

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

DAY
15

WEEK 3

PRAYER AS PETITION

Give us today our daily bread.

This week, we will be focusing on prayer as petition. The Scripture says that our Lord is our Heavenly Father who knows all our needs even before we ask Him. Yes, that is one of the reasons Paul says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Phil.4:6). 1 John 5:14 says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." As we ponder over prayer as a petition, our focus is to meditate on God's faithful nature to hear our petitions, His justful nature to validate our petitions, and His sovereignty to fulfill our petitions. What is our role and action as we bring our petitions to Him?

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GOD IS FAITHFUL

EXODUS 34:6; DEUTERONOMY 7:9-11; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-9

Have you ever had an extended conversation with someone you met for the first time? For most of us, it tends to be an awkward encounter. The subject matter usually remains at the surface level. There's no trust developed to go any deeper than what we do for a living.

Unfortunately, that is a posture that many take with knowing God. People guard their hearts and avoid vulnerability. They may feel free to trust Him with provision of their needs, but is He trustworthy with those painful areas of our lives?

God is always faithful to supply our every need, and He gives us the choice to remain at that level of relationship. However, His desire is to go much deeper. God was faithful to meet the physical needs of the Israelites as they wandered the desert. As for Moses, that wasn't enough. He longed to experience the fullness of God at the deepest level; he ultimately wanted what Adam and Eve experienced before the Fall.

Because of His death and Resurrection, Jesus has taken out the prohibitions to knowing who He truly is. Within the Trinity, there is love, delight, security, and acceptance. The invitation is not just to be a bystander craving that kind of relationship; it is to fully take part in that relationship.

Action: Meditate on John 15:9. Ask God to reveal the places in your heart where you haven't opened up to Him. What is He asking of you in response?



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

You see the deepest part of my soul. You understand me better than I understand myself. You consistently prove Yourself to be faithful, and the love that You have expressed to me can be found nowhere else. Yet, how often do I find myself holding back? I don't want to keep anything from You. I long to experience the fullness of Your love for me. I want to know what it means to be united with You. Jesus, thank You for making the way for this to be available to me. And it's in Your name I pray, amen.

MEET THE NEEDS OF THOSE IN CIVIL UNREST

PSALM 32:7, 34:4, 107:6; ISAIAH 43:18-19; 1 JOHN 4:4

The world around us is filled with constant pain—from overseas conflicts where the mighty attack the weak to our own backyard filled with violence against the innocent and children. How do we approach God amid this injustice and unrest?

It is good and right to weep with those who weep and to mourn with those who mourn. It is being like Christ who had compassion and wept with Mary and Martha over Lazarus though He knew Lazarus would rise by His hand. It is good to cry out to God and grieve the pain and destruction in our world.

God has also called us to be a people of prayerful petition, asking Him to protect children, those who are being wronged, and our Christian brothers and sisters who are suffering. We claim the promise of Psalm 32:7: “You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.”

Further, we should give thanks that even while evil is at work, God is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4) and is doing a new thing. He is making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland (Isa. 43:18-19). We claim these truths and pray that God will overcome evil with good. We pray that He will send His people to bring peace, restoration, and justice to the places in our world thirsty for the hope only Christ can bring.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Take a current event in our world and pray over the situation with God; grieve with Him over the injustice of it. Pray for God’s protection of those facing trials by name or group.

Ask Him to make a way in the wilderness, to make streams in the wasteland.

Ask Him to bring the love, hope, and peace of Jesus Christ to the people walking through this hard reality of life, that the name of Jesus would be lifted up for all to see. Thank you for walking beside them in prayer today.

MEET THE NEEDS OF THE MARGINALIZED & IMPOVERISHED

EXODUS 22:22, 23:6; LEVITICUS 19:15;
DEUTERONOMY 10:18; LUKE 10:25-37

Read Luke 10:25–37. Do you want to feel good, or do you want to be an answer to prayer?

We've heard the Good Samaritan parable many times. It was in response to a ruler who felt good because he had the religious answers about how to obtain eternal life—love God and love your neighbor—but was the ruler willing to really answer the question, “Who is my neighbor?”

There are many in our communities, in our world—and, yes, right next to us—who are hurting, trafficked, forgotten, starving, abused, and living in poverty for whom Jesus is the answer. Take a moment today and pray for them specifically. Pray that they will find healing, stability, purpose, food, comfort, shelter, sustenance, and employment. Maybe even go a step further and become the answer to the prayer.

Theologian Miroslav Volf states, “There is something deeply hypocritical about praying for a problem you are unwilling to resolve.” Part of a good prayer life is aligning our thoughts and desires with the heart of God. While you and I may not have a Jericho–road experience as in the parable, we can begin to see others as God does as we intercede spiritually, materially, and physically on their behalf.



REFLECTION PRAYER

The chorus in Brandon Heath's song “Give Me Your Eyes” will serve as the reflection prayer today:

“All those people going somewhere, why have I never cared?
Give me Your eyes for just one second.
Give me Your eyes so I can see everything that I keep missing;
give Your love for humanity.
Give me Your arms for the brokenhearted,
the ones that are far beyond my reach.
Give me Your heart for the ones forgotten.
Give me Your eyes so I can see.”

MEET THE NEEDS THROUGH OUR CREATIVE OUTREACH

JEREMIAH 1:7; MATTHEW 25:35-40; MARK 16:15

“Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, ‘Now, I have put my words in your mouth.’” –Jeremiah 1:9

God’s Word encourages us with stories of people who, on the exterior, may not appear to be likely candidates to spread the good news of the Kingdom; but their interior life tells a different story. People God uses in Kingdom advance are not favorites; they are intimates who take the hand of the Father in prayer.

One of my fondest memories of my “steelworker” Dad was of him walking me to school during kindergarten. Each day, he would take my hand and walk me to the Juniata Terrace Elementary School. At the end of the day, he would be there again to take my hand, hear what I had learned, and walk me home. It’s the same when we take the hand of the Father in prayer. When we are intimate with God, we sense His presence and hear His promptings, which come to us in prayer. When we move into prayer that is intimate conversation with our Father, we take His hand just as Jesus told us to do, praying, “Our Father in heaven. . .” In the presence of the Father, we bring our petitions to Him and then respond to His promptings to take His Word to a lost world around us. What is your petition today? Will you take the Father’s hand and ask?



REFLECTION PRAYER

Use this simple prayer pattern to take the Father’s hand today, sensing His presence and hearing and responding to His promptings.

Father,

You are great, and You are good.

I need Your help.

They need Your help.

Heal me and forgive me.

Thank You.

In Jesus’ name, amen.

(Taken from *Before Amen* by Max Lucado)

MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR EMPTY SOULS

PSALM 23:2, 119:11; MATTHEW 4:4; ROMANS 10:17

Where do you run when your soul is empty? When you are worn and weary, do you seek fulfillment from your own power, effort, and plans, or do you run to Jesus and seek the comfort that comes from knowing Him and His Word? Matthew 11:28 says, “Come to me, all you who are weary. . . and I will give you rest.” It’s natural for us to try to find satisfaction in other things (it’s been the case since Adam and Eve), but the only thing that can truly make us whole is Jesus.

The closer we run to Jesus, the more we will know Him and His Word, and this will keep us from sin. Jesus Himself turned to Scripture to rebuke Satan’s temptations in Matthew 4, and as the psalmist writes in Psalm 119:11, hiding His Word in our hearts keeps us from sinning against God.

Jesus calls Himself the *Good Shepherd* and says that like sheep, His followers will know His voice (John 10:27). As David writes, “He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul” (Ps. 23:2–3a).

Do you know the Word of the Lord? Can you discern the voice of the Good Shepherd? The more time we spend with Jesus (the incarnate Word) and in our Bibles (the written Word), the clearer His voice becomes, and He will restore our empty souls.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father in heaven,

We confess and repent of all the times we have tried to treat our emptiness under our own power and through worldly means. We acknowledge that You, and You alone, are the key to a fulfilling, whole, and satisfying life.

Lead us to a greater appreciation of Your written Word and a greater desire to study it and know it because knowing the Word allows us to know You better; and in knowing You, we can find rest. Amen.

Please reflect on Psalm 23 again as you end your prayer time.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

PSALM 23:1; MATTHEW 6:33; JOHN 15:5

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall [lack nothing].”—Psalm 23:1

God provides for all humans and creatures, but He is a shepherd only to His people. As shepherd, He’s always there to take care of His sheep, and they will lack nothing. Jesus is our Good Shepherd (John 10:11). He looks after our whole being—spirit, soul, and body.

Jesus wanted His disciples’ hearts to be occupied by Him and His Kingdom. He did not want them to worry about the things of this world. He said, “But seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt. 6:33). For those who set King Jesus before them, God makes sure that they have all they need.

As believers in Christ, we depend on Him for all things. He said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). The assurance for the branch to always bear fruit is in abiding in the vine. The Father, the farmer, is looking for fruit on the branches—fruit that comes only from the farmer’s vine. Only these fruits bring glory to Him.

We are to produce Christ’s fruits—His character. Let us look to our source, our enabler, our sustainer, our true vine. He will never disappoint us.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father,

We thank You, for You are our Shepherd, our Provider. Help us not to worry about little things. Help us to trust You and Your Son.

As Your Word says in John 14:1, “Trust in God; trust also in Me”; we want to continually believe in and depend upon You. We want to be fruitful. We want to produce Your character. Help us. Help us to get the order right: You before us and the things we need behind us. Occupy our hearts with You and Your Kingdom. Let our prayer always be “May Your Kingdom come.” In Jesus’ name, amen.