



21 DAYS OF PRAYER

AUGUST 8 - 28, 2019



PARKVIEW
BAPTIST CHURCH

WELCOME TO 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

These next 21 days in August are an invitation for you to fast and pray over the course of the next three weeks for a revival of God's presence and work in your own life and at Parkview.

THE GOAL OF THAT REVIVAL IN YOU IS FOR GOD'S GLORY TO BE REVEALED TO A WATCHING WORLD THAT NEEDS TO KNOW HIM.

When large numbers or high percentages of people are transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, spiritual awakening is the result. Communities change. Cities change. And yes, nations can change. Spiritual awakening is what we need in our nation, but revival of God's people is a spiritual prerequisite.

Each day in this prayer guide, we've included one or more Scriptures to get your focus on God and what He has to say to us through His Word. May God challenge, encourage, and increase your own hunger for His presence and power to such a degree that you will make every adjustment required to experience revival and awakening. I'm praying that God will increase your faith to believe Him for all He wants to do where you are. Don't focus attention on how bad things may be around you. Get your eyes fixed on Jesus and what He can do. He is our Hope.

Below you have been given you some suggestions for prayer. Prayer is a relationship with the Creator of the universe. Jesus wants you to spend time getting to know Him and His purposes and His ways as you pray. He wants to speak to you about your life and your part in His plan for world redemption. You will notice that each day we're asking you to talk to the Lord about what you should do to apply what you are hearing from Him. Don't be a hearer only. Fasting may be a new discipline for you. If so, do some research or ask someone about fasting. That may include denying yourself food, or it could include a fast from television or media for a season. Fasting heightens your hunger for God and your focus on Him, but it also provides you with additional time to pray. Fasting and prayer go together.

Parts of the 21 Days of Prayer are taken from Claude King (a man of prayer).

DAY 1**Spiritual Awakening****God's Word for Today**

Read Acts 19:18-20 (or the larger passage Acts 19:1-20)

Thoughts for Today

A spiritual awakening is a time when many people are changed by coming to faith in Christ. The result of such a harvest is the culture and the society is radically transformed. Paul's preaching and demonstration of the power of the gospel in Ephesus led to major change in many people's lives. In the last part of Acts 19, a riot broke out. The silversmiths were angry because so many people were turning to Christ that their business of making and selling false gods was suffering. That's spiritual awakening.

In the 1970's and 1980's, Angola Prison in Louisiana was known as the bloodiest prison in America. Most of those sentenced to Angola would die at Angola. The hopelessness of the prisoners led to unbridled violence. In 1995, Warden Burl Cain realized the only lasting change would have to be a moral reformation that starts in the heart. Prisoners came to Christ and began to share their faith with others. A reformation was underway.

In partnership with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, a program for training in Christian ministry was established inside the walls. Men began to grow spiritually and gain victory over sinful behaviors. They began to reflect Christlikeness in their actions and behaviors. They shared this good news and hope and new life began to spread. Today Angola may be one of the safest and most peaceful prisons in the nation.

When Hurricane Katrina forced 2,000 New Orleans inmates to Angola, officials were afraid of riots. So they called in the prisoners trained in Christian ministry. Within 24-hours, peace had come and perhaps 200 had placed their faith in Christ. Today, wardens at other prisons request transfers of these prisoners turned Christian ministers to spread the change to their prison. This is spiritual awakening. Do you believe the God who is transforming Angola can transform your community? That's what we are fasting and praying for.

It's Time to Pray

1. Pray that God will increase your faith to believe that the change He can bring to an Ephesus in Paul's day and to an Angola in our day will begin to transform your community as people come to faith in Christ.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do over the course of the next three weeks to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

DAY 2

Revival

God's Word for Today

Read Zechariah 1:1-6

Thoughts for Today

When churches conduct "revival" services, they frequently see many people place their faith in Christ. Consequently, many think of revival as evangelistic services. But revival is what God accomplishes with His people when they return to Him. Revival comes when God restores life and vitality to His people. Revival is evident when His power and presence is made know in a community. When genuine revival comes to God's people, God's activity becomes the talk of the town.

Claude King tells a story about speaking to a church on prayer to about 25 members of a church that had run about 50 in attendance for 50 years. At the end of the session, the pastor and people confessed they had not been people of prayer and they repented. I explained that when John the Baptist preached a message of repentance, he required "fruits of repentance." I asked, "What is the fruit of repentance for prayerlessness?" ...Prayer! So we concluded in small groups of prayer. Many wept over their sin and pledged to pray.

That pastor resigned and a new one came a few months later. I was asked to speak again. The deacon chairman said, "We are not the same people we used to be. We took that prayer thing seriously." They had begun to pray in classes and services. Their mid-week prayer meeting became a real prayer meeting. They had been meeting weekly on Fridays to pray for a new pastor and God had sent them a man of prayer. I was excited to think what God might do with a praying people led by a praying pastor.

A few months later, a Methodist pastor asked if I had heard about the revival in this church I just described. I had not. He said the Methodists were praying it would spread their direction. So I called the new pastor and asked what was happening. Inactive church members were getting right with God and reconciling with the church. Life and vitality had replaced apathy. People were coming to faith in Christ and the church was running 175 in attendance. Now they were on mission with God in their community and they were going to the world. That is revival!

It's Time to Pray

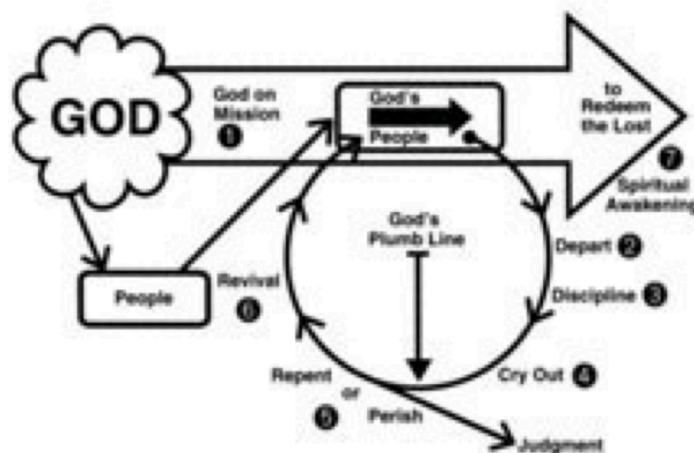
1. Pray that God will reveal His requirements for genuine revival in your church. Ask God to start that revival in your own heart and life.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

DAY 3**God's Pattern for Revival and Awakening****God's Word for Today**

Read 2 Chronicles 7:13-14

Thoughts for Today

The diagram to the right and the phases described below illustrate the connection between revival and spiritual awakening. When God disciplines us and we repent and return to Him, He revives us. He then can work through us to draw others to faith in Jesus.



- Phase 1: God is on mission to redeem a lost world. God calls His people into a relationship with Himself and He accomplishes His work through them.
- Phase 2: God's people tend to depart from Him, turning to substitutes for His presence, purposes, and ways.
- Phase 3: God disciplines His people out of His love for them.
- Phase 4: God's people cry out to Him for help.
- Phase 5: God calls His people to repent and return to Him or perish.
- Phase 6: God revives His repentant people by restoring them to a right relationship with Himself.
- Phase 7: God exalts His Son Jesus in His people and draws the lost to saving faith in Him.

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to reveal where you are and where your church is in this pattern. Have you departed? Are you being disciplined? Are you crying out for help? Do you need to repent and return to Him? Are you ready to be used by God to draw others to new life in Christ?
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take to be of maximum usefulness to His kingdom?

1. Diagram and phases from Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King. *Fresh Encounter: Seeking God Together for Revival in the Land*, (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2006), p. 65. Reprinted and used by permission. Available at www.lifeway.com.

DAY 4**Making the Gospel Attractive****God's Word for Today**

Read Titus 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 2:11-12

Thoughts for Today

Your life is a living testimony of the power of the gospel. A sinful lifestyle or behavior can bring shame and discredit the cause of Christ. But Christlike living can demonstrate the power of Christ to change lives and make the gospel appealing to others.

My dad grew up on a farm. One day he went to help a neighbor plow his field. It was a hot and humid day as he walked behind the mule team and the plow. Dripping with sweat he got very thirsty under the blazing summer sun. Dad took a break to ask the farmer if he could get a drink of water.

The farmer spit out his tobacco juice and it began drooling down his chin. Then he told my dad to get a drink from the water jug under a shade tree. When my dad picked up the jug, he could see something growing on the inside. With this sight of a dirty jug and thinking of the farmer's tobacco juice on his chin, my dad decided he wasn't that thirsty and returned to his plowing.

As you pray and seek to reach out to those in your circles of influence, your life will be like a water jug. People who need Jesus Christ as Savior are thirsting for the Living Water. When they look at Christ through your "glass-jug" life, will they be thirsty enough to drink? Will they see the pure, clean Water of Life and decide to drink deeply. Or will they see impurities and uncleanness that cause them to put off a decision for Jesus Christ? How clean is your water jug?

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to reveal to you anything in your life that might hinder others from choosing to follow Him. Ask Him to enable you to live in such a way that others will want what they see in you—Living Water.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

DAY 5**Revival and Harvest in Wales****God's Word for Today**

Read Isaiah 40:1-5

Thoughts for Today

Religious and church life had reached a low point in Wales in 1904. Church attendance was low and apathy and sinful behavior were high. Many were praying for revival. A young man, Evan Roberts, had been praying for 13 years. Sensing God's call to vocational ministry, he left working in the coal mines to go to school.

He sensed God gave him a message to share with his home church. On a Monday night, he shared a four point message with 17 young people and all responded with a desire to obey. They met the next night with more responding and attendance began to grow nightly. As Christians got right with God and others, God began to convict unbelievers of sin and many began turning to faith in Christ. In six months over 100,000 had professed faith in Christ. Because so many people's lives were being changed, the society changed as well. Crime decreased so much that judges and policemen had little to do. Taverns went out of business because of the decline in drinking alcohol. That affected family life for the good. Even the animals in the coal mines had to be retrained because of the clean language of the converted miners.

Read Evan's four points and consider what changes you would need to make to apply these in your life.

1. You must put away any unconfessed sin.
2. You must put away any doubtful habit.
3. You must obey the Holy Spirit promptly.
4. You must confess Christ publicly.

It's Time to Pray

1. Pray for God to bring such conviction throughout your region that masses will put away sin and doubtful habits. Pray that God will guide and empower your witness and that of others.
2. Pray that so many people will come to faith in Christ that the society in your community will change for good as lives are changed for God's glory.
3. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

DAY 6**Confession****God's Word for Today**

Read Proverbs 28:13

Thoughts for Today

In 1904, when a revival was sweeping through Wales, two men from London visited Wales to witness the move of God. When they arrived at the railroad station in Wales, they asked the ticket agent where the revival was. The agent placed his hand over his heart and said, "Gentlemen, it is here, underneath my buttons."

He was accurate. Revival begins personally when people are willing to confess their sins and repent of those specific sins.

Confession is agreeing with God, admitting it, calling sin what God calls it. Repentance is turning from the sin that you confessed. When a person is willing to do this, he/she is granted mercy and his/her fellowship with God is restored.

On February 17, 2008, Midway Baptist church in Jena, LA conducted a "revival meeting." Monday night God's Spirit moved powerfully but there were no outward decisions. As the service began on Tuesday, a lady stood up and said, "I can't wait. I have to get right with God tonight and with others." She openly confessed her ill will toward another church member. That confession was the beginning of 1 1/2 hours of confession and repentance. Revival broke out and it lasted for 9 weeks spreading throughout the parish involving other churches, denominations and across racial lines. Lives continue to be affected by the revival. A key to revival is to confess our sins and repent.

It's Time to Pray

1. Allow God to reveal any unconfessed sin. Confess, repent and claim 1 John 1:9—"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

DAY 7**What Is the Evidence?****God's Word for Today**

Read 2 Corinthians 13:5, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 5:19-25

Thoughts for Today

Missionaries in the Shantung Province of China in the late 1920's began to wonder if many church members had only intellectually responded to Christ but had never repented and been transformed by Christ. An Evangelical Lutheran Missionary named Marie Monsen began asking people three questions:

1. Have you been born of the Spirit?
2. What evidence do you have of this new birth? 3. Have you been filled with the Holy Spirit?

When people began looking for the evidence in their lives that they had become new creations, many realized there was no evidence. Their lives were no different than all the people around them. Convicted by their lost condition, many repented of their sin and placed their trust in Christ. Even some church leaders and some missionaries realized they had never been changed by Christ.

Others knew they had faith in Christ, but they had no evidence of His power in their lives or in their witness for Christ. Many prayed, fasted, and cried out to God for the filling of His Spirit. They confessed and repented of the sins and impurities in their lives that quenched the Holy Spirit's work in and through them. As God began to reveal His power to change lives, the gospel began to spread and a revival and awakening began to spread rapidly through the province.

It's Time to Pray

1. Review those three questions and ask God to reveal to you the truth about your life. "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5). Examine the fruit of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit in your life. Are you a new creation? Have you been filled with His Spirit and power?
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?
3. Pray today by name for a person who has yet to believe in Christ as Savior. List the name on page 25 and see page 24 for ways to pray.

DAY 8**Be Filled with the Spirit****God's Word for Today**

Read Luke 24:45-49, Acts 1:4-8, and Ephesians 5:18

Thoughts for Today

Before Jesus returned to His throne in heaven, He told His followers to wait for the filling of the Holy Spirit. That filling occurred 40 days later on the Day of Pentecost. However, we also need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers our witness for Christ.

You can present yourself to the Lord for filling in one of two conditions. Imagine I'm holding in my hands two clear plastic containers. One is filled with dirt, rocks, and other things. The other container is clean and empty. Those containers can represent the two conditions you can present to the Lord for filling.

The container filled with stuff represents a life filled with selfish desires, impure thoughts and deeds, sinful behaviors, broken relationships, and "idols of the heart" that distract you from your first love. When you bring a life like that to the Lord for filling, He says, "I'm sorry but I cannot fill and use a life like that."

The empty container represents a life that has been cleansed from sin and has learned to walk in victory over sin (see Rom. 6). It has reconciled broken relationships, put away idols of the heart, and been cleansed from impure thoughts. Self has been denied, crucified with Christ. When you bring a life like that to the Lord for filling, He says, "I've been looking for you!" Scripture says, "The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to show Himself strong for those whose hearts are completely His" (2 Chron. 16:9). A life emptied of all the junk can be filled by His Holy Spirit, and that's where spiritual power comes from.

It's Time to Pray

1. Think about the two containers described. Ask the Lord which one best represents your life. If it is the first container, ask God to cleanse you and guide you to prepare your life to receive His fullness. If it is the second container, humbly present yourself fully to Christ for filling.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?
3. Pray today by name for a person who has yet to believe in Christ as Savior. List the name on page 25 and see page 24 for ways to pray.

DAY 9**Reconcile Broken Relationships****God's Word for Today**

Read Matthew 5:23-24 and Mark 11:25

Thoughts for Today

Your life is like a PVC pipe (or any kind of pipe). It is a channel through which Jesus—the Living Water—flows. On one end of your “pipe,” you must be connected to God by a saving relationship with Him through Jesus Christ, your Savior. On the other end of your pipe, you are connected to other people through relationships. God’s desire and mission is to work through your life in such a way that others will come to saving faith in His Son—that they would be reconciled to God.

However, if your pipe is clogged up, the Living Water cannot flow through it as intended. Sin can clog up your pipe. God’s holiness and righteousness cannot be revealed (flow) through a dirty life. If your pipe is clogged by sin, self, or the love of something that takes the place of your love for God (an “idol of the heart”), you need to get your pipe cleaned out. Clean out your “pipe” by confessing and repenting of your sin. Put away “idols of the heart” and return to your first love for God.

Another problem can exist with the flow of Living Water through your PVC-pipe life. If you have a broken relationship with a person, you have a cap on the end of your pipe that stops or limits the flow. The person may not be willing to listen to you or receive the Living Water from your life.

Two kinds of broken relationships may be present in your relationships with others. In one case you may have sinned against the other person or group. In that case Jesus commands you to go and be reconciled. Seek forgiveness and make restitution if necessary. The other kind of broken relationship is where you have been offended (or sinned against) by the other person. If you are withholding forgiveness, your pipe will be capped. In this case you must forgive, no matter how serious the offense.

I’ve heard and read many stories of people who reconciled a relationship and that very action created the opportunity to lead the person to faith in Christ. Uncap your pipe and let Christ’s living water flow!

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to reveal any relationships you may have that need reconciliation or forgiveness. Pray for those people today.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

DAY 10**Return to Your First Love****God's Word for Today**

Read Revelation 2:1-5

Thoughts for Today

Our intimate relationship with Christ and our concern for those He loves are dependent on our love for Him. If we depart from our first love, we need to return. Our renewed love for Him could change our world.

In 1727 Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf resigned from all his governmental responsibilities to provide spiritual leadership for a group of about three hundred people who had moved to his estate to escape religious persecution. Internal conflict was about to destroy the community. Zinzendorf and the elders drew up a covenant of brotherly union, and on May 12, 1727, the entire community repented of their divisions, reconciled with their brethren, and entered a covenant to live together in harmony.

On August 13, 1727, they had a significant encounter with their Savior at a Lord's Supper observance. During the service, they were deeply touched by their awareness of the sacrificial love of their wounded Savior. They determined that the best way they could express their love for Christ was to win for Him the souls for whom He died. Their battle cry was "to win for the Lamb that was slain the reward of His suffering."

Following that encounter with Christ, the Moravian Brethren were possessed by a zeal for missions. They began a 24-hour prayer watch for the causes of the Kingdom, which continued for more than 100 years. During the following 25 years, they sent out more than one hundred missionaries around the world. Moravian missionaries were instrumental in leading John Wesley to genuine faith in Christ, and God used him as a key instrument in the First Great Awakening in America and the Evangelical Awakening in England.

It's Time to Pray

1. Thank God for His love shown through Christ's sacrifice. Ask Him to reveal the quality of your love for Him and how to increase your love.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?
3. Pray today by name for a person who has yet to believe in Christ as Savior. List the name on page 25 and see page 24 for ways to pray.

2. Adapted from *Come to the Lord's Table*, Claude V. King, Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2006, pp. 10-15. Reprinted and used by permission. Available from www.lifeway.com

DAY 11**Surrendered Lives****God's Word for Today**

Read Romans 12:1-2 and 1 John 3:16

Thoughts for Today

Paul explained that God's mercy for us deserves the surrender of our lives and bodies to Christ as living sacrifices. Then John wrote that because of Christ's love for us, we ought to lay down our lives for others. As the Moravians began to pray for missions needs, they were told about the significant need for the gospel among the Negro slaves in the West Indies Islands. As they prayed for laborers, Leonard Dober and Tobias Leupold sensed God calling them to go. But they were told that the slave owners would not permit them to preach to the slaves. Leonard and Tobias came up with a plan. They would sell themselves as slaves so they could live and work among the slaves and lead them to faith in Christ. Count Zinzendorf said that was too high a price to pay and would not allow them to go. They insisted that God called them, so the community held a prayer meeting to draw lots and seek the Lord's will. The lot revealed that Leonard should go and Tobias should wait. They continued praying and sensed God wanted David Nitschmann to accompany Leonard. The love for Christ caused these men to be willing to lay down their lives for others. When they reached St. Thomas Island, they found that the slave owners would allow them to preach to the slaves without having to sell themselves. And thus began the missionary work that impacted the world.

Though God may not require you to lay down your physical life for His cause, His call to salvation is a call to lordship. Jesus is Lord. We are His servants. We need to be prepared to obey His every command because we love Him. And we love Him because He first love us and gave His life for our salvation.

It's Time to Pray

1. Thank God for all the mercy and grace He has shown to you. Now, I beg you to present yourself to the Lord as a servant who will obey His Lord's commands.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?
3. Pray today by name for a person or group who has yet to believe in Christ as Savior. See page 24 for ways to pray.

DAY 12**The Blessings of Obedience****God's Word for Today**

Read John 14:15-23 and Matthew 7:21-27

Thoughts for Today

Hasn't Jesus made some wonderful promises to us? He has promised the Holy Spirit as our Counselor who will never leave us alone. He has promised us life in Him and in the Father. When we love Him and obey His commands, the Father will love us and Christ will reveal Himself to us. When we love and obey God, He takes up residence in our lives to live in us and with us! Did you notice the importance of obedience in all those promises? Those who do not obey, do not love Him. And their experience with God will be very different. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the parable about the two builders. One built his house on a rock, and the other built his on sand. When the storms came, the house on the rock stood firm and the other was destroyed. He said our lives are like those two builders. Those who obey are wise like the man who built his house on the rock. When the storms of life come, we can remain strong through the tough times. Those who do not obey are foolish like the man who built his house on the sand. People like that cannot remain strong when the storms of life rage around them.

If God were to grade your obedience to His commands, what kind of grade would you receive from Him? Based on your obedience and what He has said in His Word, what can you expect from Him? Can you expect a strong life even during the storms? Can you expect Him to reveal Himself to you and take up residence in your life? Or can you expect to collapse when the storms of life come. Could you possibly hear Him say, "I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers" (Matt. 7:23)?

Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven, that person is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt. 12:50). Though we are not saved by obedience and our good works, they are evidence that we share the family resemblance. They show others that we belong to His family.

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to evaluate your obedience. What does that reveal about your love for Him? Your relationship to Him?
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take to obey Him and experience His best?
3. Pray today by name for a person who has yet to believe in Christ as Savior. List the name on page 25 and see page 24 for ways to pray.

DAY 13**The Power of Love****God's Word for Today**

Read John 13:34-35 and John 15:9-17

Thoughts for Today

The world will know we are followers of Jesus Christ by the love we demonstrate toward one another. This past summer I saw this reality during a trip to Sierra Leone (West Africa). I heard story after story of former Muslims who had come to faith in Christ. Their lives were so radically changed by Christ, they began to act like Him and love like Him. They could not contain the good news of the gospel's power to change lives. I met one former sheik who had helped start 100 churches in the past four years. I visited one of those churches that was less than a year old. They already had plans to take this good news to five other villages around them.

I was told how over 35 (they quit counting) villages sent their Muslim leaders to ask the storytellers (church planters) to come to their villages. They saw the way people in other villages loved one another. They saw the way men treated their wives and children differently and they wanted that for their village. The love of Christ demonstrated through the lives of Christ-followers is a powerful testimony and makes the gospel attractive.

In *Concentric Circles of Concern*, Oscar Thompson said, "Love is meeting needs" (p. 157). Another demonstration of love I saw in Sierra Leone came through ministry to the needs of people. Following the civil war, a seed bank provided seed and farm tools to a community on the verge of starvation. Today, there is a church planting movement among the Susu people because the love of Christ opened the door. Storytellers offer to help dig wells (by hand), start schools, provide medical and dental care, provide job training, and a host of other access ministries to communities in need of the gospel. In six years, they have started over 3,000 churches and they are sending missionaries to other nations throughout Africa.

What does your love for others reveal? Would people know you are a disciple of Jesus Christ because of the sacrificial way you love?

It's Time to Pray

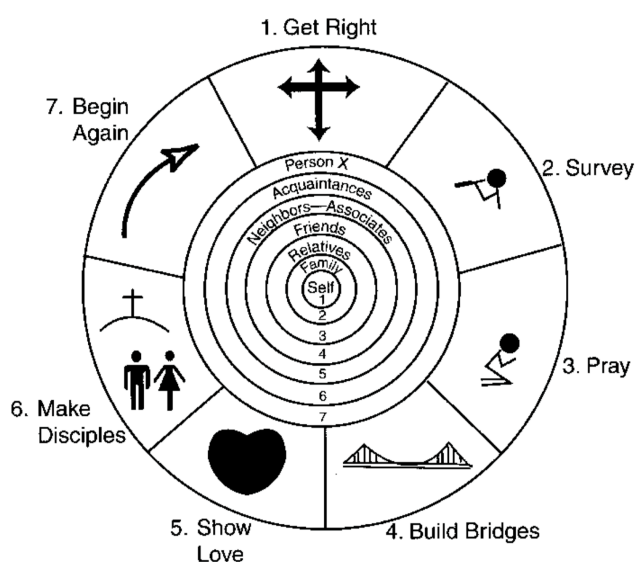
1. Pray that God will so fill you with His love that it will overflow to those in your circles of relationships. Pray that God will draw people to Jesus because of the love they see in your life.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take? As you pray for people on your list on page 25, ask the Lord to show you ways to show love to them.

DAY 14**Survey Your World****God's Word for Today**

Read John 1:35-51

Thoughts for Today

When Andrew and Philip met Jesus, they immediately thought of others in their circles of relationships who needed to meet Him. They immediately brought Peter and Nathaniel to meet Jesus. Today, I want you to begin thinking about the people in your circles of relationships who need to meet Jesus as Savior and Lord. Follow the prayer suggestions below and then turn to page 25. List the names of people you know who need to be introduced to Jesus.

**It's Time to Pray**

1. Ask God to remind you about the time you were first introduced to Jesus. Reflect on the change that Jesus has worked in your own life.
2. Ask God to begin identifying people you know who are living without a faith relationship with Jesus Christ. Think about those in the concentric circles of relationship illustrated below.
- 3 Turn to page 25 and begin making your list.

3. W. Oscar Thompson with Carolyn Thompson Ritzmann and Claude V. King, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 95. All rights reserved. Reprinted and used by permission.

DAY 15**Praying for Those Yet to Believe****God's Word for Today**

Read Matthew 7:7-11 and James 5:13-20

Thoughts for Today

Years ago I revised the book *Concentric Circles of Concern* by Oscar Thompson and Carolyn Thompson Ritzmann (Oscar's widow). In it, Oscar tells the story of one of his seminary students named Dick. Dick began making a list of the people in his concentric circles of relationships like you started on Day 7. He began to pray for his great aunt Alice. On her 83rd birthday, he sent her a birthday card.

Later he and his wife went to visit her in the nursing home where she lived. As he began to talk about what he was learning about relationships, he described the importance of a relationship with Jesus Christ. She began weeping. She had been a member of the church most of her life, but no one had explained how she could have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Dick had the privilege of leading his great aunt to faith that day. A few months later great aunt Alice entered eternity; and Dick asked, "Dr. Thompson, what if I had not listed her in my concentric circles? What if I had not done my survey?"⁴

After Dick listed his great aunt on his survey, he began to pray for her. As he prayed, God began to give him a special concern for her. He worked on rebuilding a relationship with her that became a bridge over which the gospel flowed.

The two Scriptures you read at the beginning of the day are wonderful promises regarding the power of prayer. Now that you have begun to survey and list your VIPs, I want you to begin praying for them. God wants to work through you, and one way will be through your prayers.

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to guide your prayers for your VIPs according to His will.
2. Turn to page 24 and use some of the prayer suggestions in your prayers for people on your list on page 25. As you pray, be sensitive to ways God may guide you to take action in reaching out to those individuals.

4. W. Oscar Thompson with Carolyn Thompson Ritzmann and Claude V. King, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 101.

DAY 16**Live with Urgency****God's Word for Today**

Read Luke 16:19-31 and Luke 21:25-28

Thoughts for Today

Jesus is coming again! Our redemption is drawing near. But people without the saving work of Jesus Christ are headed to horrible torment in hell.

In 2002, one year after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, I was asked by the North American Mission Board to consider being the prayer coordinator for the Strategic Focus Cities emphasis in New York City. I had been involved with prayer retreats and conferences in the city. Though my family could not relocate, I knew at the least I needed to pray. The Lord brought 1 Corinthians 7:29 to my attention: "The time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none" (KJV). My wife and family prayed and sensed God was asking us for a different measure of sacrifice. So for over two years, I lived in New York for three weeks each month and spent the other week in Tennessee with my family.

Time is short and eternity is long. We've been warned what life without Christ will be like in eternity. The Lord wants none "to perish, but all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). On my way to New York City, I realized that "time is short" could mean the Lord knows other attacks are coming. But then I realized "time is short" could mean that Jesus' second coming is near. Finally, I realized that life is short. Whether the Lord returns soon, or I face a tragedy or disease that could take my life, or I just grow old—any way my life on earth concludes—time to trust Christ is short. Then I realized I need to live my life with urgency. I can't afford to waste my time and life on trivial matters.

As you pray for those in your circles of relationships who are yet to believe, keep their eternal destiny on your heart.

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to reveal to you the people around you who are headed to torment without Christ. Ask Him to give you a view of the masses around the world who are yet to hear about Jesus. Ask Him to give you His compassion for those for whom He died and ask Him to stir up an urgency in your living for His sake.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?
3. Pray today by name for a person who has yet to believe in Christ as Savior. List the name on page 25 and see page 24 for ways to pray.

DAY 17**Pray for Workers in the Harvest****God's Word for Today**

Read Matthew 9:35-38

Thoughts for Today

When Jesus "saw the crowds, He felt compassion for them" (v. 36). The closer you get to Jesus and the more time you spend with Him, the more your heart will begin to beat with love for those He loves.

Think about the crowds Jesus may have seen in Israel 2,000 years ago. How large were they? Five, ten, or twenty thousand? Maybe more? Now think about the crowds you have seen live, in books or magazines, on television, or in the movies. Have you seen some of those crowds with hundreds of thousands of people? Have you seen crowds in the cities where masses of people go by continually? In our world the numbers of people in the spiritual harvest field are multiplying rapidly. Who will tell them the good news? Who will go? Who will have the privilege of reaping the spiritual harvest among them?

When Jesus saw the crowds of His day, He asked His disciples to pray for workers in the harvest fields. If you still have your Bible open to Matthew, take a look at chapter 10. Just after the disciples prayed for workers, Jesus told them to go into the towns and cities to preach the good news about His kingdom.

Today, keep your eyes open to see the crowds around you, in newspapers or magazines, or on the Internet or television. When you see a crowd, pray that God will call and send out workers to that harvest field.

It's Time to Pray

1. Pray for the workers who are already working to bring in a spiritual harvest. Pray for their protection, wisdom, spiritual and physical health, and fruitfulness. Pray that God will call and send workers. Pray that He will call some from your church and even from your family.
2. Give God permission to call and direct you to work in the harvest. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?
3. Pray today by name for one person or even for a crowd or people group who have yet to believe in Christ as Savior. List the name(s) on page 25 and see page 24 for ways to pray.

DAY 18**Jesus' Final Command****God's Word for Today**

Read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-48; John 20:21-22; and Acts 1:8

Thoughts for Today

Final words of famous people are long remembered and often quoted. When a person knows he is on his death bed, he might even prepare a final statement of challenge to family and friends. Final words can have great significance for the next generation.

Jesus Christ came to provide salvation for all mankind. Following His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus spent forty days giving His disciples their final instructions to guide the church until His second coming. Not many of those words were recorded in the Scripture for us to read. But some were recorded, and they were perhaps His most important last words. Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave one final command to His disciples. He didn't want His disciples to miss this most important commission for the church. The future of His kingdom would depend on their obedience. Each of the Gospel writers records a variation of this command indicating that Jesus gave special attention to it during His final days on earth. You read those in the Scriptures above.

How faithful have you been to obey Christ's final command? Are you making disciples as you go about your daily living? Have you preached the good news? Are you talking with others about repentance and forgiveness that is available through Jesus Christ? Since Jesus was sent to seek and save the lost, are you seeking to point lost people to Him for salvation?

It's Time to Pray

1. Talk to God about the status of your obedience to Christ's final command. If your obedience is lacking, confess your sin. Ask Him to guide and enable your obedience.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?
3. Pray today by name for a person who has yet to believe in Christ as Savior. List the name on page 25 and see page 24 for ways to pray.

DAY 19**Go Home and Tell****God's Word for Today**

Read Mark 5:1-20

Thoughts for Today

Think about the story this formerly demon-possessed man had to tell back home. That surely was a powerful testimony! When Jesus said we would be His witnesses (Acts 1:8), this is what He was talking about. A witness is one who reports on what he knows and has personally experienced. No one but you can tell your story as a personal testimony. And when you are filled with His Holy Spirit, you will have power in your witness to Him.

Today, I want you to reflect on all the good things God has done for you. What changes has Christ worked in your life? How is your life different because you have known Christ? Where do you think you would be had you not placed your faith in Him? Make a few notes below.

If you are meeting with others in your family for this daily prayer and devotional time, share your stories with one another. Tell about His wonderful works in your behalf. Praise and thank Him together.

It's Time to Pray

1. Thank God for all the good things He has done for you. Be specific.
2. Pray today by name for a person who has yet to believe in Christ as Savior. List the name on page 25 and see page 24 for ways to pray. Pray today for others on your list.
3. Pray about when and how you will share your story with your people back home. Are there people who knew you "before Christ" story that you need to tell?

DAY 20**A Testimony for Your "Town"****God's Word for Today**

Read John 4:28-30, 39-42 (or the larger passage John 4:1-42)

Thoughts for Today

This story about Jesus' encounter with the Woman at the Well is a powerful story of the change Jesus can make in a community in a very short period of time. Think about this woman. How long had she known Jesus before she began to tell her whole town about Him? What training had she received? This woman got a taste of "Living Water" and her life was changed. The Living Water bubbled up out of her life and became evident to those who heard her story. Like Andrew and Philip (Day 14), she immediately had to go tell others and bring them to meet Jesus for themselves. When many in the town believed in Jesus Christ, they had an experience of their own not just the words of another.

Yesterday, I asked you to reflect on your story. What have you experienced in your encounter with Jesus Christ that has changed your life? What is your testimony? Today, I want you to think about your "town." Who are the people who need to hear your testimony?

It's Time to Pray

1. Ask God to reveal the people in your "town" who may already be prepared to respond when they hear your story. Would they be people in your home, neighborhood, school, workplace, or gym? Or is your "town" the people who knew you in your "before Christ" days? Ask God for the boldness to share your story with your town. Describe or name the people God places on your mind and heart.

2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed. What actions will you take?

3. Pray today by name for a person who has yet to believe in Christ as Savior. List the name on page 25 and see page 24 for ways to pray.

DAY 21**The Coming Harvest****God's Word for Today**

Read John 4:27-38 and Acts 1:8

Thoughts for Today

If you have been fasting from food in order to seek the Lord in prayer for revival and awakening, you can identify with Jesus. The disciples were trying to get Him to eat, but He was preparing to reap a spiritual harvest of a city. His food was to obey the will of His Father. Sometimes a spiritual purpose will be far more important to us than taking time to eat.

Jesus' disciples were surprised when they found Him speaking to the woman. A Jewish man would not be caught in public talking to a Samaritan woman, especially a divorcee with five ex-husbands. What was He doing? The disciples may have expected a spiritual harvest when Jesus established His kingdom. Jesus essentially said, "Why wait? It's harvest time now!"

Let's hear His words for us. We could be saying something like this:

x Maybe awakening will come when all the churches experience revival. x We can't expect a harvest when the lost world is so cold and hardened. x He's delayed 2,000 years to come back. We don't need to rush now.

x We have tried before (fished all night). This isn't a good time.

One day Peter and his partners had been fishing all night. But Jesus told them to go into the deep water and drop their nets. They reluctantly obeyed and caught so many fish they nearly sank two boats! "When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!' " (Luke 5:8). That's the day Jesus called him to fish for men. Did you notice the great harvest of fish came before Peter confessed his sin? Sometimes God's kindness brings repentance (Rom. 2:4).

The harvest is the Lord's work. He has chosen us to be workers together with Him in this great task. He is bringing in a harvest in many places around the world. He is fully able to do that where we live also. Let's pay attention to His final statement of His final command to us and be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Jesus would say to us, "Open your eyes and look at the fields, for they are ready for harvest" (John 4:35).

It's Time to Pray

1. Pledge your willingness to obey God, and ask Him to bring in a great harvest for His glory. Continue to pray for workers for the harvest.
2. Ask God what He wants you to do today to apply what He has revealed.

PRAYING FOR THOSE YET TO BELIEVE

As you pray for those yet to believe, consider some of these prayers.

1. Bring him to recognize his emptiness and purposelessness in life. Bring him to the end of himself so that he will turn to You.
2. Cause him to hunger and thirst for more in life.
3. Bring him to understand the truth of his condition without Christ and to understand what Christ has done for his salvation.
4. Bring conviction of sin. Allow the consequences of his sin to cause him to desire a different life. Let him become fed up with his life as it is.
5. Jesus, reveal the Father to him.
6. Father, exalt Jesus in his eyes.
7. Father, draw him to Yourself and Your Son Jesus.
8. Guide and create circumstances that create a need, and then show Your love through meeting needs through me or others of Your people.
9. Bring godly people into his life that will influence him for Christ.
10. Prepare circumstances where a Christian will have the opportunity to forgive him and thus reveal something of your mercy.
11. Lord, I care so much for this person you have my permission to allow him to offend me in such a serious way he knows he doesn't deserve forgiveness. Then enable me to forgive him to show him what Your mercy looks like that You may draw Him to Yourself.
12. Open his ears to hear Your call.
13. Allow him to see the unity and love of Your people in a way that he is convinced that Jesus must be sent from You. Convince him that Jesus is indeed the Savior of the world.
14. Prepare his life to receive the planting of Your Word.
15. Protect him from Satan's attempts to blind him and steal away the Word that has been sown.
16. Reduce the cares of the world around him that could choke the seed planted in his mind.
17. Raise up intercessors in behalf of this person.
18. Reveal to me the time and the way for me to share a witness about you and to tell him about the good news of salvation.
19. Bring him under the hearing and influence of Your Word through teaching or preaching. Create in him an openness to listen.
20. Create opportunities for him to hear a witness for Christ from several different trusted sources. Use the timing and diversity of these witnesses to convince him that You are the Author behind them all.
21. Cause him to recognize his need for a Savior.
22. Lord, do whatever it takes to cause this person to seek after You. Break the hardness of his heart toward You.

MY VIPS WHO ARE YET TO BELIEVE

Over the course of these 21 days, make a list of people in your circles of relationships who are your very important people. Ask God to focus your attention on ones to emphasize. List people who do not yet believe in Christ and those for whom you do not know their relationship to Christ. Identify people who are family members, relatives, friends (past and present), neighbors, coworkers, classmates, people you associate or interact with on a regular basis, acquaintances you may not know well but you know their names or faces.

Draw a star beside those for whom God has given you a special concern.

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