry for not always being quick to forgive. Sometimes, my sense of entitlement overtakes me and I am disobedient toward You. Help me to forgive others quickly, even when they do not offer an apology. Help me to forgive unconditionally.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Please help my high school friend to forgive her mom, though she has wronged her in many ways. Help my friend to know that you love her deeply and that, as Your daughter, she is called to forgive. I know it will take some time, but I pray that You would help heal her heart and reconcile her relationship with her mom.

Pray for our church family:

Oliver & Valerie Glover
Madi, Shunnar & Jinan



Pete & Becky Goins



Leslie Godshall
Mattie



Henry Golatt



Week 3: January 12 – 18

Matthew 7:7–12

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Parents' Guide

Week 3: January 12 - 18

Matthew 7:7–12

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

1. Parents, ask your children:

What does it mean and why does Jesus ask me...

| | |
|--------|--|
| Jan 12 | <i>to pray persistently and not to give up?</i> |
| Jan 13 | <i>to pray expecting God to answer?</i> |
| Jan 16 | <i>to pray understanding that God loves you more than even your parents?</i> |
| Jan 17 | <i>to pray expecting good gifts from your heavenly Father?</i> |
| Jan 18 | <i>to pray for a heart to initiate good to others?</i> |

2. Now encourage a heart check for the principle of prayer that you learned today. Ask each child to consider:

Do I pray in the way Jesus asks? Or do I need to change the way I pray so I am doing what He asks?

(Parents, feel free to model a response with observations about your own prayer life and habits.)

3. Now pray, putting into practice what you've just learned.

Suggested Answers for Parents' Guide for Week 3

Jan. 12

A good example of this persistence is the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21–28) who will not leave until her prayer is answered. I think of children who often “want” something that is forgotten as soon as it is out of their sight. We are to pray for those things that God lays on our hearts with a persistence that does not stop until it is fulfilled (and then is replaced by equal measures of praise). Perhaps you prayed for someone to be saved for many years before God did it, or maybe you are still praying. The heart that does not give up in prayer is the heart that is convinced that God will answer.

Jan. 13

Here again we see the idea of expecting God to answer. Who asks for something they don't expect to receive? Who looks for something they don't expect to find? Who knocks on a door they don't think someone will open to them? Not only does God want us to ask Him for things; He wants us to ask, *expecting* Him to answer. I think we are often like the people in Acts 12 who prayed for Peter's release from jail but were in disbelief when God did exactly what they asked. Perhaps there was one in the crowd who truly expected God to do it? Let us be that person.

Jan. 16

God wants you to understand that nothing compares to His love. A parent would do anything for his or her children, including die for them. And this is exactly what God has done for us.

Jan. 17

I must admit, I often come to God acutely aware of my sin and therefore of how I do not deserve any gift. But then I remember that I do not come with my own righteousness but the righteousness of Christ given to me when I believed and was saved. God wants us to know that He is fully satisfied with Christ's payment that enabled us to be adopted into God's family with all the rights and privileges of a son or daughter—and with all the benefits that a loving Father freely bestows on His children. God never gives us things that are not good, although I admit that sometimes it takes a long time to see the good in some of the difficult things He gives us. The Father gave Jesus the cross, and He and we agree about the infinite good that came from it.

Jan. 18

It is the most basic of rules – do to others as you want them to do to you. So much of our society and world is based upon earning something. “I'll forgive her when she admits what she did. I'll be kind when they are kind to me.” Aren't we glad that God does not employ this standard? Our job as followers of Jesus is to initiate—initiate love where there is no love; initiate kindness when others are unkind; initiate grace when grace is not deserved. When we initiate these things, we display Christ and bring glory to Him.

Written by Scott Torres

⁷*“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives. Everyone who seeks finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.*

⁹*“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? ¹⁰Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! ¹¹So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.”*

1. Begin by reading the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). In light of your reading, what initially stands out about **this** passage? Does it relate to anything Jesus has previously said?
2. Focusing on the very first part of verse 7, what is the first command that Jesus gives?
3. How often does Jesus say a person should **ask**?
4. What is the promise that Jesus gives regarding this command?
5. In light of the Sermon on the Mount, what types of things might Jesus be telling His disciples and the crowd to **ask** for?
6. In your own words, summarize the meaning of the first part of Matthew 7:7.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Write some things below.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

What do you want to ask Him for His help in obeying?

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Based on the first part of verse 7, how can you pray for others? What truth does God bring to mind that you want to see come to pass in someone's life?

Pray for our church family:

Noel & Reina Gomez
Honduras



Jerry & Vicki
Graham



Mark & Melia Godron
Carter & Marleigh



Cory & Amy Granata
Bryce, Addy & Baby



Written by Scott Torres

⁷“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives. Everyone who seeks finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? ¹⁰Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! ¹¹So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.”

Begin by reading this week’s passage and asking the Lord to speak to you through your study of Matthew 7:7–12. You’ll recall that yesterday we focused on asking. Today we examine the next command in verse 7.

1. What is the next command Jesus gives His disciples and the crowd in verse 7?
2. According to Jesus, how often is someone to **seek**?
3. What comes to your mind when you hear the word “seek”?
4. What promise does Jesus give when someone continually seeks?
5. What does Jesus mean by telling His disciples to seek?
6. In your own words, summarize the meaning of the middle part of Matthew 7:7.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Write some things below.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

What do you want to ask Him for help in obeying?

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Based on the middle part of verse 7, how can you pray for others? What truth does God bring to mind that you want to come to pass in someone's life?

Pray for our church family:

Michael & Paula Grande
Levi, Megan & Jenna



Jeff Green
The Fold Family
Ministries



Veronica Grant



Jenny Green



Written by Scott Torres

⁷“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives. Everyone who seeks finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? ¹⁰Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! ¹¹So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.”

Begin today by reading this week’s passage again and asking the Lord to speak to you through your study of Matthew 7:7–11. Today we move beyond yesterday’s focus on seeking to the third command in verse 7.

1. What is the third command that Jesus gives His disciples and the crowd in verse 7?
2. According to Jesus, how often should someone **knock**?
3. What comes to your mind when you think about “continuous knocking”?
4. What promise does Jesus give when someone continually knocks?
5. What does Jesus mean by telling His disciples to **knock**?
6. In your own words, summarize the meaning of the end of Matthew 7:7.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank him for?*

Write some things below.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

What do you want to ask Him for help in obeying?

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Based on the last part of verse 7, how can you pray for others? What truth does God bring to mind that you want to come to pass in someone's life?

Pray for our church family:

Roy & Susan Green



Kevin & Debi Hall
William, Erica &
Andrew



Jordan & Margaret Hall
Thomas, Peter & John
Bob & Cheryl Hancock



January 15: Matthew 7:7–11

Day 15

Written by Pastor Jerry

⁷“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives. Everyone who seeks finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? ¹⁰Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! ¹¹So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.”

Today’s sermon is based on Matthew 7:7-11, as you know from using this Guide the past three days. Today, meditate on the passage—read it over and over again and ask God to reveal his truth to you. Then make a few of your own observations about the passage:

-
-
-
-

What do we learn about GOD from this passage?

What do we learn about OURSELVES from this passage?

After listening to the sermon (live or via HCC website or phone app) and/or meditating on the text, what is ONE primary way that you can apply some truth mentioned here to your life THIS WEEK?

Based on what you have written above, can you write a brief prayer of response below, asking God in your own words to help you obey his Word and put it into practice?

Puritan Prayer:

The Valley of Vision is a collection of Puritan prayers and devotions. Each Sunday, we will provide one of those prayers that relates to our theme. These ancient prayers can be challenging because of their language, but they are very rich and full of meaning. We encourage you to read the prayer slowly, then to pray it to God yourself, followed by any other ways God leads you to commune with Him and pray for others. As you pray for the ministry listed at the bottom of this page, please remember to use Matthew 7:7-11 to help guide you.

Living By Prayer, 266-267

O GOD OF THE OPEN EAR,

Teach me to live by prayer as well as by Providence, for myself, soul, body, children, family, church; Give me a heart frameable to Thy will; so I might live in prayer, and honor Thee, being kept from evil, known and unknown.

Help me to see the sin that accompanies all I do, and the good I can distil from everything. Let me know that the work of prayer is to bring my will to Thine, and that without this it is folly to pray;

When I try to bring Thy will to mine it is to command Christ, to be above Him, and wiser than He: this is my sin and pride. I can only succeed when I pray according to Thy precept and promise, and to be done with as it pleases Thee, according to Thy will.

When Thou commandest me to pray for pardon, peace, brokenness, it is because Thou wilt give me the thing promised, for Thy glory, as well as for my good.

Help me not only to desire small things but with holy boldness to desire great things for Thy people, for myself, that they and I might live to show Thy glory.

Teach me that it is wisdom for me to pray for all I have, out of love, willingly, not of necessity; that I may come to Thee at any time, to lay open my needs acceptably to Thee; that my great sin lies in my not keeping the savor of Thy ways; that the remembrance of this truth is one way to the sense of Thy presence; that there is no wrath like the wrath of being governed by my own lusts for my own ends.

Featured Ministry: HARVESTUDENTS

The middle and high school ministry has two goals: [1] To develop middle & high school students into followers of Jesus Christ with a passion to worship God well and communicate his love to others; and [2] To help equip parents as they disciple their students in Christ.

We believe that our mission as the local church is to make disciples. This includes equipping students and parents to understand and apply Scripture better. That's why we take time each week to study the Bible in a thorough and relevant way. The Bible teaches that Christians should "be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Each of our events are open to middle school (6th – 8th grade) and high school (9th – 12th grade) students. Our weekly Sunday night gatherings consist of an in-depth Bible study for middle students and a separate one for high school students, fun indoor or outdoor field games and other random craziness! It's also a great time for your student to experience community as they meet other students their age, make friends, and get connected in a safe and caring environment where our trained leaders are ready to love your teenager. Join us Sunday evenings from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Written by Scott Torres

⁷“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives. Everyone who seeks finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? ¹⁰Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! ¹¹So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.”

We spent the majority of our time last week studying verse 7. Part of the reason is because it seems to be the heart and soul of our passage. Verse 8 goes on to reiterate with certainty that what Jesus promises in verse 7 will happen. Today I would like for us to finish studying verses 9–11 and then posture our hearts towards application the last two days.

1. Who does Jesus address in verses 9–11?
2. What rhetorical questions does Jesus ask parents who are listening? How does He answer His own question?
3. What does He call parents in verse 11? Why do you think He does this?
4. What contrasting words does Jesus use in comparing earthly parents' giving with the Heavenly Father's giving?
5. What does Jesus say the Father will give to those who **ask** Him?
6. In your own words, summarize the meaning of verses 9–11 below.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Write some things below.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

What do you want to ask Him for help in obeying?

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Based on verses 9–11, how can you pray for others? What truth does God bring to mind that you want to come to pass in someone's life?

Pray for our church family:

David Hancock
Peru



Tim & Carolyn Harrell
Mike, Amy & JJ



Nathan & Becky Hardenbrook
Lydia, Luke, Samuel & Ezra



Erik & Gena Haviland
Elise, Ryan & Andrew



January 17: Matthew 7:7–11

Day 17

Written by Scott Torres

Today we will set aside time to reflect on the character of our Heavenly Father. In particular, let's focus on His goodness in how He has answered our prayers in the past. Remember our passage for the week that reminded us that parents, although born with a sinful nature, take care of their children by giving them good things. How much more will our Heavenly Father answer His children's requests by giving them good things that will help and not hurt them?

Take a moment today to write out 3–4 examples of times when you persistently asked God for a particular item and He answered you. Be sure to include one that He may not have answered in a way that was to your liking, but over time you saw how He used it for your good and His glory. Afterward, spend some time thanking the Father for being good and faithful to you as His child.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Additional Item:

Take a moment to listen to the worship song "Sovereign Over Us" by Aaron Keyes. Let God minister to you as you meditate and sing along: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPkMbhydU9I>

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Write some things below.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

What do you want to ask Him for help in obeying?

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Based on this week's passage, how can you pray for others? What truth does God bring to mind that you want to come to pass in someone's life?

Pray for our church family:

Don & Sai Hill
Thailand



Seth & Jamie Howard
Ann, Charlie, Elliott & Nelson



Joshua & Lauren Holey
Aaron & Andrew



Grace Hutchinson-LaFleur



January 18: Matthew 7:7–11

Day 18

Written by Scott Torres

The overall point of our passage this week has been perseverance in prayer. We are to continually ask God for whatever we need, and we can be sure that He will answer in a way that is fitting and good. He is a good Father and will give only good gifts to His children.

On this last day of our study, we will focus on application. List a few prayer requests that you have been persistently asking God for.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Now that you have listed them, take time to recommit yourself to persistently praying for these and any other requests you may have. Remember, you can be certain that God hears and will answer your prayers! Sometimes He answers by giving you exactly what you ask for. Others times He gives you what He knows is best. It's been said that God answers our prayers with the following: Yes, No, or Wait.

Additional Item:

Read Luke 18:1–8.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Write some things below.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

What do you want to ask Him for help in obeying?

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Based on this week's passage, how can you pray for others? What truth does God bring to mind that you want to come to pass in someone's life?

Pray for our church family:

Bryan & Evelyng Huyhua
David Josias & Baby
Peru



Charidi Jamison



Anne Jamison



Bill & Celia Jewell
Nic



Week 4: January 19 - 25

Matthew 9:35-38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Parents' Guide

Week 4: January 19 - 25

Matthew 9:35–38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

1. Parents, ask your children:

What does it mean and why does Jesus ask me...

| | |
|--------|--|
| Jan 19 | <i>to pray for laborers to be sent into the harvest?</i> |
|--------|--|

Included in this command, Jesus is asking me...

| | |
|--------|---|
| Jan 20 | <i>to pray that I would follow His command to become a laborer?</i> |
| Jan 23 | <i>to pray for boldness in preaching the gospel.</i> |
| Jan 24 | <i>to pray for the heart of compassion for the lost.</i> |
| Jan 25 | <i>to pray for the harassed, helpless, and afflicted.</i> |

2. Now encourage a heart check for the principle of prayer that you learned today. Ask each child to consider:

Do I pray in the way Jesus asks? Or do I need to change the way I pray so I am doing what He asks?

(Parents, feel free to model a response with observations about your own prayer life and habits.)

3. Now pray, putting into practice what you've just learned.

Suggested Answers for Parents' Guide for Week 4

Jan. 19

It seems that God is always chronically short on workers—those who will give up everything and follow Christ no matter where He leads. So God asks us not to try to remedy the situation ourselves, but to pray earnestly for more workers to help those who are harassed, helpless and with no one to show them the way. (Be careful: When Jesus asks that we pray for workers to be “sent out,” what exactly does He mean? When we read the phrase “sent out,” it instills in us the idea of peacefully moving. But the word translated as *sent* is the same word used for “casting out” demons; it’s the word used when the people “drove” Jesus out of the town to throw Him off a cliff. It’s also used when the Jews “cast” Stephen out of the town to stone him and when the man born blind was “cast out” of the synagogue for believing in Jesus. In most instances, the word carries the implication of a forceful move against one’s will. Jesus has already commanded that His people go. I believe what we are being asked to pray for is that God would compel people to follow this command. How can one earnestly seek this in prayer if they themselves are not currently following Jesus’ command to give up their lives and go?)

Jan. 20

How can we pray for someone to do something we are not willing to do ourselves? Jesus asks us to follow Him and, in the process, to become like Him. Jesus always led by example and never asked anyone to do what He Himself was not willing to do. We are to live the same way.

Jan. 23

When we read Acts there is always one adjective that is associated with preaching the gospel: ***boldly***. At the end of his letter to the Ephesians, Paul asks the church at Ephesus to pray that words might be given to him to open his mouth ***boldly*** to proclaim the mystery of the gospel and to declare it ***boldly*** as he ought to speak. Can we conclude from this that Paul, the boldest witness for Christ that ever lived, was not naturally a bold person? We need to pray for boldness for each other because the gospel is something that must be proclaimed with conviction.

Jan. 24

There is a saying that people don’t care what you know until they know that you care. Jesus not only cared for the lost, but He also entered our world to come find us. We will never be effective preaching the gospel if our hearts do not genuinely care for the lost.

Jan. 25

We must see lost people as afflicted, harassed, and hopeless. Further, we must understand that they have no one to lead them (like a sheep without a shepherd) unless we will do it.

Written by Bill Axline

Introduction to Matthew 9:35–38

At this point in Matthew's gospel, we are in the second year of Jesus's ministry. He has invited certain ones to follow Him, promising to make them fishers of men. He has appointed the Twelve "to be with Him," and they are in constant attendance, observing all that Jesus says and does. Jesus is reaching the climax of His popularity among the masses in His public ministry, and His opposition is beginning to solidify. So far in his gospel, Matthew has emphasized first the teachings and then the works of Jesus in His public ministry. In these few verses, Matthew summarizes the activity of Jesus in His public ministry and at the same time gives a snapshot of one aspect of His training of the Twelve.

Read verses 9:35–38

³⁵Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

In earlier chapters, Matthew has given us examples of Jesus's public ministry in the early days, and now in verse 35 he presents us with a concise summary of the ministry during this period. The language Matthew uses makes it clear that this is a pattern, something Jesus was doing repeatedly.

1. In verse 35, what are the activities Jesus engaged in that formed the pattern for the ministry at this time?
2. Briefly consider these activities. Put yourself in the place of one of the Twelve who were with Him and describe in a short paragraph what you think this early ministry of Jesus might look like.

Special Note: In New Testament times, the synagogue was the social and civil center of the Jewish community as well as its spiritual heart. Most every community had one. Not only did worship and religious instruction happen in the synagogue, but all types of social and civil functions occurred there as well. Among its many uses, it would serve as a court of law, a marketplace, and on occasion, even a hostel. The synagogue was a key place to meet and get to know the people of a community.

3. Jesus went where He could meet the people of the community, observe their needs, respond to their needs, and share His message of the Kingdom. Where could you go in your community to get acquainted with people and their needs and, at some point, develop the opportunity to share your story of God's Kingdom?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Thank You, Lord, for being Immanuel, God with Us. You became flesh and dwelt among us, filled with grace and truth, being the exact representation of the divine nature, the perfect image of the invisible God. Because of You we have come to know Him who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light. To Him be honor and glory forever.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Lord, by Your divine power You have granted to us all things pertaining to life and godliness, even that we might become partakers of the divine nature. Yet, so often, my first thoughts are about my will and my wants, having little thought for the true riches that are already mine. Heal me of this disease and let the words of Jesus continually echo in my mind, that I might be more aware of those around me and their needs.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Heavenly Father, may the Spirit of truth continue to guide _____ into all the truth, that he/she might know Your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding and experience healing from the destructiveness of sin. And in his/her healing, may _____ be growing in his/her availability to serve You in serving others. Bless him/her with a special sense of Your presence that even others sense. For your glory, forever. Amen.

Pray for our church family:

Chris & Debbie Johnson
Eastern Europe



Mike & Jennifer Jolly
Wesley, Ella & Charlotte



David & Taleayah
Johnson
Alex & Alivia



Sheriffe & Hardaye
Karim



Written by Bill Axline

³⁵Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, **“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”**

1. In verse 35, Matthew tells us Jesus went from town to town, ministering to the people. In verse 36, what observation is made about the crowds of people Jesus spent time with? And what was His response?
2. What do you think it means for Jesus to have compassion on the people?
3. What do you think it means for the people to be harassed? Helpless?
4. Matthew tries to help us understand what it means for the people to be harassed and helpless by comparing them to sheep who have no shepherd. What does this word picture suggest to you about the people? (A description of the role of a shepherd can be found in the answer key. It really isn't an answer, but it might help you think about this if you are unfamiliar with sheep and shepherds in the Bible.)
5. When you observe people in your own community (Charlotte and surrounding areas), whether it is up close on the streets, in the malls, or in the parks, or second hand, as in the newspaper or on the news, what do you see? Considering your first thoughts, how would you describe them?
6. And what is (are) your frequent initial response(s) to them?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Heavenly Father, thank You that as much as You hate sin, You love me, the sinner. Thank You that You sent Your Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. You not only see our sin, but You also understand our need. The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; Your mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning! Great is your faithfulness. You, Lord God, are awesome.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Forgive me for those times when I do not extend to others the kindness You have shown me. Help me to be less focused on myself and my concerns and more aware and responsive to those around me and their needs.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Heavenly Father, I ask You to fill _____ with a spirit of encouragement, that he/she would be equipped to comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from You. Keep him/her from any anger or bitterness for the wrongs done to him/her. Help _____ to be disciplined in those things that would bring to maturity the fruit of the Spirit in his/her life. May faith, hope, and love so abound in his/her heart that his/her presence brings life and light to those still walking in darkness. Lord, be glorified in him/her. Amen.

Pray for our church family:

Todd & Amy Keenan
Cohen & Luke



Jeff & Candie Kisiah
Parachurch Ministry



Nate & Karen Kepley
Silas & Tyler



Robert Kisiah



Written by Bill Axline

³⁵*Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.* ³⁶*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.* ³⁷*Then he said to his disciples, “**The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.**”* ³⁸*Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

It most likely is the winter and early spring of AD 31 when Jesus conducted this itinerant ministry in Galilee. By the time Matthew gives us this summary of this ministry, it is now in the fall. When Matthew relates Jesus’s conversation with his disciples, he literally writes, “Then he is saying to his disciples...” This use of the present tense for something obviously in the past is a literary technique often used in storytelling to bring us readers into the action of that moment. The significant aspect of that here is that this suggests that this may not have been a single conversation, but a recurring statement Jesus made to his disciples during this period of his ministry. (See H.E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, The Macmillan Company: Toronto, 1927, p. 184).

So then, it is easy to imagine during this growing season Jesus walking with His disciples through the countryside from town to town, observing the various stages of the grain growing in the fields they passed and then pointing to the fields and reminding the disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.”

(The chronology followed here is that which has been so convincingly set forth in the following: Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, 1977, p. 11–142.)

1. When you think about this word picture that Jesus used in verse 37, what point do you think Jesus is trying to make to the disciples, using your own words in plain language?
2. Why do you think Jesus said the harvest is plentiful?
3. Jesus also observed in verse 37 that there are few people who are real workers in God’s harvest. Why do you think that is the case?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Lord Jesus, thank You that when You sent Your disciples into the world to make disciples, You did not give them an impossible task. You invited them to join You in a ministry that was awaiting an abundant harvest. Not only did You invite us to labor with You in that abundant harvest, but You also have given us every resource we need to succeed in making disciples.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Heavenly Father, forgive me for those times when I neglect or hold back from doing the work You have given me as Jesus's disciple. Help me to give Your work the urgency it deserves. And help me to take advantage of the resources You have given me to succeed in that work.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Heavenly Father, give _____ wisdom to recognize those people in his/her life who are most ripe for the harvest. Show him/her how best to relate to these people as individuals, discerning their unique needs and issues, and responding to each one in way that draws that person to you. Help _____ to discern the barriers in the lives of those who are not ripe for harvest, and show him/her how to break those barriers down in a gentle and loving way. Holy Spirit, train _____ to be an effective master disciple-builder. May we all labor together in Your harvest field for Your eternal glory. Amen.

Pray for our church family:

Bob & Nancy Kluesener



Vicki Lehman



Ryan & Maggie Kruse



William Lide



January 22: Matthew 9:35–38

Day 22

Written by Pastor Jerry

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Today’s sermon is based on Matthew 9:35-38, as you know from using this Guide the past three days. Today, meditate on the passage—read it over and over again and ask God to reveal his truth to you. Then make a few of your own observations about the passage:

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What do we learn about GOD from this passage?

What do we learn about OURSELVES from this passage?

After listening to the sermon (live or via HCC website or phone app) and/or meditating on the text, what is ONE primary way that you can apply some truth mentioned here to your life THIS WEEK?

Based on what you have written above, can you write a brief prayer of response below, asking God in your own words to help you obey his Word and put it into practice?

Puritan Prayer:

The Valley of Vision is a collection of Puritan prayers and devotions. Each Sunday, we will provide one of those prayers that relates to our theme. These ancient prayers can be challenging because of their language, but they are very rich and full of meaning. We encourage you to read the prayer slowly, then to pray it to God yourself, followed by any other ways God leads you to commune with Him and pray for others. As you pray for the ministry listed at the bottom of this page, please remember to use Matthew 9:35-38 to help guide you.

Requests, 274-275

O GOD,

May I never be a blot or a blank in life, cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of, or make my liberty an occasion to the flesh. May I by love serve others, and please my neighbor for his good to edification.

May I attend to what is ornamental as well as essential in religion, pursuing things that are lovely and of good report. May I render my profession of the gospel not only impressive, but amiable and inviting.

May I hold forth the way of Jesus with my temper as well as my tongue, with my life as well as my lips. May I say to all I meet, I am journeying towards the Lord's given place, come with me for your good.

May I be prepared for all the allotments of this short, changing, uncertain life, with a useful residence in it, a comfortable journey through it, a safe passage out of it. May I be in character and conduct like the dew of heaven, the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the fullness of the fountain.

May I never be ashamed of Jesus or his words, be deterred from fulfilling a known duty through fear, be discouraged from attempting it through weakness. May I see all things in a divine light so that they may inform my judgment and sanctify my heart.

And by all the disciplines of thy providence, and all the ordinances of religion, may I be increasingly prepared for life's remaining duties, the solemnities of a dying hour, and the joys and services that lie beyond the grave.

Featured Ministry: Harvest Kids

Our mission is to partner with parents as they disciple their children in Jesus Christ.

We believe that God has called parents or guardians to be the primary disciplers of their children. Therefore as a ministry, we want to do all we can to help parents in this endeavor. One of the ways we partner with parents is by helping teach the gospel and instruct their children in the word of God. We also provide a venue on Sunday morning where parents are involved in their child's spiritual formation. We also resource parents with curriculum, conferences and classes.

We are currently using Children Desiring God's "A Sure Foundation" for babies and toddlers and Lifeway's "The Gospel Project for Kids" for preschool and elementary ages as a teaching resource on Sunday mornings.

We are thankful for the volunteers who share the gospel with our children each week. If you would like to join our monthly rotation, contact Amy Granata at amy@harvestcharlotte.com for more information.

Written by Bill Axline

³⁵*Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.* ³⁶*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.* ³⁷*Then he said to his disciples, “**The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.**”* ³⁸***Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”***

1. In verse 37 Jesus draws attention to the need for those who will work at helping the many who are responsive to God to become growing disciples of Jesus. What is the first thing Jesus asks His disciples to do in response to this need?
2. In verse 38 Jesus continues to use the metaphor to challenge the disciples to a specific response. In this metaphor, whom do you think the various elements (the Lord, the harvest, the workers) specifically represent?
3. Matthew obviously thought this exhortation to pray was significant because he included it in his gospel. What do you think is the significance of this prayer request? Perhaps Matthew 4:19, 10:1–8, and 28:19 give us a context to understand this passage.
4. What do you think is the nature of the work that needs to be done in the harvest field?
5. For which specific ministries at Harvest Community Church could you pray for these kinds of workers?
6. Among your Christian friends, who are some for whom you can pray God will raise up as a harvest worker?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Lord God, thank You for being the Lord of the harvest. You are the one who works all things according to the counsel of Your own will, and it is Your Holy Spirit who convicts those in the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, and it is Your Spirit who guides us into all the truth. You have honored us by inviting us to work with You in the harvest, but we know it is by Your work that people are transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Your beloved Son. We are assured that as we abound in the work of the Lord of the harvest, our labor is not in vain.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Lord of the harvest, forgive me when I regard the Your work with a casualness that belies its importance. Forgive me when I engage in Your work and then think more highly of myself than I ought. Give me the wisdom and the grace to abound in Your harvest work, not for material gain or for the praise of men, but to hear You say, “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the rest of Your Master.”

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Heavenly Father, I ask that Your Spirit help _____ to be a disciplined follower of Jesus and make him/her into a fisher of men. The Twelve recognized that the Scriptures bore witness to Jesus that “zeal for thy house will consume him.” May this become the reputation of _____ as well. May he/she abound in the work of Your harvest, being confident that his/her labor is never meaningless or without fruit. To You be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever. Amen.

Pray for our church family:

Nick & Amanda Macek
Jackson



George Markovich



Rachel & Greg Manning
Allie, TJ & Amelia



Dan & Jennifer Martin
Ashley, Melissa & Heather



Written by Bill Axline

³⁵*Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.* ³⁶*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.* ³⁷*Then he said to his disciples, “**The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.**”* ³⁸***Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”***

After Jesus shared several times with His disciples His observation on the harvest and workers in the harvest, He sent them out to do the same work they had seen Him do (Matthew 10:1–8). Previously, He had invited them to follow Him and promised to make them fishers of men (Matthew 4:19). And when He had completed His earthly training with them, He sent them into the world to be those workers they were challenged to pray for, to be harvesters (Matthew 28:19). From the beginning, it seems Jesus had a clear plan in training His followers to be effective workers in His harvest field.

Let me suggest that following Jesus and becoming a fisher of men or, as in the metaphor in this passage, a worker in the Lord’s harvest field are two concepts that are bound together in the plan of God. Yet throughout the Scriptures are examples of people who either rejected this invitation and plan of God from the beginning or else, having started, dropped out and failed in the work of the harvest field.

1. Can you think of some examples from the New Testament of those who failed to respond to God and to become workers in the Lord’s harvest? If not, read the passages noted in the answer key.
2. What are some reasons people fail to develop as effective workers in the Lord’s harvest field?
3. Is there something holding you back from becoming an effective worker in the harvest? Are there some steps you can take to move you forward as an effective harvester?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Lord Jesus, thank You for never wavering from doing the will of the Father. Thank You that the guiding force of Your life was to accomplish the work of the Father and You did not rest from Your labor or seek Your glory until it was accomplished. Thank You for setting us apart, calling us to enter into Your labor that You continue to do from heaven's throne, God's work to bring many sons to glory.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Heavenly Father, forgive me for those times when I love the world and the things of the world, when I let the desire for physical pleasure and comfort, the desire to possess what I see, and the desire to exalt myself in the eyes of others become the decision-makers and the guiding forces in my life. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting, that I might be a tool useful in your hand.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Heavenly Father, I ask that You keep _____ in Your name, set a guard over him/her as he/she labors in Your harvest field, and keep him/her from the evil one. Sanctify him/her in the truth: Your word is truth. May he/she abide always in You and You in him/her and so bear much fruit, always and forever to Your glory. Amen.

Pray for our church family:

Jean Meehan



Dean & Joyce McHam

Jay & Elisabeth
Mendicino
Anthony & Gia

Written by Bill Axline

³⁵Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, **“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”**

As we have studied this passage these past few days, we have observed:

- Jesus went to the people.
 - Jesus helped the people with their needs as well as taught them about the Kingdom.
 - Jesus felt compassion for the people.
 - Jesus’s compassion is directly related to His observation of their emotional and spiritual condition.
 - Jesus involved His disciples in the harvest ministry.
1. How can we become more sensitive to the needs of others? What practical things can we do to grow in this way?
 2. How can we show compassion to people without creating an unhealthy situation where they are dependent upon us? What guidelines might apply here?
 3. Are there two or three people in your circle of Harvest Community Church friends or acquaintances for whom you can pray that they might become workers in the Lord’s harvest field?
 4. As you have studied and prayed through this passage, what is the most significant lesson or truth you have learned? And how can you respond to this in a specific, tangible way?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Heavenly Father, it has always been Your desire for us to know You intimately. To this end, Your Message to us became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as the truly unique Son of God, full of grace and truth. Thank You, Lord, for seeking us out and calling us to share in this eternal work. Thank You for seeing something in us that we couldn't see. Heavenly Father, You are amazing!

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

I confess, Lord, that I do not extend myself to others, seeking them out and becoming part of their lives and having them become part of mine. I can be friendly, Lord, but I am reluctant to make new friends. Lord, teach us about the going part of what it means to make disciples. Lord, You told us to pray for laborers for the harvest field. Help me to become increasingly effective laborers in Your harvest field.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Lord, before You sent out Your disciples, You prayed to the Father that they would be kept in His name, and protected from the evil one, and that they would be sanctified in the truth, Your Word. I ask this same thing for _____. May he/she always abide in You, seeking the will of the Father in all things. May he/she stand firm in his/her faith, resisting the devil. Set _____ apart in Your Word that he/she might be a worker unashamed, being salt and light in this world, bearing much fruit. For your eternal glory. Amen.

Pray for our church family:

Joseph & Maryann
Mercier



Susie Moore



Sara Minerva
Alyssa



Joe & Jan Mott



Week 5: January 26 – February 1

Mark 11:22-24

“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Parents' Guide

Week 5: January 26 – February 1

Mark 11:22–24

“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

1. Parents, ask your children:

What does it mean and why does Jesus ask me...

| | |
|--------|--|
| Jan 26 | <i>to pray with faith in God?</i> |
| Jan 27 | <i>to pray for things that seem impossible?</i> |
| Jan 30 | <i>to pray believing in God's infinite power?</i> |
| Jan 31 | <i>to pray believing what you say will happen?</i> |
| Feb 1 | <i>to pray believing you have received what you asked for?</i> |

2. Now encourage a heart check for the principle of prayer that you learned today. Ask each child to consider:

Do I pray in the way Jesus asks? Or do I need to change the way I pray so I am doing what He asks?

(Parents, feel free to model a response with observations about your own prayer life and habits.)

3. Now pray, putting into practice what you've just learned.

Suggested Answers for Parents' Guide for Week 5

Jan. 26

Again we see that we are to pray with faith in God. This is mentioned many times, so it is clearly an essential part of prayer. We must pray to God knowing He is willing and able to help. This attitude is not arrogant but pleasing to Him. Are we pleased when our children come and ask us for help? They are acknowledging our ability to help them, and they ask expecting that we will help them because we love them. We should have the same relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Jan. 27

Thankfully, God is not limited by our understanding. Ephesians 3:20 states that God is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think. We are to pray in a way that recognizes that God literally can do anything. He heals the sick, raises the dead, turns enemies into friends, walks on the water, feeds thousands with food barely enough for one, and spoke the universe into existence out of nothing. Our attitude when praying to God must acknowledge His ability to do absolutely anything, even beyond our ability to comprehend it.

Jan. 30

"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?" (Jeremiah 32:27) If you are like me, I often limit the ability of God to do something to my own understanding. Think about Mt. Everest being picked up and thrown into the sea. It seems impossible until we realize that God created the mountain and things much, much bigger. God is BIG—so much bigger than we can comprehend—and when we pray, we need to remember that we pray to God who is not limited in any way. If you have never seen it before, I highly recommend watching *How Great Is Our God* by Louie Giglio with your family, which is now available for free on YouTube. It will definitely communicate to you the vastness of God and give you a new perspective for His infinite power.

Jan. 31

This attitude of a confidence in God has been a recurring theme in our study. God wants you to have the confidence to approach Him like a child asking his or her loving father for something needed. Dads, realize that you represent God the Father to your children in this capacity. Do they know you care for them? Are you available? Are you approachable? Do they know that they are important to you? Do you reliably come through on what you promise? Children, especially young ones, will understand their relationship to God as they experience their relationship to you. The confidence they have in their earthly father will impact the confidence they have in their Heavenly Father. That is a humbling thought.

Feb. 1

Faith is described in Hebrews 11:1 as follows: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Further, Paul states in Romans 8:24–25, "Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." God wants us to pray with hope, meaning that we are assured of what we're asking for. If God can do anything and He answers our prayers, then it would be inconsistent to make a request to Him while doubting He will ever answer it. Believing that we have what we ask for is to be absolutely assured that it's going to happen and that the only thing separating our prayer from becoming a reality is time.

January 26: Mark 11:22–24

Day 26

Written by Carol Garrott

²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.

²⁴Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

1. Who and what is Jesus responding to regarding faith?
2. Why is faith important?
3. Jesus had faith that after His death He would be sitting on His rightful throne (Matthew 26:64). Can you think of a particular circumstance where having faith might help you in your life?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Lord God, only You have the ability to enable me to have faith. Without such a thing, I would still be dead in my sins. Your answers to prayer have been both exciting and humbling. You are faithful to answer, and Your answers given at the right time according to Your will have been instrumental in building my faith even more. I praise You for teaching me and building me up through Your word.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Dear Jesus, when I think of the withered fig tree, it tells me that confident faith is needed, for this was previously a healthy tree. I confess that I don't have such faith and ask for Your forgiveness for having a lack of assurance. Please work within me to wipe away doubt and strengthen my faith to enable me to accomplish that which will glorify You.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Father, I lift up the body at Harvest Community Church and ask that You grant every person an increased measure of faith, that all would see You, then everyone else, in a different light. Allow us to grow in this area in order to be empowered to resist the enemy and to worship You as You should be worshiped.

Pray for our church family:

Tom & Sheri Muma
Chad



Michael & Tamara
Nazareth
Elora



Delon & Brenda
Murphy
Sarah



Anton & Lynette
Niemand



Written by Carol Garrott

²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. ²⁴Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

1. Jesus is teaching about speaking to a fig tree (v. 11:12–14) and then to a mountain (v. 11:24). If we were to compare these two verses, do you notice anything?
2. Moving a mountain into an ocean is a potentially cataclysmic event. Do you believe Jesus was stating this in a literal sense?
3. Why do you suppose Jesus is using a mountain as an example?
4. If a person “does not doubt,” what will happen?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Jesus, I praise You for teaching us and showing us what can actually happen with such a high level of faith. Your very voice commanded the fig tree to obey and wilt. I thank You for the examples the Bible holds for teaching and building faith and wisdom within each of us.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Lord, I confess I need practice to realize this level of faith. Even though I may not have spoken to a tree in such a way, I sense that my faith needs renewing. Please upgrade my faith and trust as Your servant so that I can help build Your Kingdom without restraint.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Heavenly Father, I approach Your throne to ask You to build up our body so that we can trust You to move our own mountains. Please speak to each person, giving us exactly what we need right now to intentionally remove those things that inhibit progress in growth.

Pray for our church family:

John & Bonnie Nystrom
Papua New Guinea



Joy Paulsen
East Asia



**Gina & Gilbert
Pagunuran**
Giselle, Gabriel & Griffin



Terry & Brenda Peagler

January 28: Mark 11:22–24

Day 28

Written by Carol Garrett

²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.

²⁴Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

1. When doubt creeps in while you petition God in prayer, what do you think is the result?
2. Jesus states, “Believe that you have received it...” How can you get there?
3. Why did Jesus feel it important to explain this?
4. What does this passage show or remind us about prayer?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Jesus, thank You for teaching us about the correct manner in which to pray, emphasizing that faith, not doubt, must be present. I praise You for Your patient teaching to help move us to a place where we no longer engage in old thinking. You desire that Your sons and daughters live a life of utter joy and fulfillment under You, in Your care.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Lord, help me to realize those areas where I may have been working against myself. Help me also to resist the ideas suggested by the enemy. My desire is that I continue to learn and adopt traits such as faith in order to live a holier and more effective life.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Father, I pray for _____ to be living as a true representation of You in his/her everyday life. Help him/her to drop what is not of You and adopt faith and belief, and help him/her to exercise it more and more as a regular part of his/her routine. Please help him/her to be in a regular prayer mode with you.

Pray for our church family:

Dennis & Lois Pickens



Andy & Anna Pierce
Aiden, Benjamin, Naia



Bonita Pickett



Moses & Shelly Pitter



January 29: Mark 11:22–24

Day 29

Written by Pastor Jerry

²² “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³ “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Today’s sermon is based on Mark 11:22-24, as you know from using this Guide the past three days. Today, meditate on the passage—read it over and over again and ask God to reveal his truth to you. Then make a few of your own observations about the passage:

-
-
-
-

What do we learn about GOD from this passage?

What do we learn about OURSELVES from this passage?

After listening to the sermon (live or via HCC website or phone app) and/or meditating on the text, what is ONE primary way that you can apply some truth mentioned here to your life THIS WEEK?

Based on what you have written above, can you write a brief prayer of response below, asking God in your own words to help you obey his Word and put it into practice?

Puritan Prayer:

The Valley of Vision is a collection of Puritan prayers and devotions. Each Sunday, we will provide one of those prayers that relates to our theme. These ancient prayers can be challenging because of their language, but they are very rich and full of meaning. We encourage you to read the prayer slowly, then to pray it to God yourself, followed by any other ways God leads you to commune with Him and pray for others. As you pray for the ministry listed at the bottom of this page, please remember to use Mark 11:22-24 to help guide you.

Meeting God, 268-269

GREAT GOD,

In public and private, in sanctuary and home, may my life be steeped in prayer, filled with the spirit of grace and supplication, each prayer perfumed with the incense of atoning blood.

Help me, defend me, until from praying ground I pass to the realm of unceasing praise. Urged by my need, invited by Thy promises, called by Thy Spirit, I enter Thy presence, worshipping Thee with godly fear, awed by Thy majesty, greatness, glory, but encouraged by Thy love.

I am all poverty as well as all guilt, having nothing of my own with which to repay Thee, but I bring Jesus to Thee in the arms of faith, pleading His righteousness to offset my iniquities, rejoicing that He will weigh down the scales for me, and satisfy thy justice.

I bless Thee that great sin draws out great grace, that, although the least sin deserves infinite punishment because done against an infinite God, yet there is mercy for me, for where guilt is most terrible, there Thy mercy in Christ is most free and deep.

Bless me by revealing to me more of His saving merits, by causing Thy goodness to pass before me, by speaking peace to my contrite heart; strengthen me to give Thee no rest until Christ shall reign supreme within me in every thought, word, and deed, in a faith that purifies the heart, overcomes the world, works by love, fastens me to Thee, and ever clings to the cross.

Featured Ministry: Community Groups

Community Groups are small communities of Harvesters committed to glorifying God by making disciples.

It is more than just a weekly meeting. It's an environment where we share life together. This entails living intentionally in the natural overlap of life. For example, our community groups eat meals together, attend family sporting events, recitals, babysit for one another, etc. We celebrate the good times and help each other through the bad. We basically live in ways that normal families do. Community groups are an environment where we are "known". When people know us they are able to help us mature in Christ by speaking the "truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

Finally, not only are we involved discipling one another, we are also striving to fulfill the Great Commission by going and serving those around us. This is seen by groups serving local missions, non-profits, neighborhoods, etc. It is our hope that we will reach Charlotte and her many communities through these groups. Our plan is to live where God has placed us and serve for the good of our particular communities and the city (Jeremiah 29:1-4). For a current list of our community groups, please visit harvesthcharlotte.com.

Written by Carol Garrott

²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. ²⁴Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

OBSERVATION

Faith and belief seem to be closely aligned. Faith and belief in what? In a situation turning around? Possibly, in a roundabout way, but more accurately, it’s faith and belief in our Heavenly Father. Do we believe Him? Do we believe what He accomplishes? Are we convinced of His perfect plan and His will to carry it out? Do we believe His authenticity, His truth, His righteousness, His holiness, His worthiness to rule? Do we believe His love, trustworthiness, faithfulness, compassion, mercy? Do we believe He is Shepherd and Savior?

He is our only hope in a world that acts like it has forgotten Him. We could go on and on with descriptions and names, such as Wonderful Counselor; Prince of Peace; I Am; the First and the Last; the Holy of Holies; Jehovah Rapha (your Healer); Omniscient; the Way, the Truth, and the Life; Forgiver of all transgressions; Breath that gives you life; the Ark of the Covenant; the Door; the Tree of Life; the Glory in the cloud of the temple; the Lord who rescues those with a contrite spirit; the Blood Atonement.*

Consider these passages:

- Psalm 23
- Hebrews 11
- Revelation 22

It seems helpful getting reconditioned in order to appreciate the God to whom we pray. Perhaps this helps us to approach our Father in Heaven with the right spirit of prayer, as well as increased faith and belief.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you” (Jeremiah 29:11–12).

*Four pages of descriptive names are available upon request. Contact Carol at carol.garrott@zoho.com or (980) 721-4193.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Lord God, I am nearly speechless with the honor of knowing You anew with so many names and titles. I praise You and thank You for being the God that You are. What can be the proper acknowledgment of You except to drop to my knees, mindful of who I am, and Who I am encountering. You are worthy, worthy, worthy.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Jesus, I confess that I feel so unworthy to be called Your heir. We, Your people, are privileged to be held up by You with Your unconditional love. Help me, dear Lord, not to treat You casually, but in the highest esteem due You. You deserve everything from me, including obedience, sacrifice, time, love, a teachable spirit, worship...

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

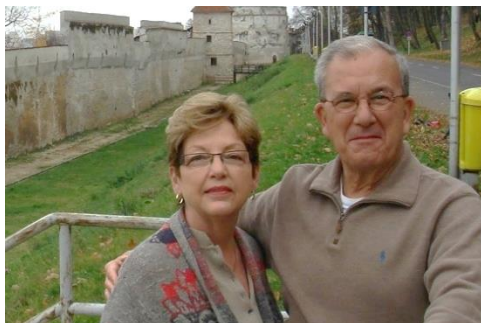
Lord Jesus, I raise up all Harvesters to be drawn closer to You. Bring them to a place with You that they have never encountered before. Allow them to bask in a new place, new light, new awareness of You, increased joy. I pray You will lighten their loads, rearrange their schedules where warranted, display Your love and compassion, and melt their hearts. I pray that hearts will be on fire for You, bringing increased fervency in our worship of You when we gather together.

Pray for our church family:

Bruce & Karen Porter



Tim & Carol Prewitt
World Reach



Steve & Niki Powers
Kayla & Evan



Stan & Heidi Reckard
Andrew, Emily, Amy,
Kaela & Catherine



Written by Carol Garrott

²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. ²⁴Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

As Christians, we have been outfitted with powerful gifts from the Holy Spirit. Putting the gift of our faith into action is bound to resolve problems. The Bible itself contains such stories. Perhaps it’s time to boldly put our faith to the test. Are you seeing yourself clearly as empowered by a Holy God to walk in His truth and be a light? Do you believe these passages are speaking to you?

Below is an excerpt from an insightful commentary written by Matthew Henry:

And therefore (Mark 11:24), “*What things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye shall receive them; nay, believe that ye do receive them, and he that has power to give them, saith, Ye shall have them. I say unto you, Ye shall* (Mark 11:24). *Verily I say unto you, Ye shall*” (Mark 11:23). Now this is to be applied, [1.] To that *faith of miracles* which the apostles and first preachers of the gospel were endued with, which did wonders in *things natural*, healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils; these were, in effect, the removing of mountains. The apostles speak of a faith which would do that, and yet might be found where holy love was not (1 Cor. 13:2). [2.] It may be applied to that *miracle of faith*, which all true Christians are endued with, which doeth wonders in *things spiritual*. It *justifies* us (Rom. 5:1), and so removes the mountains of guilt, and casts them into the *depths of the sea*, never to rise up in judgment against us (Mic. 7:19). It *purifies* the heart (Acts 15:9), and so removes mountains of corruption, and *makes them plains* before the grace of God (Zech. 4:7).

(Source: Matthew Henry's Commentary, Hendrickson, Peabody, 1991, Vol. 5, 427)

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Jesus, thank You for Your Word, for it pierces the darkness and brings new life. You created many miracles while You walked alongside man. In this way You were in position to point out my frailties and give me vision to see what I can become in You. You, as The Word, serve as a road map and guide for praying, practicing, and realizing what can be a new “me.” I praise You for Your truth!

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Lord, forgive me for not looking to see the everyday miracles that are on display for me to observe. You and Your wonderful works are there, but I must admit I've been choosing not to see them. I confess to not exercising that wondrous gift of faith from You, for it erases a mountain of guilt, for example. Please bring correction to my life, using whatever methods You deem necessary. I want to be Your child with whom You are forever pleased.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Lord, I hold up those in my family, the body at Harvest Community Church, and others in my personal life to be given increased wisdom and resultant ability to remove their mountains. I pray that each person's personal set of issues after they have been prayed for will be permanently banished from his or her life. I pray this in the wonderful name of Jesus.

Pray for our church family:

Mary Lou Rhodes



Erin Rockman



Gabe & Meg Robinson
Finnegan, Grace & Max



Daniel & Kayla Rupp
Gene, Zion, Brave & Jubilee
East Asia

Written by Carol Garrott

²²*“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. ²⁴Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”*

Prayer is a time for us to shut out the noise, be still, and humble ourselves. Jesus loves to hear from us in prayer. This is a great time of communication when He is talking to us, and He wants us to be still so that we can hear His voice. He is so concerned for us and loves us so deeply. He wants to download what He wills into us and smooth out the wrinkles in our lives, to simply love on us.

In verse 24, He specifies *“whatever you ask for in prayer”* (italics mine). Wow. When we make time for God in prayer, He is absolutely listening to whatever we have to say to Him. He is present and considers our quiet time together with Him to be of the utmost importance.

He further specifies *“it will be yours...”* Who else can be so all-inclusive in making promises to us? God is literally stating in this verse that there are no limitations to the fulfillment of our prayer requests. Speaking in financial language, we should be able to see 100 percent return on our “investments.” This is a stunning promise by our Heavenly Father! How great is the love of our Heavenly Father for us.

Editor’s note: Of course, we must consider everything Scripture says about prayer, not just one passage in isolation. However, let’s not let that qualification deter us from exercising the kind of faith that Jesus is encouraging in this passage.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Thank You, Lord, for hearing all of my prayers. Thank You for granting me anything, whatever I ask for in prayer. You are a faithful and loving God whom I can't yet understand fully. But Your concern and desire for us is at a level that should bring us to tears. May every man bow down and declare You as Lord and King. With love and gratitude in our hearts, we give You the worship You deserve.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Lord, You are pleased to answer our prayers and grant our wishes. But I must confess that I don't necessarily ask. Therefore, I don't receive. Whether this is for the right or wrong reason, only You know for certain, Lord. Please bring correction to me where it is called for, dear Jesus.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Lord, I pray that all who study this Scripture about Your incredible promise are enlightened and mindful to pray as each person should. I pray that the body at Harvest Community Church and the missionaries we support are spending delightful time with You in prayer; that You are ministering to each and every one; that all are hearing Your call to be still and remain close to You; that You are bringing comfort and healing in the specific way each person needs it now; and that each soul personally experiences and feels an undeniable measure of the love that pours out of You. And so in this process, I ask that You recreate a new and higher level of complete faith in You, for You are able, so able.

Pray for our church family:

Karl & Joy Seger
Grant, Hope, Clarke,
Faith, Jane, Wade & Jed



Judy Sellers



Dean & Barb Seidel



**Jon & Kathleen
Shoenfeld**



Week 6: February 2 – 9

John 14:13-14

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Parents' Guide

Week 6: February 2 – 9

John 14:13–14

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

1. Parents, ask your children:

What does it mean and why does Jesus ask me...

| | |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| Feb 2 | <i>to pray in His name?</i> |
|-------|-----------------------------|

(To help understand what it means to pray in Jesus' name, ask yourself what an ambassador is and what an ambassador does?)

What does it mean and why does Jesus ask me...

| | |
|-------|---|
| Feb 3 | <i>to pray with His authority?</i> |
| Feb 6 | <i>to pray with His power?</i> |
| Feb 7 | <i>to pray according to His will?</i> |
| Feb 8 | <i>to pray that God is glorified?</i> |
| Feb 9 | <i>Review the questions you've asked this week.</i> |

2. Now encourage a heart check for the principle of prayer that you learned today. Ask each child to consider:

Do I pray in the way Jesus asks? Or do I need to change the way I pray so I am doing what He asks?

(Parents, feel free to model a response with observations about your own prayer life and habits.)

3. Now pray, putting into practice what you've just learned.

Suggested Answers for Parents' Guide for Week 6

Feb. 2

When we do something in someone's name, it is as if we are doing it that person's place. I think we have come to believe that we are required to add "in Jesus' name" to the end of our prayers as if that phrase makes it effective. But that is not what this means. I think the easiest way to think about this is to think what an ambassador is and does. Our country has ambassadors all around the world, doing things in the name of the United States and representing the United States to the foreign countries in which they are located. Further, ambassadors have certain designated authorities and powers so they can undertake and be successful in executing the mission and message the United States has given them. The ambassadors' ultimate objective is to represent the United States in a way that increases its standing in foreign communities. Sound familiar? We are Christ's ambassadors on earth. Our role as believers is to represent Christ on earth. Christ has granted us certain authority and power to successfully represent Christ, proclaim His message, and do His will with the ultimate goal of bringing glory to Christ. So when we pray "in Jesus' name," it is to recognize the position He has given, doing and asking all things according to His will. Therefore, implied in this role is that Christ's ambassadors know Him, His word, and His will as we spread His gospel.

Feb. 3

Authority is different than power, although they are related. Authority gives someone the right to execute a power. The great commission does not start with GO. It starts, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore..." When we pray in Jesus' name, we are not asking for His authority but recognizing that all authority has been given to Him and He has sent us out in His authority.

Feb. 6

I think the best example to illustrate this point is James' description of Elijah in James 5:16–18: "The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit." The point is that it is God's power and not ours; and, assuming we are a vessel fit for honorable use, He uses us as a conduit of His power.

Feb. 7

To pray according to God's will means to pray in accordance with His desired outcome and not ours. It incorporates several things, including knowing His will and trusting that His will is best. We might object that we don't know the will of God—but the more I read the Bible, the more I see people who, having surrendered their lives to Christ, were enlightened to the specific will of God in many situations. Further, Paul states in 1 Corinthians 2 that no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God, which has been given to us so *that we might know the thoughts of God*. I'm not saying that we can know God's will in each and every matter. But, speaking from personal experience, I don't know how often I utilize the gift of God's Spirit to even attempt to discern God's will. My point is this: How much time do you spend speaking with someone who is not listening to you? Our culture drives us to think we will get everything in five minutes or less, but that is not how our God works.

Feb. 8

This must be the ultimate reason for everything we pray. And when God is glorified, that means very good things—unbelievable things—for us! Christ glorified God by going to the cross, and look at what that has brought us! I was reading today in *The Valley of Vision*, a collection of Puritan prayers that Pastor Jerry has mentioned and read from in service. I like to flip through it and stop at whatever I feel led to read. Most times, while reading, I reach a line in one of the prayers that stops me in my tracks as I realize how badly I miss the point sometimes. Today was no different; the lines in questions highlight the very idea of God being glorified. In a prayer titled "God's Cause" (from p. 175 in my copy), I read the following: *Glorify thyself and I shall rejoice for to bring honor to thy name is my sole desire. I adore thee that thou art God, and long that others should know it, feel it, and rejoice in it.*

Written by Jerry Swisshelm

Today we will look at Matthew 1:20-21.

*²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the **name Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.”*

1. Names were important in biblical times—much more so than today. We may hold someone in high esteem or in disrespect by using his or her name in certain ways, but in biblical times using someone’s name meant representing that person and acting in his or her authority. To see examples, search your Bible app for “in the name of the Lord” in the Old Testament. Some well-known examples are 1 Samuel 17:45 (David to Goliath), 1 Kings 18:32 (Elijah on Mount Carmel), and Psalm 20:7 (“Some trust in chariots...”). Make any relevant notes in the space provided here.
2. Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, which means “the Lord saves.” What does having the name “Jesus” given to our Lord in biblical times say about Him?
3. Ephesians 5:20 says we should be “always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, **in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**” Based on the above observations, what does it mean to give thanks in the name of Jesus?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Praise God the Father for His Son, through whom we receive all that is good. Thank God the Father for every way that He has blessed you in the name of Jesus.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Consider your use of Jesus's name—does it represent His true position and purpose, and your acting under His authority? Or has it become a simple formula for ending prayers? Consider Exodus 20:7, and the example of the seven sons of Sceva in Acts 19:13–16. Confess any failings on your part, and ask the Lord for His help in correcting them.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Consider who you are under Jesus. See 2 Corinthians 5:20, Acts 1:8, and Matthew 25:34–40. Ask the Lord to show you to whom He wants you to go. Pray for them now, and ask the Lord to grant you the opportunity and courage to represent Him to them!

Pray for our church family:

Greg & Linda Singerle
Reece & Seth



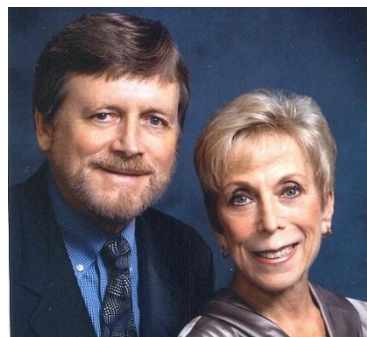
Stan Smith



Kyle Singerle



Bob & Dee Spillane



Written by Cory Granata and Seth Howard

Today we will look at Philippians 2:9-11.

⁹*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰that at the **name of Jesus** every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

OBSERVATION

Jesus was humble and obedient, even to death on the cross. God “exalted” Him for this. The name *Jesus* is superior. The bowing of the knee indicates inferiority. As is written in Isaiah 45:23,

“I have sworn by my own name; I have spoken the truth, and I will never go back on my word: Every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will confess allegiance to me.”

Every created being will confess [agree with] publicly that Jesus Christ is Lord.

INTERPRETATION

1. Try to put this verse in your own words.

APPLICATION

2. Psalm 37:39 says, “The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD.” Read this Psalm in its entirety, and meditate on it. Verse 4 contains a promise for those who “delight in the Lord.” State this promise in your own words, and then list from this Psalm the other promises the Lord gives those who delight in the Lord:

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Praise Jesus for being steadfast and obedient. Thank Christ for His abounding love and unconditional grace He gives you every day.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Pray in Jesus's name the promises you found in Psalm 37 for *yourself*.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Pray in Jesus's name the promises you found in Psalm 37 for *others*.

Pray for our church family:

Kyle & Bel Spinner
Marissa, Harrison &
Audrey



Mayfa Stoy



Laura Stone



Jerry & Lynn
Swishelm



Written by Nick Macek

Today we will look at John 14:11-14.

OBSERVATIONS

1. Jesus calls us to believe that He and the Father are **one**.
2. Jesus says that **all believers** will do His works, not just a chosen few.
3. Jesus will grant you anything you ask “in His name” **so that** the Father will be glorified.

Verse 11 - The first thing we are called to do in these verses is to believe Jesus when He says He and the Father are one. He then adds that if we're not willing to take Him at His word, then at a minimum we should believe He and the Father are one based on the ways He's demonstrated His power in His ministry (i.e., miracles).

In verses 7 and 9 prior, Jesus has expressed in various ways to the disciples that He and the Father are one. This is a call to trust Christ when He says He is not merely a man, a prophet, or a great teacher. Trust Christ when He says He and the Father are ONE.

Verse 12 - It's interesting to note that while Jesus is speaking with His disciples in this setting, He opens up this promise to all believers. He says “whoever believes in me” will do the things He has done and more. He doesn't say “only the most faithful believers will do my work” or “only pastors will do my work.” He says “**whoever** believes in me.” I think that's pretty powerful. All believers are on a level playing field when it comes to continuing the works of Jesus. The works aren't reserved for a chosen few, but are open to all who believe.

Verse 13 - Praying “in Jesus's name” is not a secret password we can tack on the end of our prayers to somehow strong-arm God into giving us what we want. We probably know this isn't true, because we've tried. However, Jesus is pretty clear on what praying and asking in His name *does* mean. Read verse 13 again. When we ask Jesus for something “in his name,” that something we're asking for **must lead** to the glorification of the Father through Jesus's acting if we expect Jesus to do it. Simply put, when our desires align with God's desires (praying in His name, for His glory), Jesus acts.

Verse 14 - Have confidence in Jesus to do the things He says He'll do. John 14:11–14 concludes with Jesus almost doubling down on what He has already said. He has told us already in verse 13 that He will do whatever we ask in His name. Now in verse 14, He lays it out there again. “If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.” Why repeat this? Clearly, Jesus feels this is important and bears repeating. We had best pay attention.

INTERPRETATION

Based on the observations above, try interpreting this passage in your own words:

APPLICATION

There is so much to take out of this passage to apply to our lives. Here are some questions to consider:

- Do I believe Jesus is who He says He is?
- Do I believe that God and Jesus are one?
- When we ask God to do something in Jesus's name, will that something bring glory to God? If not, why are we asking?
- When we do pray for God to do something that will bring Him glory (e.g., the conversion of a lost person, supernatural healing) and it doesn't happen, what does that mean?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Thank You, Jesus, that You include all believers in this promise. You give power and authority to all who believe in Your name to continue the work You began. Thank You that You call us to work alongside You in building Your kingdom.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Father, I confess that I struggle to believe that You are who You say You are. I often don't take You at Your word and ask for a sign or evidence of Your moving. Help me to take You at your Word and believe that You are who You say You are. I also confess that sometimes my desires are not Your desires. When I pray, make my prayers align with the things You care about. When I pray in Your name, help me not to think of it as a trick to get what I want, but as a framework to ask for the things You want accomplished.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Father, we pray on behalf of those who struggle to believe in Your name. Be merciful on those who require signs and increase their faith so that they would believe in faith that You are who You said You are. We pray on behalf of all believers that You would increase our confidence so that we may do the works that You did and more, and in that, acknowledge that these works happen only through You and only so that You would gain glory.

Pray for our church family:

Bob & Peggy Tanner



Mark & Dedria
Tidwell



Steve & Kim Thompson
Faith, Sarah, Annabeth &
Charlotte // Maine
Scott & Andrea Torres
Boston, Bryce, Bailey
& Brooks



Written by Pastor Jerry

¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Today's sermon is based on John 14:13-14, as you know from using this Guide the past three days. Today, meditate on the passage—read it over and over again and ask God to reveal his truth to you. Then make a few of your own observations about the passage:

-
-
-
-

What do we learn about GOD from this passage?

What do we learn about OURSELVES from this passage?

After listening to the sermon (live or via HCC website or phone app) and/or meditating on the text, what is ONE primary way that you can apply some truth mentioned here to your life THIS WEEK?

Based on what you have written above, can you write a brief prayer of response below, asking God in your own words to help you obey his Word and put it into practice?

Puritan Prayer:

The Valley of Vision is a collection of Puritan prayers and devotions. Each Sunday, we will provide one of those prayers that relates to our theme. These ancient prayers can be challenging because of their language, but they are very rich and full of meaning. We encourage you to read the prayer slowly, then to pray it to God yourself, followed by any other ways God leads you to commune with Him and pray for others. As you pray for those listed at the bottom of this page, please remember to use John 14:13-14 to help guide you.

The Prayer of Love, 270-271

GRACIOUS LORD,

Thy name is love, in love receive my prayer. My sins are more than the wide sea's sand, but where sin abounds, there is grace more abundant. Look to the cross of thy beloved Son, and view the preciousness of his atoning blood; Listen to his never-failing intercession, and whisper to my heart, 'Thy sins are forgiven, be of good cheer, lie down in peace.'

Grace cataracts from heaven and flows for ever, and mercy never wearies in bestowing benefits.

Grant me more and more to prize the privilege of prayer, to come to thee as a sin-soiled sinner, to find pardon in thee, to converse with thee; to know thee in prayer as the path in which my feet tread, the latch upon the door of my lips, the light that shines through my eyes, the music of my ears, the marrow of my understanding, the strength of my will, the power of my affection, the sweetness of my memory.

May the matter of my prayer be always wise, humble, submissive, obedient, scriptural, Christ-like. Give me unwavering faith that supplications are never in vain, that if I seem not to obtain my petitions I shall have larger, richer answers, surpassing all that I ask or think. Unsought, thou hast given me the greatest gift, the person of thy Son, and in him thou wilt give me all I need.

Featured Ministry: Special Interest Groups

- **Friday 10 a.m. – English as a Second Language (ESL): Teaching English**
 - Meeting every Friday from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. in the Harvest Cafe, this ministry is designed to help non-English speaking individuals learn English and the Bible. Lessons are paced to meet members' needs, and our ultimate goal is that people will experience salvation and grow in their faith through our tailored lessons. Volunteers are always needed who can be conversational partners and communicate God's love to the internationals. Tish Barber: tishbarber@bellsouth.net or (704) 947-0848
- **Saturdays 3 p.m. – International Students and Scholars**
 - Seventy-five percent of internationals never get invited into an American home while they are studying in the US. There are over 1,700 at UNCC this year, and there are many ongoing ministry opportunities each week both on and off campus to build relationships and share Christ with these students, visiting scholars, and their families. One particular opportunity we are involved in is English Corner at UNCC. This occurs weekly on Saturdays from 3 – 4:30 p.m. A Bible study follows for anyone interested. Tish Barber: tishbarber@bellsouth.net or (704) 947-0848
- **Hospitality Team**
 - Our hospitality team provides meals for church-wide events and as needed. Lynette Niemand: lynette.niemand@yahoo.com or (980) 428-4950

Written by Jerry Swisshelm

MEDITATION AND APPLICATION

John 10:27

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

Matthew 6:31–33

“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

OBSERVATION

1. Our Lord asks us first to listen for His voice and then to act by following where He leads us.
2. Our own thoughts tend to focus on what we want or think we need. It takes focus and a willingness to give up our desires to seek God’s kingdom and righteousness first, while trusting Him to provide for our needs.

INTERPRETATION

I think the biggest challenge to prayer is knowing the difference between expressing our feelings and needs to the Lord (which He wants us to do—see Matthew 6:11–13 and 11:28–30) and listening to Him in prayer so we can follow Him in action. One approach to addressing this challenge is through “listening prayer.” Groups such as YWAM and Intervarsity are encouraging Christians in “listening prayer.” A source I am finding helpful is the booklet *God Guides*, but there are many similar resources.

APPLICATION

The basic approach is to:

1. Prioritize your time with the Lord daily and get in a quiet place.
2. Ask for wisdom (James 1:5).
3. Confess any areas of disobedience (1 John 1:9).
4. Take authority in His name over the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19–20) and your own thoughts (2 Cor. 10:5).
5. Ask the Lord what is on His heart for you, His people, and others around you.
6. Listen quietly and write down what you hear from the Holy Spirit.
7. Commit to obeying and acting on what He tells you.

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Praise God for His love in coming to you, sending you the Holy Spirit, and knowing your needs before you even ask. Thank Him for having a plan for you and providing for you based on His complete knowledge of you and His plan!

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Have you given the Lord priority in your time and attention? What has been the focus of your prayers? Confess any failings on your part, and ask the Lord for His help in correcting them.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Spend time in listening prayer:

- Ask the Lord what is on His heart for you, His people, and others around you.
- Listen quietly and write down what you hear from the Holy Spirit.
- Commit to obeying and acting on what He tells you.

Pray for our church family:

Sasha & Natsha
Tsutserov
Russia



Mark & Lori Ulrich
Morgan



Ben & Michelle Truitt
Lilly, Heath, Violet
& Parry



Pete & Camille Villari



Written by Jerry Swisshelm

Matthew 18:19–20

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

Acts 1:14

They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

James 5:13–16

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

OBSERVATION

There is special power in believers coming together in prayer!

INTERPRETATION

Yesterday we examined our personal prayer life. Today we look at our communal prayer life. Our Lord intends for us to also pray together as a body (Romans 12:3–8) united by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11–13). We all have different weaknesses and strengths, but in coming together in confession and prayer, we help each other and thereby strengthen the entire Body of Christ.

APPLICATION

1. How often do you pray together with your spouse? Your children? Other believers who live near you? Our local church body?
2. Have you confessed your failings to other believers so that they can pray for you?
3. Have you asked the elders to pray over you concerning a special need?
4. How can you become more involved in communal prayer?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Praise God that you have been adopted into His family and are part of the Body of Christ. Thank Him for the other believers around you—in your family, your community, and our church—working together to bring Him honor and glory.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

As Americans, we tend to be individualistic and avoid opening up to or getting closely involved with others. Look at your participation in the Body of Christ from His perspective—are you actively helping strengthen the Body, or do you tend to be detached from it or a hindrance to it? Confess any failings on your part, and ask the Lord for His help in correcting them.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Ask the Lord to show you others in the Body who need encouragement or help. Then pray for them in His name and ask the Lord to grant you the opportunity to serve them (Galatians 5:13).

Pray for our church family:

Ben Wahab



Arthur & Stacey
Weinstein
Ashley & Tyler



Basil Watkins



Lee Ann & Ian Wilson
Amber & Jade



Written by Seth Howard

Today we will look at Acts 4:29-31.

*²⁹Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders **through the name of your holy servant Jesus.**" ³¹After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

OBSERVATION

1. The early disciples were dependent on God to enable them to speak with boldness. They prayed as ones who were in need seeking the One who is over all.
2. Wonders are made possible through Christ. The Holy Spirit made them to speak the word boldly.

INTERPRETATION

3. Try to put this passage in your own words.

APPLICATION

4. How will this passage change you today?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*What can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank Him for?*

Praise the Lord for the Holy Spirit. Thank him for allowing the Holy Spirit, our helper, to help us speak the words of Christ without fear.

2. **Confession and Help**—*What do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying His truth to my life?*

Lord, I confess that I have not always been bold with my opportunities to share the gospel. Help me to speak your words without fear. May your Holy Spirit do miracles through the name of Jesus.

3. **Intercession**—*How can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Ask the Lord to reveal unbelievers where you live, work, and play. Pray for opportunities to connect and build relationships with these people, with the goal of boldly sharing the gospel with them.

Pray for our church family:

Eric & Kathy Wolff
El Salvador



**Bryan Yerke & Judy
MacCallum**

Written by Pastor Jerry

As we come to the final day of this year's 40 Days of Prayer, let me ask you a question that we often talk about at the leadership level: "What would it take for us to have not just '40 days of prayer' but '365 days of prayer'?" Could that be what Jesus had in mind for his church when he said, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations"? As we wrap up this emphasis and look forward to how God will move us going forward, I encourage you to reflect one more time on each of the biblical passages we have covered during the past six weeks. Please read each one of them *slowly, prayerfully, and reflectively*—and answer one question about each one of them.

1. Matthew 6:5-8--What is one way you can put this text into practice right now?
2. Matthew 6:9-15— What is one way you can put this text into practice right now?
3. Matthew 7:7-12— What is one way you can put this text into practice right now?
4. Matthew 9:35-38— What is one way you can put this text into practice right now?
5. Mark 11:22-24— What is one way you can put this text into practice right now?
6. John 14:13-14— What is one way you can put this text into practice right now?

Prayer Guide

Three Ways to Pray:

1. **Praise and Thanks**—*what can I praise God for based on these verses? What can I thank him for?*
2. **Confession and Help**—*what do I need to confess to God as a result of these truths? How do I need to ask God to help me in applying his truth to my life?*
3. **Intercession**—*how can I use the truths arising from these verses to pray for others?*

Pray for our church staff:

Jerry Barber
Senior Pastor



Henry Golatt
Worship Coordinator



Heidi Reckard
Treasurer



Jim Bennett
Student Ministry
Coordinator



Amy Granata
Administrative
Assistant



Scott Torres
Associate Pastor



Answer Key

December 30: Matthew 6:5–8

What are the common themes that characterize hypocrisy?

Answers might include: stand, seen, street

How would you define hypocrisy?

Answers might include: claiming to be or believe one thing while practicing or believing another.

December 31: Matthew 6:5–8

How do some people believe they can make God hear them?

Answers might include: empty phrases, many words

January 2: Matthew 6:5–8

List three things about God you see in this phrase: *“your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”*

Answers could include: God is a Father, God sees all, God rewards, nothing is secret or hidden from God.

January 3: Matthew 6:5–8

Jesus mentions “empty phrases.” What do you think that means?

Answers might include: redundant, meaningless, vain, or repetitive sayings or phrases. These might be phrases that seem spiritual or special for getting God’s attention, but they are used without meaning.

Can you think of empty phrases you use or have heard in prayers?

Answers might include: hallelujah, “in Jesus name,” etc.

Why do you think Jesus instructed his disciples not to “heap up empty phrases”?

Answer might be something like: Because prayer is a conversation and we must not put our faith in the wording of our prayers but in the God to whom we pray.

January 4: Matthew 6:5–8

Based on the truth of the last verse in this passage, when does God know your needs?

Answer: before we even ask.

God knows our needs before we even recognize our own needs! How can you find confidence for prayer in that truth?

Answer might be something like: If God knows my needs and loves me, then I can rest in knowing that my weakness in prayer is no obstacle to his intervention in my life.

January 5: Matthew 6:9–15

1. Before giving the prayer, what statement does Jesus use as a preface?
“This, then, is *how* [emphasis added] you should pray.”
2. To whom or to what are the petitions directed in this segment of prayer?
Toward God the Father.

3. Where is the Father?
Heaven
4. Whose desire is asked to be fulfilled in this prayer?
God's desire.
5. What is the difference between Jesus telling us *how* to pray instead of *what* to pray?
The Lord's Prayer is not presented in Matthew as liturgy to be recited. Instead, it is presented as an example. Jesus wanted us to use the Lord's Prayer as a foundation or as a template for our prayers. Jesus was giving us an idea of how we can communicate with God.
6. Why do you suppose this prayer acknowledges that the Father is in heaven?
By pointing to heaven, we are recognizing God's supremacy. He is above, beyond, and in sovereign control over creation.
7. What does *hallowed* mean? Why do you think the prayer reads "hallowed be your name" instead of "we hallow your name"?
Hallowed means "made holy." I do not have the power or ability to make His name holy. Only God has that power through manifesting Himself on earth.
8. Why is it important to acknowledge God's will and kingdom when we pray?
In doing so, we are recognizing that God's will in our lives is paramount. We may have requests for God based on our own desires, but by asking for His kingdom to come, we are surrendering our desires and asking God to fulfill His plans on earth.

January 6: Matthew 6:9–15

1. Who or what is the focus of the petitions in this segment of prayer?
The focus of the petitions in this portion of prayer is on human needs.
2. Who is providing the bread?
God is providing the bread.
3. How much bread is asked of God in this prayer?
Daily bread.
4. Who is taking part in forgiveness?
God is forgiving us, and we are forgiving others.
5. Who is doing the delivering in this prayer?
God is delivering.
6. Why are we led to pray for daily bread instead of bread for the days ahead? Can you think of other places in Scripture that relate to this?
By praying for daily bread, we are acknowledging our faith in God to provide for each day. If we have bread just for today, it will force us to rely wholly upon God for provision. In storing up, I can lose sight of God as if I do not need Him. Another place we see a similar message is in Exodus 16, where the Israelites were sent manna from heaven. They were instructed to take only one day's supply of bread.

Matthew 6 also points to our faith in God. Just as He provides for the birds of the air, He will provide for me.

7. What are the debts mentioned in this prayer?
The debts here are our sins. By sinning, we are indebted to Christ.
8. Why is the phrase “as we also have forgiven our debtors” important?
This shows a posture of humility. To seek forgiveness without first forgiving others would be holding us to a different standard than those who have wronged us.
9. Considering James 1:13, why ask the Lord not to lead us into temptation?
Scripture tells us that God will not tempt us; however, we see in Scripture that God will allow the devil to tempt us. Ultimately, the Lord can prohibit or place boundaries on the devil’s temptations, as we see in Job. This petition shows an attitude that seeks to avoid sin.

January 7: Matthew 6:9–15

1. In these verses, what theme is repeated from the prayer studied in the previous days?
In these verses, Jesus is telling us that if we are to be forgiven of our sins, we must also forgive others of theirs.
2. What appears different in John 5:24, Romans 8:1, and Ephesians 1:7?
John 5:24 says that whoever hears God’s Word and believes has eternal life. Romans 8:1 states that no one in Christ will receive condemnation. Ephesians 1:7 shows that according to His grace we have forgiveness of our trespasses. In each of these passages, there is no condition mentioned that we must forgive others.
3. Considering the verses mentioned above that give no qualification of forgiving our peers, what do you think Jesus meant when He taught this?
I think Jesus was not suggesting that to receive salvation, you must forgive others. I think He was teaching His audience that as a result of being forgiven by Christ, our desire (as a reflection of our changed heart) is to forgive others and live in harmony with those who have wronged us. If we do not or will not forgive others for their sin against us, it may be a reflection that we do not have a complete understanding of the forgiveness Christ has extended to us.

January 9: Matthew 6:9–15

1. List three attributes of God. Spend a few moments dwelling on these before you pray today. How does this help you when you pray?
 - a. God is Holy and set apart.
 - b. He is the Sustainer of all things.
 - c. He is love.

By spending a few moments thinking about who God is before I pray, I naturally want to praise and acknowledge Him as I start my prayer. It also helps my mindset and reminds me who I am actually talking to – the powerful God of the universe!
2. Answers will vary.
3. What are some practical ways you can build your faith this week and better anticipate His coming?

Talk to the Lord out loud and tell Him how excited I am for His coming.
Spend some moments in the morning meditating on His kingdom on earth and the promise of heaven.
Talk to my spouse and other fellow believers about how they anticipate Christ's kingdom.

4. How does verse 10 put your life and priorities into perspective?

God's plan that has been in motion for all of time is very simple. He is a jealous God and wants us, His specific creation, to dwell with Him forever. When I think of this simplicity, that God wants to dwell among us without the hindrance of sin and death, all other things in my life become trivial. Day to day, I busy myself with housework, meetings, television, work... the list goes on. Knowing that Christ made me to dwell with Him and to help call others to dwell with Him too, life seems much less complex than I make it to be.

January 10: Matthew 6:9–15

1. What are some "daily bread" requests that you have lifted to God in the past? (In this context, "daily bread" means something that you need from Him *today* and cannot do on your own.)
 - For safety and security
 - For sleep, rest, and renewal
 - For bills/mortgage to get paid
 - For patience with coworkers and family
2. Write down one request you need to depend on God for today. Make your request known to Him, and before you go to bed tonight, try to see how God was faithful to your request.

Write out your own PERSONAL answer for how this applies to you, but mine is as follows: Today, I pray that God would give me safety as I travel alone this afternoon out of state. Help keep me awake and alert as I drive!

3. Read Job 23:10–12. How does Job's perspective of daily bread and his faith challenge you?

Many times, my personal requests are what take up the most time during my prayers. Job has suffered much by the time he states these words in chapter 23, yet He proclaims that God's words are more precious to him than having his needs met, his daily bread. I want to grow in my desire for the Lord so that I want His words every day more than anything else.

4. As Christ followers, all of our sins were forgiven at the cross. Why do you think Christ models for us a daily confession of our debts?

It is important to consecrate ourselves to the Lord each day and allow Him to cleanse our hearts. Though asking forgiveness will not add to or subtract from my salvation, it is a daily reminder that I myself am not perfect. It is Christ who makes me clean in God's eyes. I will continue to have debts to confess until Christ returns and destroys sin once and for all.

January 11: Matthew 6:9–15

1. In light of today's verses, read Matthew 18:21–35. Where do you see mercy in this parable?

The kingdom of heaven is portrayed as a king. He shows mercy to his indebted servant who begs for the king to be patient with him. Though the servant says he will pay it back in time, the king shows great mercy and cancels all his debts.

2. Of all the petitions made in the Lord's Prayer, why do you think Christ chose to reiterate the importance of forgiveness? (There's no right or wrong answer here—just your thoughts.)

The new covenant that God establishes with us through Christ revolves around forgiveness. Christ's once-for-all death on the cross forgives the sins of all who believe on His Name. I think Christ wants to emphasize our responsibility to forgive others because we have received the greatest pardon ourselves through Him.

3. Self-evaluate: How do you model Christ in your forgiveness of others who trespass against you?

Complete forgiveness is the essence of Christ. Because it does not come naturally among mankind, I know it is Christ's power that gives us the ability to forgive. Forgiving others is an example of how Christ showed us great mercy on the cross. Because we know the great freedom that comes with being forgiven, we can freely forgive others and show them the love of Christ.

4. Of course, forgiveness from God is not based on our works or the number of debtors we forgive, but on God's grace alone. When we confess before God and receive His forgiveness through faith, it becomes our desire to forgive others as we grow in Christ. How do you think our forgiveness of others helps us become more like Christ?

By forgiving, I think we can better identify with Christ's nature rather than our own. In the cases where it has been hard for me to forgive someone, I feel entitled or justified in my unforgiving attitude. This sense of entitlement wells up inside, allowing my selfishness to push me away from Christ. In the cases where God has given me power to forgive, I am able to model kindness and love toward the one who has wronged me.

January 12: Matthew 7:7–11

1. Answers will vary
2. Focusing on the very first part of verse 7, what is the first command that Jesus gives?
Ask
3. How often does Jesus say a person should **ask**?
Continuously. Jesus uses the phrase "Keep on..."
4. What is the promise that Jesus gives regarding this command?
It will be given to you.
5. In light of the Sermon on the Mount, what types of things might Jesus be telling His disciples and the crowd to **ask** for?
Anything pertaining to living in light of God's kingdom. This would include forgiveness, material needs like food and clothing, protection (Matthew 6:9–13, 19–24), and the necessary strength to live in light of the kingdom.
6. In your own words, summarize the meaning of the first part of Matthew 7:7.

As a way of life, we are to continually come to the Father in humility, asking Him for the necessities in life while expecting Him to answer.

January 13: Matthew 7:7–11

1. What is the next command Jesus gives His disciples and the crowd in verse 7?
Seek. The seeking analogy is a metaphor that Jesus is using to illustrate a point. “Seek” links one’s prayer with responsible activity in pursuing God’s will, as when a person prays for a job and at the same time checks out leads. Followers of Jesus are to be constantly responsible in pursuing God’s will.
2. According to Jesus, how often is someone to **seek**?
Continually. Jesus uses the phrase “Keep on...”
3. Answers will vary.
4. What promise does Jesus give when someone continually seeks?
They will **find**.
5. What does Jesus mean by telling His disciples to seek?
I believe that Jesus is telling His disciples to continue to seek the Lord in prayer along with responsibly pursuing God’s will. An example of this would be when a person prays for a job and then at the same time does his or her part in searching for employment.
6. In your own words, summarize the meaning of the middle part of Matthew 7:7.
As children of the Father, we are to be constantly praying and responsible in pursuing God’s will.

January 14: Matthew 7:7–11

1. What is the third command that Jesus gives His disciples and the crowd in verse 7?
Knock. The knocking analogy is a metaphor that Jesus is using to illustrate a point.
2. According to Jesus, how often should someone **knock**?
Continually.
3. Answers will vary.
4. What promise does Jesus give when someone continually knocks?
The door will be opened.
5. What does Jesus mean by telling His disciples to **knock**?
He is illustrating a disciple’s need to persevere in bringing his or her prayer request to God.
6. In your own words, summarize the meaning of the end of Matthew 7:7.
As children of the Father, we are to persevere and posture ourselves with determination.

January 16: Matthew 7:7–11

1. Who does Jesus address in verses 9–11?
Parents
2. What rhetorical questions does Jesus ask parents who are listening? How does He answer His own question?
If children ask for food (bread and fish), do parents cruelly give them something that will hurt them and not nourish them? He answers His question with a resounding NO!
3. What does He call parents in verse 11? Why do you think He does this?
He calls parents sinful. He does this because God's ultimate parenting of His children outmatches earthly parents who innately desire to do what is best for their children.
4. What contrasting words does Jesus use in comparing earthly parents' giving with the Heavenly Father's giving?
Jesus uses the phrase "How much more..."
5. What does Jesus say the Father will give to those who **ask** Him?
Good gifts.
6. In your own words, summarize the meaning of verses 9–11 below.
Our Heavenly Father will answer his children with what He believes to be good for them when they ask.

January 19: Matthew 9:35–38

1. In verse 35, what are the activities Jesus engaged in that formed the pattern for the ministry at this time?
Teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.
2. Briefly consider these activities. Put yourself in the place of one of the Twelve who were with Him and describe in a short paragraph what you think this early ministry of Jesus might look like.
During those early days when we first followed Jesus, we, who were his disciples, did very little but shadow Him, listening and observing. When entering a new village or town, generally, we would head directly for the synagogue, where we could connect with the local citizens. If the village was of sufficient size, often there would be a guest room where we could spend the night, or there might be an inn associated with the synagogue or at least close by. The inn was nothing more than a simple shelter, where travelers could fix their own meals and bed down for the night. If there were no inn or guest rooms, then we could meet local people who would invite us into their homes. Hospitality to travelers is an important part of our culture and is viewed as a religious duty, just like attending worship on the Sabbath. With all the activity of people coming and going from the synagogue, it was a really good place to meet people and begin to get to know them. Often, Jesus would engage people, become familiar with their circumstances and needs, and heal illnesses or maladies. And of course, this was a great opportunity to talk with people about God's Kingdom and our hope in the Messiah. Sometimes it was with just a few people in the evening in the home where we stayed, and sometimes a crowd would gather and He would address the whole group, explaining what it really means to be a part of God's Kingdom. Then often, as a visiting rabbi, Jesus was invited to read the Scripture and speak in the synagogue during the Sabbath worship. And this often stimulated more discussion and opportunities. Then, as we walked to the next village, Jesus would discuss with us the events and the meaning of what we had heard and observed in that last village. Often, He would help us to see how

needy the people were and encourage us to ask God to send workers to help them.

3. Jesus went where He could meet the people of the community, observe their needs, respond to their needs, and share His message of the Kingdom. Where could you go in your community to get acquainted with people and their needs and, at some point, develop the opportunity to share your story of God's Kingdom?

Volunteer opportunities (e.g., hospital), community college adult education classes, special interest clubs, neighborhood associations, public library (volunteer or events), classes at hobby and craft stores, Harvest outreach ministries (English Corner with international students, ESL with local Hispanics)

January 20: Matthew 9:35–38

1. In verse 35, Matthew tells us Jesus went from town to town, ministering to the people. In verse 36, what observation is made about the crowds of people Jesus spent time with? And what was His response? They were harassed and helpless. He had compassion on them.
2. What do you think it means for Jesus to have compassion on the people?
The Greek word used here is the verb *splagxnízomai* and properly means “to be moved in reference to one’s internal organs” (heart, liver, lungs, etc.). These organs together are the *splágxna*. Over time these terms came to be used metaphorically to refer to the source of one’s feelings or to the feelings themselves. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament and in the New Testament, these terms are consistently used to refer to the feelings of kindness, benevolence, and pity. [A paraphrase/summary of two entries from G. Abbot-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, T. and T. Clark: Edinburgh, 1937, p. 414] So, then we can say that Jesus, upon interacting with the people and observing their hurts, felt sorry for them and responded with kindness and good will toward them rather than being critical and condemning of them.
3. What do you think it means for the people to be harassed? Helpless?
“Harassed” (NIV) is used for the Greek word *skulló*, which originally meant “to skin, flay, or rend.” It came to mean “to vex, trouble, or annoy.” In the New Testament, it is used only four times (Mark 5:35, Luke 8:49, Matthew 9:36, and Luke 7:6). [A paraphrase/summary of two entries from G. Abbot-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, T. and T. Clark: Edinburgh, 1937, p. 411.]
“Helpless” (NIV) is used for the Greek word *rhíptó*. Vines, entry Cast, A2. 2. *rhípto* (‘riptw, 4496) denotes “to throw with a sudden motion, to jerk, cast forth;” “cast down,” Matt. 15:30 and 27:5; “thrown down,” Luke 4:35; “thrown,” 17:2 (KJV, “cast”); [*rhípteo* in Acts 22:23 (KJV, “cast off”), of the “casting” off of clothes (in the next sentence *ballo* No. 1, is used of “casting” dust into the air)]; in 27:19 “cast out,” of the tackling of a ship; in v. 29 “let go” (KJV, “cast”), of anchors; in Matt. 9:36, “scattered,” said of sheep. See THROW, SCATTER. Vines, Entry: scatter, A4 4. *rhípto* (‘riptw, 4496), “to throw, cast, hurl, to be cast down, prostrate,” is used in Matt. 9:36 of people who were “scattered” as sheep without a shepherd. See CAST, No. 2, THROW. [W.E. Vine, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, published in 1940 and without copyright. Entries: cast, A2; scatter, A4. (No page numbers available.)]

The verb form of both “harassed” and “helpless” indicates this was a continuous or constant state of being. This was the constant state of their lives. So then, we could say that life was a constant and troubling stress that wearied them and beat them down, perhaps almost to the point of hopelessness.

4. Matthew tries to help us understand what it means for the people to be harassed and helpless by comparing them to sheep who have no shepherd. What does this word picture suggest to you about the people? (A description of the role of a shepherd can be found in the answer key. It really isn’t an answer, but it might help you think about this if you are unfamiliar with sheep and shepherds in the Bible.)

The focus of a good shepherd was to be on his flock—their provision, guidance, and safety... The good shepherd provides nourishment and refreshment for his sheep... The skilled shepherd MAKES them lie down (v.2), LEADS them (v.2), and GUIDES them (v.3). He provides guidance which is so critical for sheep that are by their nature apt to stray or wander into danger because they are so helpless... Sheep in the East are not driven like in the West due to differences in the terrain. For the most part, in the East the shepherd goes ahead of the sheep, choosing the way to go. Not only did the shepherd provide nourishment and direction, but David goes out of his way in the Psalm [Psalm 23] to convey the idea of the shepherd providing safety and protection. Sheep are extremely skittish and fearful, but the shepherd was equipped to protect the sheep. The rod, which was more of a club, was used to ward off wild animals and robbers. The staff, as we have seen already, was used to protect from scorpions and snakes. [Taken from the website of Xenos Christian Fellowship, from an essay titled “The Shepherd Motif in the Old and New Testament” by Mary Beth Gladwell (<http://www.xenos.org/essays/shepherd-motif-old-and-new-testament>).]

5. Answers will vary.

6. Answers will vary.

January 21: Matthew 9:35–38

1. When you think about this word picture that Jesus used in verse 37, what point do you think Jesus is trying to make to the disciples, using your own words in plain language?
In our society, there exists a large population of people who are ready to respond to God to become genuine followers of Jesus, but there are few people who are able and willing to come alongside them to help them and walk them through the change of becoming committed followers and workers of Jesus.

2. Why do you think Jesus said the harvest is plentiful?
He had observed that multitudes from city to city were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (v. 36). Everywhere He went, He saw so many who were beaten down by life and desperate for someone to help them. The implication is that they would be responsive to someone who would come alongside to offer that help.

3. Jesus also observed in verse 37 that there are few people who are real workers in God’s harvest. Why do you think that is the case?

Consider the following suggestions made by Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators.

Only a few things will ever keep human beings from multiplying themselves in the physical realm. One is that they never marry. If they are not united, they will not reproduce. This is a truth that Christians need to grasp with reference to spiritual reproduction. When a person becomes a child of God, he should realize that he is to live in union with Jesus Christ if he is going to win others to the Saviour.

Another factor that can hinder reproduction is disease or impairment to some part of the body that is needed for reproductive purposes. In the spiritual realm sin of some kind or another can keep one from winning the lost.

One other factor that can keep people from having children is immaturity. God in His wisdom saw to it that little children cannot have babies. A little boy must first grow to sufficient maturity to be able to earn a living, and a little girl must be old enough to care for a baby.

[Dawson Trotman, *Born to Reproduce*, The Navigators: Colorado Springs, 1975, p. 24–5.]

January 23: Matthew 9:35–38

1. In verse 37 Jesus draws attention to the need for those who will work at helping the many who are responsive to God to become growing disciples of Jesus. What is the first thing Jesus asks His disciples to do in response to this need?
To pray that God will send workers into His harvest field.
2. In verse 38 Jesus continues to use the metaphor to challenge the disciples to a specific response. In this metaphor, whom do you think the various elements (the Lord, the harvest, the workers) specifically represent?
The Lord = God/Jesus; the harvest = the many who are wanting to respond to God; the workers = the twelve disciples in this context and, in a broader context, all of His followers.
3. Matthew obviously thought this exhortation to pray was significant because he included it in his gospel. What do you think is the significance of this prayer request? Perhaps Matthew 4:19, 10:1–8, and 28:19 give us a context to understand this passage.
Earlier in the year, Jesus invited the disciples to follow Him and promised to make them fishers of men. Then toward the end of this early ministry in Galilee, after they had heard this observation and challenge several times, Jesus sent them out in pairs to heal and to preach. And in a couple of years, Jesus would send them into the world to make disciples. It seems likely that Jesus was seeking to build awareness and a burden for the ministry that He was going to entrust to them.
4. What do you think is the nature of the work that needs to be done in the harvest field?
In light of the previous question and answer, Jesus has in mind workers who will be effective in making disciples—that is, men and women who can respond to people and their needs in a way that will lead them to decide to follow Jesus, and then to build them up to be obedient followers/workers of Christ in His harvest field.
5. For which specific ministries at Harvest Community Church could you pray for these kinds of workers?
Various small group ministries (community life groups, men’s and women’s Bible studies and ministries), Sunday school and children’s ministry, youth ministry, elders’ shepherding ministry, ministry in the personal sphere of influence of individual members. Others?
6. Answers will vary.

January 24: Matthew 9:35–38

1. Can you think of some examples from the New Testament of those who failed to respond to God and to become workers in the Lord’s harvest? If not, read the passages noted in the answer key.
Rich young ruler, Matthew 19; Demas, 2 Timothy 4:10; Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1–11; many disciples, John 6:60–66; Simon the magician, Acts 8:9–24.
2. What are some reasons people fail to develop as effective workers in the Lord’s harvest field?
You can consider this question from different perspectives. Generally, you might go back to Day Three and read the answer to Question 3 (the statement of Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators). And you can consider 1 John 2:15, 16, and identify some specific examples of each of the three problems John mentions there. Read John 15:1–11 and think about what it means to “abide in Christ” in this passage, and identify some specific examples.

3. Answers will vary.

January 26: Mark 11:22–24

1. Who and what is Jesus responding to regarding faith?
Jesus is responding to Peter, who exclaimed, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!” Peter is expressing shocked surprise because when they had departed Bethany for Jerusalem, Jesus had found no figs on a fig tree and therefore said to the fig tree: “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”
2. Why is faith important?
Our faith is testimony to our belief that God can do anything. Faith overcomes obstacles, gives us insight into God’s desires, and allows us to see what is possible even when humans deem it impossible.
3. Jesus had faith that after His death He would be sitting on His rightful throne (Matthew 26:64). Can you think of a particular circumstance where having faith might help you in your life?
Answers will vary. For me, I might exercise prayer in faith about my continued health, for His glory.

January 27: Mark 11:22–24

1. Jesus is teaching about speaking to a fig tree (v. 11:12–14) and then to a mountain (v. 11:24). If we were to compare these two verses, do you notice anything?
These two situations share something in common. They are not people. Jesus is teaching Peter that he can (with faith) speak even to a tree or a mountain in such a way as to see them change.
2. Moving a mountain into an ocean is a potentially cataclysmic event. Do you believe Jesus was stating this in a literal sense?
There is a difference between *meaning* (only one) and *application* (many). Jesus was probably referencing a literal mountain to them. As we try to *apply* this teaching to our situations, we might look at this metaphorically. The moving (or removing) of mountains can refer to the moving of obstacles in our lives.
3. Why do you suppose Jesus is using a mountain as an example?
We hear of problems as small as a mole hill or as big as a mountain. This might very well be Jesus’s way of stating with assurance that there is no problem too big to prevent us from dealing with it.
4. If a person “does not doubt,” what will happen?
Watch and see what Jesus will do in answer to your spoken requests. Whereas doubt is an inhibitor, the lack of it speaks to your faith that what you pray or speak has God’s power behind it.

January 28: Mark 11:22–24

1. When doubt creeps in while you petition God in prayer, what do you think is the result?
Doubt is the unbelief that God is able to accomplish that for which we are praying. Since God answers all prayers, He is pleased to reward the prayers of those who are exercising complete faith. He will also answer the prayer of the one exercising doubt in his or her mind, although His response may or may not be the one which we would be hoping for. Doubt can actually derail the results of our prayer that we'd be hoping for. Faith, however, is key to the fulfillment of having our prayed-over concern answered by our gracious Lord according to His desire for the best possible outcome.

2. Jesus states, “Believe that you have received it...” How can you get there?
Our faithful Father has given us this hint at what it takes for answered prayer. For faith coexists with belief, and belief culminates in a successful outcome. There are sure to be valid reasons for not being in this mindset, including continuous attacks by our enemy. It may take practice to get into this mindset if we’re not there. But imagine the results when we have such belief!
3. Why did Jesus feel it important to explain this?
Peter’s surprised outburst showed Jesus where he was at—that he did not have the faith that Jesus’s statement would hold any real, measurable outcome. Jesus considered this a teaching opportunity.
4. What does this passage show or remind us about prayer?
Prayer is a personal time of communication and sharing between Jesus and His saints. The regular routine of prayer helps maintain our connection to our Lord and builds us up into more mature, wise believers.

February 2: John 14:13–14

1. Observations/notes will vary.
2. Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, which means “the Lord saves.” What does having the name “Jesus” given to our Lord in biblical times say about Him?
The Lord’s primary purpose in coming to us was to save us from our sins. Our prayers and actions on His behalf should ultimately represent His purpose (not ours)—to offer salvation from sins to the world!
3. Ephesians 5:20 says we should be “always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, **in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**” Based on the above observations, what does it mean to give thanks in the name of Jesus?
It is the realization that all blessings we receive are a direct result of what Jesus did for us—giving up His heavenly place and coming to earth to show us the Father, and then to die to pay for our sins so that we could have a relationship with God the Father through the Son, Jesus Christ.

February 3: John 14:13–14

Try to put this verse in your own words.

Example: God has made Jesus ruler over all existence so that every creature will be obedient to Him, that at the name of Jesus every being must submit to His authority. By this God the Father will be glorified since Jesus always does the will of the Father.

February 4: John 14:13–14

Based on the observations above, try interpreting this passage in your own words:

Example: Jesus and the Father are united in their being and power. Their power is made accessible to those who believe, for the purpose of their glorification.

February 8: John 14:13–14

Based on the observations above, try interpreting this passage in your own words:

Lord, see our those that oppose us and enable us to speak your words without fear. May your Holy Spirit do miracles through the name of Jesus. When they were done praying they felt the ground around them shake and they the Holy Spirit caused them speak the words of Christ without fear.