

TOPICAL MESSAGE
Keeping My Prayer Life Simple Yet Effective
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: You are so good, Lord. And what a testimony we have this evening, Lord, of Your might, Your strength, Your power, Lord, that no man can explain. You are just so good, Lord.

So we thank You for this time together. Lord, would You bless the teaching and bless, and encourage us, Lord, through this testimony. And if we have time to pray, Lord, we just pray that we would just so humble our hearts, Lord, and lift up the request before You this evening. Lord, bless our time together. In Jesus' name.

PASTOR JD: Amen and Amen. Good evening.

[Congregation says, "Good evening."]

You can be seated. How's everybody doing tonight?

[Congregation says, "Good."]

Glad you're here. Those of you online, glad you're joining with us with the start time, which is a half hour before we usually start on Thursday night. So we're glad you're joining with us as well.

Listen, I wanted to start off with a brief teaching. You're really quick to laugh when I say "brief" still. That's okay. I'll let you have it.

No, but in anticipation of tonight's prayer meeting, I just, in my time with the Lord, sensed that, I needed to talk about the simplicity of prayer and even more specifically, ways that we can keep our prayer life simple yet effective. If you're anything like me, and I — I suspect that you are, many of you, like me, you too have this proclivity to complicate prayer so much that you actually don't pray as much.

You know what I mean? I mean, we make prayer something it was never intended to be, and we end up not praying at all because we've overcomplicated that which was never meant to be complicated. What I'm hoping to accomplish in our time together tonight is that all of us, at the end of our time together tonight, myself included, by the way, will be helped in our prayer life in order that we might change our prayer life.

I'm going to kind of spin something here and say it like this. I'm hoping that all of us not only change our prayer life, but in so doing, also completely change our entire life. You've heard the expression, "change this and you'll change your life." Change your — well, you fill in the

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blanks. I'll if I do, I'll botch it. So there are plenty variations; you can take your pick from whichever one you want.

But what I'm hoping is, is that — because this is true — if you change your prayer life, you change your life. If you change your prayer life, you will change your entire life. Think about it like this. If you think back on all the things that God has done in your life and the role that prayer played in that — let me flip it around.

How about all of those times in your life where the outcome could have been very different, had you but prayed? I mean, it goes both ways. So I want to do this teaching. And again, I'll try to be as brief as I can on prayer, but I in no way wish to posture myself as this mighty man of prayer because well, that's just not true.

And all you would have to do is just ask my wife. But I'm not going to give you her number, so you can't. I think the danger when it comes to teaching on prayer for pastors like myself is to come off as, you know, condescending and talking down to. You know, you need to pray more, Yes, I need to pray more. And the inference is that, oh, the pastor is a man of prayer. Oh, my goodness. If you only knew.

I mean, my prayer life sometimes is such a struggle, and this for a number of reasons, not the least of which is, especially now, the off-the-charts spiritual warfare when it comes to prayer. It's the likes of which I've never known. I've been walking with the Lord for a long time, but I have never experienced this spiritual warfare concerning prayer like I have as of late, in recent months, I'll say, as recent as recent months.

And this is warranted. Really, it's been the impetus for getting back to the basics, as they say. Because I'm just as prone as the next guy to over-complicate that which is to be simple and especially when it comes to prayer. And by the way, the enemy's right there to fully cooperate with my attempts to complicate prayer.

In fact, he serves it up on a silver platter a thousand times a day, complicating it when I set my foot to pray, and I end up making it so complicated that I don't pray.

So it's really for this reason and others that I, after seeking the Lord, decided that I wanted to talk about this specific topic on prayer, perhaps, if for no reason other than to provide all of us a much-needed reminder about the simplicity of prayer. And please know again, I'm

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preaching to the choir here. You guys didn't even need to come; I'm glad you did, but you didn't even need to come. I need to hear this. I need to be reminded of this.

I know I've shared this before. Maybe it's apropos to share it again just by way of an introduction. But a number of years ago, I really, you know — I even pray — this is a dangerous prayer, by the way. Be very careful.

You know how they say, “Be careful what you pray for.” Be very careful with this prayer. “God, make me a man of prayer.” Oh, the angels given charge concerning you were like, “Oh, no you didn't.” “Oh, yes I did.” God make me a man of prayer. Okay, here it goes.

Well, what I didn't know, unbeknownst to me, was if God's going to make me a man of prayer, there's going to be some trials in my life to make me a man of prayer, to bring me to my knees in prayer. And I can look back on it now, in retrospect, and I'm grateful for all that God did in and through that. I would never want to have to go through that again. And by the way, I don't pray anymore. My prayer has been altered, I should say and confess actually.

My prayer now is not so much, “God make me a man of prayer.” It's “God, would You teach me?” Like the disciples would ask Jesus to simply pray simply. Simply pray simply. I know this is a — we use this in the context — Pastor Chuck Smith always taught us simply teach the Bible simply. Well, this applies to prayer too. Simply pray simply. So here's what we're going to do.

I got four; you might find more. There are many more. But I just took what I see as the top four ways to simply pray simply and yet effectively. And how freeing it is when we understand that prayer is simply talking to God. That's all it is. I mean, this was — this was a game changer in my prayer life many years ago when — because my prayers were a monologue, not a dialog.

You know what I mean by that? It's like they were one sided. It was just like — I did all the talking when I prayed. Well, it's like God's trying to: If... but... it...it... You know like we saw a couple of weeks ago when Daniel's praying, and right in the middle of the prayer, he's interrupted with the answer to the prayer in the middle of the prayer that he hadn't even

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finished praying the prayer. And he's already got the answer to prayer. It's almost like, wait, you're too early. I'm not even done praying. No. I'm here. I got the answer to your prayer.

Well, I think we're a lot like that in our prayer lives because it's just talking to God, and God talks back. And the number one way He talks back is through His word. In fact, one of the best disciplines, for lack of a better word, to have in the Christian life when it comes to the prayer life, is to pray the Word. Or when you pray, pray with the Word. Either pray the Word or pray with the Word.

Let me expound on that. You're going through the Word, and you're praying, and God will respond in and through His word. And it can come by way of a scripture that you know so well. You've read it a million times, but it's a word fitly spoken in answer to your prayer, and it's right there in the word of God because that's what it is, the word of God.

So I used the illustration of a telephone. I've had to update it. You know I used to go like this. Well, that's how old fashioned — do people even have those phones anymore? Now it's more like this. Oh, no, it's not even that anymore. Now it's the AirPods, so I don't even know how to do that one. I'll just stick my finger in my ear. So.

But you got the microphone. That's us talking to God, prayer. And you've got the earphone. That's, God talking back to us, His word. So it's a conversation with God. And that was so freeing for me to just simply realize that when I pray, all I'm doing is I'm talking to God.

And so I started talking out loud because I'm an auditory learner. Anyway, it has to come in through the ear gate. And when you hear yourself pray, it really changes the complexion of your prayer life and the power of the prayer life too. Because — and also you pray more fervently when you pray audibly.

So I'm just talking to God. Lord — and, you know, of course, people think — if they see you, don't, you know — they usually think that wow, they've really lost it this time. But you know, but — I — in the car, sometimes the drive time is the best prayer time that I have with the Lord, especially in traffic. (Chuckling) Never mind. I've already confessed those sins. I'm not going to confess them again.

But just — you're in the car just talking to the Lord. Lord. You know? And you petition His throne, and then He brings to your remembrance, to your mind, to your heart a verse of

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Scripture that is exactly what you needed to hear. And you know it. But you just needed to be reminded of it and then apply it. You know, do not be afraid.

Lord, I'm a little concerned.

Do not be afraid. Fear not. Don't fret. Let not your heart be troubled.

Lord, I'm a little concerned.

Don't worry. It accomplishes nothing.

Lord, this really fries my bacon and makes me angry.

Well, the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. I mean, all those verses of Scripture, that's God responding to your prayer. This is a conversation. And forget the formalities.

Another thing, and we'll get — this the last thing, and we'll get started with the four ways to simplify prayer and yet be effective in prayer. But this really changed my prayer life when I kind of got to the point and did away with the formalities, you know because it was — I'm talking to my dad in heaven.

And He even says, you can call me Abba, Father, Papa; Abba is the Hebrew and Aramaic, but the Arabic is Baba. So in my native tongue I — my children call me Baba. And it's so intimate and personal, not so formal. And it just — it just changed the whole — my whole prayer life so much so that I never looked back.

You know when you made a good decision. The litmus test that you've made a good decision is that your only regret is that you didn't do it sooner. Oh, how I wish I would have just done away with the formalities, and not to dismiss being reverent. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Please. That's not at all what I'm talking about. Don't misunderstand me.

But our prayer life is just a conversation with our dad in heaven. Baba, I love you, Baba. Thank you, Baba. And I praise Him, I thank Him, I express my adoration and awe of Him, and I want to bless Him. You know, we always pray, "Lord bless me."

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Have you ever thought about prayer being a blessing to God? “I just want to bless you, Lord.” Just like a child wants to bless their earthly parent, I want to be a blessing to You as Your son, Lord. I want to bless You, Father Baba; I want to be a blessing to You. I want to put a smile on Your face. I want to be pleasing in Your sight.

And so when I would start off like that, it just set the tone of my prayer. Because now it was personal, and it was intimate, and it was — it was real. And it wasn't just, you know, praying the way that, you know, we've all been taught to pray and using the right words and even the inflections, you know, sometimes the — and by the way, we pick up prayer habits. You know what I mean by prayer habits? So when you hear someone pray, and you'll forgive me, but...

And I don't mean to — I hope you don't misunderstand me but talk to the Lord sometimes the way you would talk to your best friend. You know, when I read the Psalms, David is talking very — you would think he — if you didn't know he was crying out unto the Lord in those psalms, crying out to God, you would think he was talking to his very best friend.

There's so intimate. I mean, he's talking about man, I am wetting my — I'm soaking my bed in my tears. I'm crying so hard my eyes are burning. I can't sleep, I can't eat, I have no appetite. How long? You would think he was talking to his best friend, sharing with his best friend about his struggles.

Man, he's going through something really hard. He's talking to the Lord like that. Lord, I can't sleep; I can't eat. But we pick up these prayer habits, and I think we do err greatly when we do this because we just parrot what we hear at other people pray. And here's what that looks like, by the way.

And I don't mean to — I don't want to look at anybody when I say this, but it's so — this is a — I'm gonna call it a prayer habit. Lord, oh, please, Lord, just, Lord, bless us. Lord, with the Lord....

Would you talk to somebody like that? Could you imagine somebody coming up to me? JD, I just want to say, JD that JD that JD, you know, JD... Okay, I — we got that — that box got checked off. My name is JD. Let's get down to business here.

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That's a repetitious — we're going to talk about that in a second. It's like a repetitious mantra that we picked up as a prayer habit. And I think we're wasting our time. And I think God — He's gracious, of course — but I keep — it's like God's saying, I know I'm Lord. Can we move on now? I know.

Again, nothing wrong with addressing Him for who He is in reverence and awe, the fear and admonition of the Lord, I mean, the fear and the trembling, a holy reverence and fear. But I think God is grieved. I think God wants us to come to Him just like a parent would want their child to come to them.

Could you imagine if your child came to you and approached you formally? Oh, father, which art on earth? What in the world? What? What do you need? What? What are you talking to me like that? How distant and cold is that? I'm here. I'm your father, which art on earth. You forgot the hallowed be your name part.

But anyway, I'm your dad. I'm your dad. What's going on, son, daughter? You know how sometimes some say, Oh, you can just call me JD? I sometimes though — I just think, God's just saying, hey, you just call me Dad. Okay, dad.

But I would be remiss if I didn't say that it was not easy at first. I felt — it was so uncomfortable because I had been taught, you know, oh, don't be irreverent. You know, like, in that reverb and King James and you know...

And at first it was kind of like I was being disrespectful or irreverent, and it didn't come out easy. But after a while, I mean, it came out very easy. Baba. In fact, I find myself sometimes just, you know, you're continually praying, Baba.

Oh Lord, I just — can we pray to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit? I know sometimes people get weird on this. You know, we interchange. You mean God in three persons?

So we say, Father, Lord, you know? And I picture God the Father, God the Son, the Holy Spirit going, oh, this one's for you; he just said Lord. Oh, Father. Father, this one's for you. You take line one. It's not like that. We're praying to our Father in heaven in the name of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. We're still praying to God, but He has given us permission to call him "Daddy." Call me Daddy.

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Okay. Four ways: First one — be brief. You're one to talk about brief. Well, let me have this one. Just hear me out. One of the lessons I'm learning about my own prayer life is that — and you've heard me say this before — it's not the length of prayer. It's the strength of prayer. And again, just to be clear, this does not apply to sermons.

But prayer is not the length. And I know it sounds cliché, but thinking I have to pray long prayers usually results in no prayers. And conversely, when I understand the truth about prayer having nothing to do with its length, prayer then becomes this freeing get-to and not a burdensome got-to, which we're going to also talk about momentarily. Listen to what Jesus said about long prayers in *Matthew 6:7*. He pulls no punches.

He says, **“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do.”** I could almost picture them, you know, they're there overhearing Jesus saying this. Don't pray like those guys do, the heathen, those hypocrites. Don't pray like them. Don't pick up their habits.

Here's why. **“For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”**

Ah! Let's be honest with ourselves, shall we? We actually — innate within all of us — and I'm just, again, as prone as the next guy to do this — we think that the more eloquent or even lengthy our prayers are the more potential they have to be answered. And that is absolutely not the truth.

In *Matthew 14:30*, we have — this is one of my favorite accounts in all the Bible. There's so many lessons to be learned from it. But it's arguably one of the most encouraging verses in the Bible when it comes to short prayers, short prayers with few words. We'll talk in a moment about prayers with no words. Prayers with tears. They're called liquid prayers.

Sometimes it's not even tears. The tear ducts get dried up, and then it's just a groan and a moan. And sometimes it's not even that. And that's where the Holy Spirit just hears the heart, the cry of the heart because you can't even groan. You're past that part. You've already wept so bitterly that the tear ducts have dried up. And there are those times where life just sits so hard, and it's so painful that there's just no words. And that's when the Holy Spirit comes in and intercedes and takes those and groans and turns them into prayers that God hears and answers.

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Well, this is the account. You know this account well. It's when Jesus, with urgency, has the disciples get into the boat after the feeding of the multitudes, knowingly sending them into a perilous life-and-death storm.

That's very disturbing to me. I've been working this out with the Lord in my own walk with the Lord because He knew they were going to get hit by the storm. And He tells them, get in the boat, in this urgency because the account says immediately He gets them in the boat and to the other side. And He says, I'll meet you on the other side.

So He puts them in the boat with urgency right after the meeting of the multitudes, which I believe is to protect them from the greater trial that awaited had they stayed. Because pride would have set in after a miracle of that magnitude. So He wants to get them out of there for their own safety and protection from pride.

So there's urgency. He gets them in the boat, sends them into the storm normally — knowingly. God will sometimes deem it necessary to knowingly send you into a perilous storm, and sometimes it's to protect you from the greater storm. He'll allow this trial to protect you from the greater trial. He has a purpose for it, a reason for it, and plus He's going to do some other things in the midst of this trial, things that he could not have otherwise done.

Example: Have Peter walk on water. Well, wait a minute. He took his eyes off the Lord. No, he walked on water. Listen, this is not a play on words. I'm convicted in my own heart, in my own teaching particularly of this account because the focus oftentimes is on: He took his eyes off the Lord, and he sunk.

Wait a minute. He got out of the boat by faith and walked on water. I mean, we're not told how long. I'm not angry. Maybe I am a little bit. But we're not told how long before he took his eyes off the Lord and looked at the storm and the sea and the waves because that storm's still raging, even before they get in the boat and Jesus calms the storm and then has a little talk with them about, you know, their little faith, not with disgust or disdain in His voice, but rather with passion and pity. Like why is your faith so little when your God is so big? Why did you doubt? Why were you afraid?

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But back to Peter. He — I wonder how long it was. You know we make assumptions, by the way, and we may do so wrongly. I don't necessarily think that he just got maybe two or three steps out.

My impression of Peter is once he got out of that boat and started walking on water, he's going, I'm walking on water, man! Ha! I bet he walked on water for a while. I mean, how far out is Jesus? He had to be far enough out to where He couldn't be recognized because they thought He was a ghost. They did not recognize Him when they saw Him. They recognized Him when they heard His voice. Because His sheep know His voice. The sheep know the shepherd's voice.

That's when — at first, they think it's a ghost. Like, we need this. We're going to die. And now they got this ghost walking on water towards us. This is how it ends. It's over. We're all going to die. And then the Lord says, it's Me. They heard his voice.

There's nowhere in the account that it says they saw. Oh, wait, no, it's Jesus. Oh, you guys, it's the Lord. No, they heard his voice saying, it's Me. Sometimes I think we need to just hear the voice of the Lord in that still, small voice of the Holy Spirit saying, I'm here. It's Me. It's Me. Oh, Lord!

And then I love Peter. And none of the other disciples did this, by the way. They're all hunkering down, hanging on for dear life in that boat somewhere, and, you know, those boats weren't big boats. And this is not a yacht either, where you can go into suite below. No, this is a fishing boat that they're on. And here they are probably just holding on for dear life.

And what does Peter do? **“Lord, if it's You, bid me come.”**

If I'm one of the other disciples, first thing I'm saying is Peter, are you — you've — are you out of your mind? You know, Lord, if it's you, bid me come. And what does Jesus say? No, Peter, it's too dangerous.

No. He said, go ahead. (Chuckling) Yeah. Let's go. Let's do this.

And there's no record of any hesitation on Peter's part. And I would expect there to be no hesitation on Peter's part because that's not who Peter was. He spoke and then thought,

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right? He didn't think before he spoke. He spoke, and then he would think about what he spoke. That's a whole nother thing.

But I imagine him as soon as Jesus said let's go, come on. He got right out of that boat. And he walked on water. I don't know for how long. And yes, it's true. He saw the wind was boisterous. And we're told he was filled with fear. And when he did, that's when he started to sink.

And as he did, he prayed a very lengthy prayer. Our Father, which art in heaven... Because that's how Jesus had taught them to pray. And then he drowned because the prayer was too long. No, he prayed a three-word prayer. **“Lord, save me.”**

Check it out. God answered his three-word prayers. Could you imagine? “Lord, save me,” as he's sinking, and the storm is still raging. Lord, I pray — you'll forgive my — the way I see this. “Lord save... glub-glub-glub.”

You know, barely getting out “me.” And we're told immediately Jesus took his hand and pulled him up and saved him and gets him back in the boat where he's probably going (Gaspng).

The other disciples, I'm sure — I know I'm reading it into it. Let me have this. They're going, told you, Peter, what were you thinking? No, hey, man, you didn't walk on water. I did, and for generations, for well-nigh 2000 years likely they're going to read about me, not you, walking on water. Yeah, but they're also going to read about you sinking. Yeah, but they're going to read about me walking on water. And not only that, they're going to read about my three-word prayer and how God answered my three-word prayer.

What's your point, Pastor? God answers three-word prayers. Lord, help me. He answers those prayers. Aren't you glad? Aren't you glad you don't have to go through like this whole gyration, this formula? You got to enter into the outer courts first. Oh, God. And by that time, your — it's too late. Sometimes prayers are — they have to be short, not sermons. Prayers have to be short. We don't have much time here. This is perilous. I'm going to die. Lord save me.

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And what did He do? The Lord saved him. Be brief. Nothing wrong with — you know, you pray a — sometimes I'll pray a prayer like this. It's usually when I'm in the middle of a project that is just defeating me and breaking me and making me cry like a baby.

I mean it's usually involving tools which I should never be allowed to have in my hands because this is not my gift. So I'm trying to fix something that anybody could, a fifth grader could fix this, but I try to fix it. I'm praying in my prayer language because this thing — I can't — and I'm making it worse.

So I'll pray a very short prayer. Lord, give me wisdom. And it's — as God is my witness — it's almost immediately after I pray a short prayer like that, that boom, that screw that I couldn't get out, that I was stripping, by the way, all of a sudden, it's loose, and it comes out. I'm going, oh, that was so cool.

And I'm like — so now — my family know this and says, oh, Baba is asking for wisdom again. This can't be good. He's having problems again. You know, next time just hire somebody to do these kinds of things. But I did — Lord, just give me wisdom. Lord, help me on this. And He does. He answers short prayers. And He's right there.

And by the way, when you call, when you pray, aren't you so glad that you don't get voice mail? Lord, I need some help here. Or you get those automatic responses in the email. You know, I'm currently out of the office. I'll return on this date, and if this is an emergency, contact my assistant, and...

No. I always get through. How's this one? We have access to God who created the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that in them is at any time to ask for anything. And we don't avail ourselves of that? You know that I can get through to the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is.

And I can — I don't have to go through a secretarial screen. I don't have to — I won't get voice mail. I won't get an automated response. I won't get an AI response. I won't get an automated “push 1 for....”

By the way, is this getting worse, or is it me? The other day I gave up. And I'm not — I'm persistent, man I'm tenacious. And I finally — I just — I had it.

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Push 1 if it's partly cloudy and windward mauka showers.

I push 1.

Push 1 if you were born after February of 19...

1.

Push 1 for English.

(Angry noise) You keep — (Stumbling over words)

Please listen carefully as our menu has changed.

Translated: we've added 25 more options that will take you a half hour to get through. I just needed to get that off my chest. It's getting so much worse, and it's going to get worse too, by the way, just want to let you know. So have a nice evening.

I couldn't even get through. I used to be able to get through. And you — try to talk to a person. And then even when you get a person, how do you know they're not AI? So is that — I remember one time I finally got a real person. I said, are you real person? Last time I checked I was. Oh thank you. I'm so glad to hear your voice. I've been on hold for a long time trying to get through your system. I forgot what I was calling about. What's your name? Let's start up a conversation here.

Now they don't even give you that option. Leave a message. We'll call you back within, you know, a couple years and try to resolve your problem. Anyway. God answers three-word prayers. Be brief.

Be specific, number 2. Now we've covered this in the past related to prayers being what I affectionately refer to as precision prayers, not peripheral prayers, you know, not surfacey, generic. You know, pray. Pray with precision, precise specificity. And here's why. Praying precision prayers brings about precision answers.

And there's a reason for that. There's no question mark. See, if you pray generic or ambiguously or, you know, just kind of, it's not specific. Well then God says — just in His grace, God answers it.

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But it was so generic, you're not even really sure God actually answered it because it was so generic. So now it's a question mark. Maybe God didn't answer. Maybe it was just a circumstantial thing.

But when you pray specifically and God answers specifically, there's no question mark. You know unmistakably that God answered the prayer because the prayer was so specific that there's no mistaking, like, oh, it was a coincidence. No, no, no, no, no. Co-incidence. It was an incidence that had a co.

Let me try that again. Coincidence? No. God answered this prayer. It was so precise that there's no mistaking that God answered the prayer. Let me flip it around. If my prayers are vague and generic, then I'm going to be riddled with the uncertainty concerning the answer also being vague and generic.

So what does that look like? It looks like this. It's like, oh Lord, I just pray your blessing on them. Then you see them at church the next week. And you know, how are you doing? Oh, man, I'm blessed. I prayed that God would bless you. That's pretty vague.

You know, it's like when they make predictions and they're so vague, you know, it's the stars will shine brightly. You got a pretty good chance of that coming to pass. Wow! You're a prophet. Wow. You made a prediction, and it happened. Whoa, that was so cool. What else is going to happen? Well, it's very likely that the sun will rise in the morning. Wow. Amazing.

No, there's — and is it not true with Bible prophecy that the specificity of the prophecy is such that there's no way that there can be any mistaking that the prophecy was fulfilled? Did we not see that in *Daniel Chapter 11*? That was one of the most mind-blowing chapters in all of the Bible concerning the precision of God fulfilling the predictions, the prophecies that were revealed to Daniel, some of which were 300 years even before the people that would fulfill them were born. He was revealed the name of Cyrus before his parents were even born and got married and had their son. That's called precision. That's being specific.

This is *James 5:16*, the second part. I want to draw your attention because there's a couple of things here that I want to point out. You know this verse. You quote this verse. **“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”**

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The effectual fervent prayer of, not our own righteousness, Christ's imputed righteousness because our own righteousness is, as Isaiah says, as filthy rags.

No, this is those who are right with God, the imputed righteousness of Christ. We're walking in righteousness. So the effective or effectual fervent prayer of one who is walking righteously accomplishes much. Translated: Gets answered.

You know what these words are in the original language of the Greek New Testament? Effective is *energeō*, where we get the word energetic and fervent is in the original - it carries with it the idea of active and engaged. So let me reread this. When it comes to the specificity of prayer, the specific, energetic, fervent, actively engaged, concentrated, precision prayer gets answered.

Listen to what we read in the next verse, in *verse 16*. We stopped at *verse 16*. We all have it memorized. We've got it on our wallpaper. I used to say, "on our walls," but that needed to be updated too. So now I say "wallpaper." I think that probably has to get updated to "now on your devices."

Never mind, just we know this verse. But what about *17*? We get an example of an answer to a very specific prayer when James, by the Holy Spirit, writes about Elijah in *verse 16*.

Listen, especially this first part. **"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours."**

Stop right there. That is so important. Why? Because when we talk about men like Elijah, mightily used of God, we disconnect ourselves from them. And we say things and think things like, well, that's Elijah, of course. I'm no Elijah.

No, wait, wait, wait, wait. He put his pants on the same way you do. I'm sorry. It could have probably used a different one, but you get — a man with a nature like ours. In other words, his specific prayer didn't get answered because, well, this is Elijah we're talking about. I mean if that were the case, I mean, why bother?

Well, yeah, of course. Elijah can pray that it doesn't rain, and it won't rain. And then he's going to pray that it would rain, and it does rain for three years and six months. That's specific. But this is Elijah we're talking about. Of course.

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Now, JD prays specifically. Well that's different. You're no Elijah. Actually, yes, I am. Let's not make the fatal prayer mistake of disconnecting ourselves from these men and women of God who were sinners just like us. Some of them, I mean, David, for example, I've shared this.

Way TMI on David. I love David. I don't want to know that about David. The plot to kill Uriah after he has sex and commits adultery with his wife, and she gets pregnant, and he tries to cover it up for a year.

Wait. This is — I don't want to know that about him. Well, no, you're gonna know that about him. Not because I want to show you how bad he was and like, how like him you are. No. I want to show you how good I am, in spite of how bad he was.

Have you looked at the genealogy of Christ recorded in Matthew and also again in Luke; it's variation? Because it goes — it follows Joseph and then Mary, and it had to be precise. Talk about precise. I mean, you would not want your family tree to include people like this in it.

What's your point? My point is this. These people are just like us. And if they can pray like Elijah did, earnestly, fervently, energetically, effectually, that it would not rain, then we can too. And we, like Elijah because we are like Elijah, can also pray that it won't rain on the land for three years and six months, and God will answer that prayer too because I'm just like Elijah.

It's not — we tend to think that, oh, they're more spiritual. So of course they're going to get their prayers answered. Now please, don't think for a second that unconfessed sin is not a hindrance to prayer because it could absolutely be a hindrance to prayer.

We've talked about that. That was a another teaching on a prayer night a while back about hindrances to prayer. The way a husband treats a wife, Peter says, can hinder your prayer, make it bounce off the ceiling if you're not dwelling with them in understanding.

There are many hindrances to prayer. Unconfessed sin is certainly a hindrance to prayer. But that's not what James is talking about. Using this example of Elijah, what he's talking about is he's leveling the playing field, so to speak, evening it out because He knows, God knows that we're so prone to elevate these people to a status, put them on a pedestal on

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which they do not belong. And in so doing, there's that disconnect where, yeah, of course they can pray that way, but it's because they are who they are. I can't, I'm just a nobody.

No. And by the way, don't use that as an excuse either. Sometimes I think we give ourselves permission not to pray and we use excuses like, well, I mean, that was Elijah. That was Moses. That was — you can fill in the blank. I love this. I heard this a while back. I know I've shared it before. I think it's apropos here.

You know, we always talk about, man, I can't wait to meet Noah, you know, Elijah, Peter can't wait to meet. I mean, I've got my list. I know you've got your list of all — and when we're in glory and we're going to know who they are. By the way, nobody's going to have name tags. 'Hi. My name is Noah.' No. We're going to know-a who Noah is.

And when we get there, oh, I can't wait to meet Noah. Have you ever thought that Noah can't wait to meet you? You see what just happened there? We just kind of leveled out the playing field. Don't elevate them because they were just like us. And if they were just like us and they prayed specific prayers and got specific answers, then why can't we?

And so what? We just don't even try? Oh, God's not going to answer that prayer. He might have answered that for, you know, Elijah, but He's not going to answer that for me. Why don't you ask? Try see. Try see. You never know.

Well, I'm getting ahead of myself. Number 3, be persistent. If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the main reasons that prayer has become a chore — and let's be honest, prayer has become a chore. Oh, I need to pray more! Oh, it's a chore.

This would have to be it. The mere mention of persistency or tenacity in our prayer lives, it's kind of synonymous with this notion that prayer is a burdensome thing. Oh, I need to pray more. Oh, I need to spend more time in prayer. And it's like it's a burden. Oh, it's the burden of the Lord. That's not what that means, by the way, in the Old Testament Hebrew.

Here's the problem. The Apostle John writes in his first epistle, *Chapter 5, verse 3*, **“The commands of God are not burdensome.”** Did you catch that? His burden is light.

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“My yoke is easy” Jesus said. **“My burden is light.”** **“Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden and burdened, and I will give you rest.”** James says, he goes on, **“The wisdom from above...”**

There's a kind of a grid, a litmus test by which to measure whether it's wisdom from above or it's worldly wisdom. And the wisdom from above **“...is first pure, then peaceable, and easy to be entreated.”** In other words, it's not a heavy, burdensome, weighty, wow, man! No, it's reasonable. It's peaceable. **“The commands of the Lord are not burdensome.”**

So when we see throughout Scripture the command to pray without ceasing — which, by the way, we want it to be a command — two things. First, it should never be burdensome because the commands of God are not burdensome. And secondly, the reason we want it to be a command is because God will never command us to do anything without also enabling us to obey the command that He's commanded us to do.

So He can't, right? Because if He commands us to do something, but doesn't also follow up with the power of the Holy Spirit to do that which He's commanded us to do, wouldn't that make Him party to our disobedience? And God can't do that. God can't tempt with evil. God cannot set us up for failure. That is impossible. God will always create an environment in our lives, in our prayer lives, that is conducive to obedience.

He will orchestrate the steps, choreograph the steps, orchestrate the circumstance because He wants us walking in obedience even more than we want to walk in obedience. And what's harder than walking in obedience? It shouldn't be a burdensome thing because God commanded us.

And God's callings are God's enablings. God commands us. He also empowers us. So you know what's harder than obedience? Disobedience. The path of the sinner is hard. This is where God commands us and we disobey, but we disobey because we did not avail ourselves of the power of the Holy Spirit to obey the command of God.

Because again, God's not going to command us to do anything unless He's also going to give us that which we need in order to obey His command because He wants us to obey. All right. So persistence. There's only one parable that I know of. I could be wrong. But there's only one parable that Jesus taught where He explained the meaning of it before He taught it.

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And it's in *Luke 18*, and I want to read *verses 1-8*. I hesitate to say it, but I'm going to say it anyway. This is one of my favorite parables of all the parables in the Bible. Let me read it. **“Then He [Speaking of Jesus] spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.”**

That's the point of the parable. Parable = parallel. It comes alongside to help as a lesson, a teaching, an illustration, a parallel, a parable. And this is the point of the parable, the lesson to be learned from the parable: Don't ever, ever, ever, ever give up. I think sometimes we stop. We give up. We toss in the towel of prayer too early. And so that's what this parable is about. Men always ought to pray continually, Paul says, and don't lose heart. Don't give up.

Now here's the parable. *Verse 2*. **“There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’**

And [Verse 4] he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’ ”

Translated. The only way I'm going to get this woman off my back is to just give her what she wants. She will not give up. She keeps texting me. I block her, she gets a new number. She keeps knocking on my door. I don't answer, she knocks harder and louder.

She keeps coming back. She's killing me. She's killing me. She keeps persistently, tenaciously asking me, asking me, asking me, troubling me, troubling me, troubling me. And unless I just give her what she wants, she's not going to stop. And I need her to stop.

Now, please don't think that this is a picture of God being reluctant. You know, like, JD again! Oh, come on. Just give him what he wants. That's the only way I'm going to get him to stop bugging Me. No. God is never reluctant. That's not the point of the parable, right? Remember what the point is?

Maybe this is why Jesus started off with the point of the parable to begin with, so we wouldn't miss the point of the parable. The parable isn't that God is reluctant, like this

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unjust judge, as we're about to read. No, it's — the point of the parable is don't give up. Keep knocking.

When Jesus said, **“Ask, and you shall receive; seek, you shall find; knock, and the door shall be opened unto you.”** Do you know in the original it's not just knock? Have you ever heard this by the way? If you have to ask twice it's a lack of faith. Nothing could be further from the truth. I rebuke that false teaching that is — nothing could be further from the truth. Ask, if I have to ask again that's a show of my lack of faith.

Have you guys ever heard that before? I was a young believer and this older, mature sister in the Lord told me that if I had to ask the Lord more than once for something that meant I had little faith. I'm like, oh! I want, I want,— I want to have faith.

So I asked God one time and then stopped. And then finally I got set right. Thank you God, by the grace of God and the mercy of God, He sent somebody in my path who actually knew the Word of God and said, by the way, when Jesus said, **“Ask,”** He said, ask and keep on asking. Knock and keep on knocking. Seek and keep on seeking. In other words, don't stop. Don't lose heart. Don't give up. You keep asking. You keep at it. You keep praying because like this unjust judge, how much more your just judge?

Verse 7. **“And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.”** He's not going to take as long as this unjust judge.

And notice one thing here. It's a detail that can be easily missed at first. His own children who cry out day and night. You remember back in the 80s, they had this 'Parenting God's Way'? Let that baby cry it out. Let him cry it out! So we tried that with our first-born son. I lasted about 42 seconds. Here's my wife. No, let him cry it out.

Okay. He starts crying. I'm going, he's crying. I'm twitching and I'm, you know, I'm reacting as God intended it to be. Something's wrong. And so finally, I just, I get up, I go into the room. Habibi! I pick him up. It's okay. Baba's here. And he stopped crying. I said, well, that didn't work. I'm never doing that again.

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No. Aren't you glad God doesn't make you cry it out? Cry it out! And here you are. You're crying, God! No. You're gonna cry it out. No! I need You. I'm going to cry out to You day and night.

And God made it — by the way, this is why it is parents. And I know, this maybe applies more to the younger parent. But remember, for those of you that are older, when your children would cry, it would just — you would you would just go into — I going to be careful what word I use — turbo mode. Turbo mom, turbo Dad. My child is crying.

Now, interesting. When somebody else's kid is crying: Shut that kid up! Am I right? But no. If it's mine, they're my child, and they're crying, I'm on it. And that's the way God intended it. Go there and comfort them immediately. And isn't it interesting? Will not God avenge them speedily?

Man, I was in there lightening — my wife would even comment, I've never seen you move so fast. This was many years ago. And that was then. Now it's like, move fast? What's that? I better finish because I'm looking at the clock, which I hate. And thank God there will be none in heaven.

Be bold. This is the best for last, I think. A simple yet bold prayer life is synonymous with a powerful and effective prayer life. And here's how I get there. When I pray big and bold prayers to our big God, our big God answers them because, listen, He's the only one who can do something that big.

Remember the story, true story, about Alexander the Great. I'll give you the real brief version. Once a year he would allow one of his subjects to come to him and ask for anything, and he would grant whatever it was that they would ask. And year in and year out, someone would come and ask, would you give me money so I can pay, you know, this month's rent and electrical bill? And he would just grant them their request.

Then one year, this one guy has the audacity to say, okay, you said I can come to you and ask you to do anything. I want a huge palace built with a huge banquet room so I can have big dinners for all my friends to come over. And I want livestock and I want servants. And he starts going down this grocery list.

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And I'm sure Alexander the Great's men — this is a true story, by the way — Alexander the Great's men are probably just going, wow, who is this guy? Who does he think he is? And much to their consternation, when he's done describing everything he wants, I mean, you talk about big and bold, Alexander the Great's like, okay, granted.

The guys come up to him afterwards like, is this a joke? Are you really going to give him all that? He said, yeah, of course I am. Why? Because for the first time, you guys, I feel like the king that I am. Because any mere man can do the things that I've been asked to do. But only a king could grant something that big. I finally feel like the king that I am, and I'm going to do this as bold and big as it is. You know why? Because I can.

I wonder how many times God has been at the ready to do something so grand and glorious, so over the top, off the charts, exceedingly, abundantly above and beyond anything we could have ever thought or imagined, let alone ask, and He's at the ready, waiting for us to ask because He can.

I mean, Lord, help me with this month's rent. Your neighbor can help you with this month's rent. Do you know who you're asking, who you're talking to? Well, we say God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Give me a break. He owns the hills. He owns the air. He owns everything. He has everything. And He has it there waiting.

And you have not because you ask not. And I picture God just waiting for us to ask Him for big things so He can do big things that only He can do, so that when you say, wow, how did that happen? Because God did it. Yeah, but that's big. Well, He's a big God. Why are our prayers so small when our God is so big? We ask God to do things that anyone can do. But what about asking God to do something that only God can do because only God could do that?

Hebrews 4:16. You know this well. **“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”**

Boldly, not arrogantly. I think we come bashfully, sheepishly. Lord, I know You're busy, you know. Sorry to bother You. You know, I just — I know I asked you this last week, but, you know, I don't want to be a pest, but, you know, if it's not too much trouble.

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Stop, stop, stop, stop, stop. Be bold. Ask Me for whatever you want. Ask Me anything. Anything? Yeah, anything. If it's for My glory and your good, I'm going to do it. Why wouldn't I? Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father above and there's no variation or shifting of a shadow, James says.

I want to close with *Romans 8:32*, and you'll see why. It is perhaps one of the most powerful passages on praying big and bold prayers in the entirety of the pages of Holy Writ. And it's in one of the most powerful chapters in all of the Bible too, *Romans Chapter 8*.

The Apostle Paul is writing, and the way he frames this question is, of course, inspired by the Holy Spirit, but it's brilliant because it just settles it. Listen to what he says and use your God-given intellect to process this.

He says **“He [Speaking of God] who did not spare His own Son, [Speaking of Jesus] but delivered Him up for us all, [Speaking of His crucifixion for us, instead of us] how shall [Question] how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”**

In other words, if God was unwilling to withhold His only begotten Son, is there anything that He would withhold from us? Watch this. We pray, we ask God for something. And it's kind of, you know, it's a little big. That's an oxymoron. It's a little big. It's kind of a little big. Little, big. Never mind. It's kind of a big ask. It's a big ask. That's better.

And there's the enemy going, God's not going to give you that. Now if it's not for selfish motives, as James says, you ask, you do not receive because you ask with selfish motives. No, if it's for My glory and your good, I'm going to give it to you. Just ask Me for anything. The only reason you don't have it is because you haven't asked.

And the only reason if you have asked that you haven't gotten is because your heart's not right. Your motives are not right. But if your heart's right, and it's for My glory and your good, I'm going to give it to you. So just ask Me for anything. Well, okay, let's try this. So God, I'm going to ask for — and you fill in the blank. I know this is a big ask God's answer.

Let Me ask you a question, JD. If I was unwilling to withhold My only begotten Son, whom I love — you know how much you love your sons, doesn't even come anywhere near to how much I love your sons, by the way.

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No greater love has any man, than he lay down his life for another. I love you so much. And if I love you that much that I was unwilling to give you My only begotten Son to die for you, are you kidding me? Why wouldn't I give that to you? I can do that blindfolded with my hands tied behind my back.

I mean, I'm using, of course, a silly way to illustrate it. But that's nothing. I can do it effortlessly. And because you asked Me, I'm going to give it to you freely. Notice, freely. Not reluctantly. Not with strings attached. All things. Not some things. Not most things. All things. Oh, but yeah, but not that thing. No, all, all things. I'm not going to withhold it from you. I'm going to give it to you because I gave to you My only begotten Son. Why would I not give that to you, whatever it is, you fill in the blank?

Does that not just inspire boldness and a sanctified strength in your prayer life? You approach the throne with a confidence and a boldness, not self-confidence, a confidence in the goodness of God. And you approached His throne boldly and ask for big and bold things, and I promise you, on the authority of who God is and how God is, and the word of God, that He will blow your mind. Try it. What have you got to lose? What have you got to lose?

Yeah, but this is a big ask.

Ask Him!

Yeah, but this, is this is big.

Jesus, dying on the cross for you, that wasn't big? Are you asking Him for something bigger than that?

No. Who could?

No, if I'm willing to do that, is there anything I would be unwilling to do? Would to God that we would be numbered amongst those of whom it is said that they boldly asked a big God for big things that were granted to them because they did.

Father, thank You. I took a brief message and prolonged it, perhaps unnecessarily. But I hope that You'll take this and by the Holy Spirit, bless it to our lives, the application of it, that it might help us in our prayer lives. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Man, the time really got away from me. Walt, come on up. I am so sorry. I really wanted to have more time. Walt, we still have time. I want to introduce you to a dear friend of mine. You probably know him, his wife, Katie, their eight children. When they're here, they — I love it when they come as a whole family. They have a place in Oregon and also here. But I love it when they come. They're the coolest family.

How am I doing so far? They take up a whole row. It is the coolest thing. I just love it. Anyway, I want to introduce you to Walt Cheshire. I asked him to come up and share with you, about a miracle. concerning his daughter. So come on up. The mic is yours. I left you 15 minutes. WALT: I'll try and do it in five.

PASTOR JD: Okay. It's all yours.

WALT: So first, I'll put in a plug for my dear bride by my side for 33 years, my lady, Katie, who taught my children how to pray from an early age. And so all this, teaching on prayer, it just reflects back to the way that we pray in our family. I pray with my children, but my wife is the one who's with, you know, the discipline and taught them how to actually pray. So I'll set the stage.

The story is, on the 26th of June, my family was in Oregon. I was actually here at the time. And they were going to go to an outing at the lake. This is Applegate Lake. And you can see the lake in the picture there. So my daughter, along with — they had some friends visiting from Ewa Beach that were in Oregon with them at the time, and they were going to swim across an arm of Applegate Lake.

And so they set out to swim. It's a long ways to swim. And they got to the other side of this arm, and there was a log that was up a little higher on this pretty steep embankment. And the friend from Ewa Beach got there first, and he went up on the log and shook it, and it was fine. So he jumped off into the water. Then my other son, Ian, he got on the log and jumped off into the water.

And then Illiana, our daughter, 17-year-old, was going to go up and get on the log and jump off. But right after Ian jumped off, the log began to roll. Now this is about a 2,000-pound log. And so if you look at the lake, it's not that low right now in the picture, but the water

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had been going down. So this log had obviously been in the water because when it went into the water, it sunk. So it had been waterlogged.

So this 2,000-pound log basically, rolled over my daughter. So she turned. She couldn't do anything else. You'd think you'd jump over a log if it's rolling at you. But when the bank is really steep, there's just no way. She just did what she naturally knew to do and turned and tucked her head.

And that log hit her back and pushed her into the water. And I know one of my sons, Isaac, he said that when she came out of the water, it was the worst scream, groan, that he had ever heard. Unimaginable.

So naturally, of course, they're yelling to Katie on the other side. But see, Katie's — you know, you can see the distances here. She didn't know. She thought they were, you know, celebrating because they had made it across the lake. You know, she didn't know that anything bad was going on.

Eventually, Ian, our son, made it back over there in one of the, I think it was an inflatable kayak. And as soon as Katie found out, of course, she — one thing she was comforted in that she knew that her children would be praying. And Katie, you know, she's a former lifeguard. She could have swam across. But it's just interesting the way that the Lord worked it all out because she didn't jump in the water and swim across, even though she might have felt compelled to. She stay put.

So our daughter was in the water being held by, our family members and our friends, for probably an hour to an hour and a half before the paramedics came. That's how long this — how remote this lake is. So the paramedics finally came, and thankfully, they were able to put a backboard under the water and lift her out.

And the Lord just worked out all the details because there was a person there with a pontoon boat, and they were able to lift her up onto the pontoon boat on the backboard and get her into the ambulance. They had to float around the bend of the lake to get to the little campsite where they had a boat ramp. And then they got into the mercy flights ambulance, and they took off.

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One note, thing, is that the reason why the ambulance might have taken so long is because it came — I don't know the code that they had — but it came with no sirens. It was like someone had told them, you know, don't use sirens. It's just a normal, you know, routine call, or whatever that means.

But so they had to wait a long time. But it's just interesting to find out when we were in the hospital later, we have a friend who's a supervisor with Mercy Flights, and she said, you know, it's very possible that your daughter was in the water that long because it would have reduced the inflammation and it would have kept her from being paralyzed.

So the surgeon, the next day, they did an operation on her. They did this while I was in the air flying back. And they put two rods in her back. The surgeon said that she was within two millimeters of being paralyzed for life. So it was a miracle, absolute miracle.

And the way that things worked out, orchestrated, it was only the Lord. The Lord could have done it. And you know, people praying on the spot at the time. I believe the Lord listened and then He showed mercy.

So I guess I'll go ahead and show some pictures. I'll try to go through these quickly. So there's our daughter in her hospital bed, and she's wearing this brace. Now she's got to wear it for three months. As soon as she got it on, she said, this is my breastplate of righteousness.

[Laughter]

So she's been taught well. And then the family, of course, had to get their pictures with her. You can see I made it back in time to get a picture taken. There's my beloved Katie with our daughter, and then Ian and I.

So it's interesting because she has progressed so well. She just had an appointment last Friday, and they said that she can finally take off her breastplate when she's in the swimming pool, so she can actually breathe. And she can take it off when she's sleeping. Other than that, she has to have it on. And our other — Ian and Isaac, her brothers, and her sister Krista.

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Now, one thing I didn't say is Krista is involved in the — a lot of our children are involved in the worship ministry at our church in Oregon. And when Krista was there, while Iliana was in the water — I don't know if you guys know that donut man — but she sang, ♪ In His arms, In His arms ♪

I don't know the song. But it is — she sang that, and then her pain went down. So it was like, God holds You close in His arms, and the pain went down. So it's just the Lord working in just many ways.

PASTOR JD: Is that all of you?

WALT: I think so, yeah.

PASTOR JD: We've gotta count. We have to do a roll call.

WALT: Yeah, that's the whole family with her. Well, not Caleb. Caleb wasn't there. We'll show you that at the end. But Christian was actually planning to come and visit. He's in pilot training. So he had a scheduled visit, and he just happened to be there at the time she was in the hospital, which was in itself, you know, special. And here's Iliana walking. So on the left —

PASTOR JD: How many miles?

WALT: So I've gone walking with Iliana. She's got her breastplate on, and I have to keep up with her. I mean, she's just, like, moving out. Now, she's an athlete. She's done ballet. She's a lifeguard. She's been a lifeguard at the Croc Center in Kapolei. So she's fit. And it just shows that the Lord has used her fitness to help her regain her —

PASTOR JD: Can you go back to the part about that she walks faster than you?

WALT: Well, it's not hard to do.

PASTOR JD: We were just talking about that. WALT: Yeah. They all — everybody walks faster than me. I mean, I have to struggle to keep up with her. But anyway, that's our driveway in Oregon. It's pretty long, and she's gone back and forth, and she's gotten to now where she's — I think she's done — I don't — she may have done more now — but five miles in one day. So she's just progressing along incredibly. So I'm transitioning real quick just to — so we're thankful for Iliana.

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But we had an opportunity two weeks ago to go to Christian's, pilot graduation from the Air Force. And both Christian and Caleb, our two oldest sons, went to University of Hawaii Air Force ROTC scholarship. And then they both got accepted to be pilots in the Air Force.

And here is our 'But God Testimony' because neither of them took the Covid shot. And our older son, Christian, on the left of the right picture there he was actually sidelined by the Air Force because he didn't take the Covid shot. So he actually graduated earlier. He ended up being behind Caleb two classes in the pilot training because the Air Force finally, said, oh, that's all gone away. You need to get to duty, to Christian.

So he was, you know, looking around like, what am I going to do? You know, if the Air Force isn't going to take me on, what kind of job am I going to have? But the Lord worked it out. He had the exemption form that the church gave him here, that he had signed up for.

And the Lord ended up working it out. It's just amazing the way God moves. So yeah, both of them now have their wings, but they're going to be doing their follow-on pilot training. So you can see Iliana on the left there with her breastplate of righteousness on in her evening gown when we went to the dining in.

PASTOR JD: Go back. That's the whole family, right? That last one, okay, I want to leave it on that. Okay. Anything else you want to share? Because I want to share something, real quick. That's the whole family, right?

WALT: That's the whole family. We, as you can see from the picture, we're really close, our family is. We've just committed everything to the Lord. And Iliana's miraculous recovery — I mean, she still has a ways to go.

I mean, she had, just to tell you how serious it was, her sternum was cracked in half, and her T5 and T6 vertebrae were severely damaged, and some of the other vertebrates had cracks in them too. She had a lacerated spleen, and she had a bruised lung. So just the fact that, you know, she's walking is just absolutely a miracle. And we're just so thankful and thankful to the Lord that He's done this great work.

PASTOR JD: Okay, so stay up here. Is it okay — I didn't ask for permission before, but what's new? Walt is a cancer survivor. Can I say it like that? But you're still, In fact, you're here for follow up because you had a battle. Do you mind sharing just briefly about that?

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WALT: Yeah, mine started in 2018. And at one of these prayer meetings back years ago, you all prayed for me. But yes, they did an extensive surgery on my jaw, which had cancer in my jawbone, and they took my jawbone out. They put my left fibula in place of my jawbone.

That process — then I had to wait a year before they would, actually try to work on putting implants in that fibular bone. And then a year after that, they finally put a prosthesis on it. And I've since, I had come back because they gave me a new prosthesis this year and I had to have the doctor look at it one more time before he moved away, moved off island, moved to Texas.

Yeah, it's been a challenge. I don't look as normal as I did once upon a time, but, you know, there's years have gone by, too, so. But Yes, I'm just thankful to the Lord that I'm still here, alive to even talk to y'all.

[Applause]

PASTOR JD: I've known you for a long time, you and your family, a lot of years now. Even Katie, this family has been through so much, and it's just been such an inspiration to see the mighty healing hand of God on them through it all.

And I remember when — man, that was a long — you said 2018? WALT: Yes.

PASTOR JD: Man, that was a long time ago. So are you cancer-free right now? WALT: I hope so. The last time I checked, yes.

PASTOR JD: You still have to keep — yeah. Okay. Well, so here's what we're going to do. First of all, we're going to pray for Iliana and thank God for the miracle. But also pray for a miraculous, speedy recovery that makes the medical team involved scratch their heads and those who don't know the Lord, that maybe this would be used to bring them to the Lord.

But I also want us to pray for Walt. He is such an inspiration. He's been also such an encouragement to me personally. We're relatively close in age. Wait a minute. Are you older than me?

WALT: I'm a tiny bit older. Who's counting?

PASTOR JD: No, no. It's important. You're older than me. That's all that matters, right?.

WALT: I'm 63 now.

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PASTOR JD: So he's a little bit older. Actually, he's older than me, so we're clear. But we've, over the years, just become dear friends. And he's a great brother and a great encouragement. And when I first got the text from Katie about Iliana, man, we got it right out on the prayer list. And thank you for the prayer warriors that went into action once we got that out, urgent prayer requests.

So let's pray. And if you would join with me. Kaponono, you can come up if you want. You can stand up if you want as well. Father in heaven, thank You. We're just in awe of You and how it is that (Chuckling) You're always there for us, no matter what.

And Lord, thank You for prayer because that's the vehicle. That's the means by which we can come to You in our time of need. And Lord, just the way, as Walt was sharing, how You timed everything and even what would have and could have been seen as a disastrous delay turned out to be Your hand delaying the arrival of the medics, and that maybe colder water and keeping her in that position... because it could have been so much worse.

And then, Lord, that she's even — these pictures of her standing and that's — only You could do that, and You did. And so Lord, thank You. Lord, we know that she's got a long road ahead of her. And this has been quite a life-altering experience that You've been in and Your hand on throughout.

But still, Lord, I just pray that You would encourage and strengthen her heart and her faith. This is surely a faith-growing experience as well to see You work in such a mighty way, Lord. So please, would You do that?

And then, from my brother Walt, I — this is — I just really want to seize upon the opportunity to pray for him again as we have for years and continue to. But Lord, You really did a miracle in his life too. I remember with both he and Katie just crying and praying together. And the diagnosis initially was not good. It was very serious.

But God. But You, O God. Your ways are too high for our understanding. That he's even standing here with me tonight in this Your church tonight is a miracle unto itself. So Lord, I just pray for those, the physicians now, even any new physicians that he has, that You would give them supernatural wisdom from above and whatever needs to be done, procedures, follow-up procedures, Lord, just keep him cancer-free and strong and keep him for us.

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Keep him for his wife and his children. Keep his children for he and his wife keep him for us and us for him. And thank You for him and his precious, precious family. And thank You for this miracle. In Jesus name, Amen. WALT: Amen, Amen.