

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

WEEK 2

PRAY NOW

Luke 18:1

Always includes *now*. Jesus' prescription for whatever we're facing right now is prayer. There should always be this sense of urgency within us to seek the Father for His help, direction, and power. James echoes this when he writes, "Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray" (James 5:13a). Prayer should be our first reaction, not our last resort. That is part of what the Lord wants to teach us as we begin another year in prayer as the Alliance family. In the face of challenging circumstances, we're all apt to shift immediately into problem-solving mode, trying to bring our resources to bear on the issue, only to find ourselves overmatched. As we ask the Lord instead, we turn our attention and faith to the unlimited resources of our Almighty God. "Lord, teach us to pray!"

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PRAYING FOR IMPORTANT DECISIONS

LUKE 6:12-16

I learned many lessons from my maternal grandmother. I used to sleep over at her house on weekends and remember falling asleep in her room while she, on her knees by the bed, would pray to God for hours. She interceded for her family, herself, and her church. And in times of difficult decisions, in tears, she prayed to her Creator. In the morning, I'd find her in the same place and position praying. She lived a Spirit-led life that showed her devotion to God through fervent prayer. She followed her loving Savior's example.

Jesus' prayer life is constant throughout the gospels. In this passage, we read that after praying all night, He chose the men who would carry on His message after He had ascended to the heavens. This was a critical decision, and He prayed before He chose. Jesus was a man of prayer who depended solely on the guidance of His Father. He needed this time away to pray. He knew the need to seek direction and discernment from His Father.

We all have moments where we must make decisions that could potentially change the direction of our lives. Unfortunately, we don't always understand the need to pause to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to seek guidance from our Father. We must not get ahead of ourselves without first having submitted to the Holy Spirit and persisted in fervent prayer. We need to follow Jesus' example. That's what my grandmother did!



REFLECTION PRAYER

Dear Jesus, I long to follow Your example. Holy Spirit, lead me in times when I must make important or hard decisions. Stir in me a deep yearning and sense of urgency to seek Your guidance as I discern Your plans for my life. May I be reminded to completely rest in Your will and surrender my time to truly seek You in fervent prayer. In Your precious, loving name, amen.

PRAYING FOR WORKERS IN THE HARVEST FIELD MATTHEW 9:37-38

Whenever I spend time with an international worker, I hear the same question: “Michelle, who do you know that can come serve with us?”

As Christ followers, each of us is called to be a witness of Christ to people we encounter. Regardless of our location, the call is the same—to be His witnesses, telling people everywhere about Him (Acts 1:8). And yet, nearly half of the world’s population has yet to hear Jesus’ name or encounter a Christian and has no access to the gospel, no ability for someone to pray with them in Jesus’ name, no understanding of the extraordinarily extravagant love, grace, and forgiveness of God shared by someone they meet.

In Matthew 9:36-38, Jesus tells His disciples, “Ask the Lord of the harvest . . . to send out workers.” In verse 36, we see His motivation: “He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

His compassion prompted Him to direct His disciples to pray for workers. How do we compassionately reach the world for Christ? We pray for more international workers. God leads people to leave behind their current life to embrace a new country to call home, a new culture to adapt to, a new language to learn, and new people to share Christ with. My Acts 1:8 family, our international workers need teammates. Would you pray for the Lord to send new workers, and would you ask Him if He is sending you?



REFLECTION PRAYER

Jesus, give us deep compassion for the lost. We know the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few. God, send more workers. Now. Prompt people today to take a step of faith to tell someone they’re hearing Your voice telling them to bring the gospel to another part of the world. Bury deep in their soul a confidence that they will have a new global address and that by the power of Holy Spirit, they will be part of a great harvest for the Kingdom. And Jesus, are You asking me to go? Allow me to listen to You. Amen.

PRAYING FOR HEALING

JAMES 5:14-16

Jesus hurts when you hurt. Jesus feels the weight of your sorrows. He sees you when pain and woundedness becomes the lining of your spirit, when it takes hold like moss on a rock. He is there when you receive hard news, the kind that results in years of uncertainty, the kind that straddles hope and fear. Jesus stoops down when your choices have left you broken and desperate and full of guilt and shame. He is with you always and beckons you to come to Him, the Healer.

Jesus speaks, and storms lose their power. With His touch, fevers disappear and bleeding stops. Jesus shouts, and the dead are raised to life. As He speaks truth in love, kindness, and compassion, troubled souls are set free and broken hearts are mended. When asked in faith, Jesus brings healing. He delivers from the entanglements of the enemy's schemes. His authority breaks all chains of lies and sin. Jesus longs for all things to become new—when pain, sickness, sin, and sorrows are no longer a part of your story.

When wounds are deep, remember who holds the truth of who you are. When fear of the unknown threatens to consume you, remember who spoke the planets into being yet holds you in His hand. When your struggles with sin intimidate and torment you, reach for the nail-scarred hands that already set you free. Cry out in prayer to Jesus, where your healing and deliverance awaits.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord Jesus, loving, kind, compassionate Healer and Deliverer of our souls, thank You. Thank You for healing and restoring us, setting us free, and making us whole. Thank You for empowering us to be a part of the Kingdom work of healing and delivering through the authority You gave us as Spirit-filled disciples. Clothed in Your love and goodness, may we be quick to come with faithful prayer to the aid of all those who are in pain, wounded, sick, suffering, bound in sin, and needing deliverance. May You receive all the glory and honor for restored lives. Amen.

PRAYING FOR DELIVERANCE

MARK 9:14-29

Trouble, danger, distress, and fear. In this passage, God's people are under the most serious of threats as their enemies, vast in number, intend for their utter destruction. The king is rightfully afraid, but rather than give into despair, he turns to the Lord. What follows is a testimony to the fruit of faith over fear, a picture of trusting in God despite circumstance.

The king gathers all of Judah—men, women, boys, and girls—and turns to the Lord in prayer. He begins by acknowledging the sovereign power of Yahweh, praising Him for His provision, confessing that He hears and will save, calls on His justice, and ends with one of the most tender expressions of trust in all of Scripture: “We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you” (2 Chron. 20:12).

Reading beyond the assigned passage, we see the Lord's response to the prayer of faith (2 Chron. 20:15–17). He has indeed heard their prayers and responds, encouraging His people to not be afraid. The grounds? The battle is not theirs but His. And further, He promises His presence. What follows is one of the more amazing stories of God's sovereign power and care for His people that the Bible has to offer.

Trouble, danger, distress, and fear? Don't know what to do? Fix your eyes on Jesus. The battles are real, but ultimately as His child, they are His, and He promises His presence. May the Lord encourage you to turn to Him in faith-filled prayer!



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord God, I come in the name of Your Son, to whom belongs all authority on heaven and on earth, who sits at Your right hand, far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion and above every name that is named—not only in this age but in the age to come. I praise You and give You thanks for the gift of the presence of Your Spirit. Lord God, would You, in Your kindness, remind me this day that Your power is made perfect in my weakness. Help me, Lord, to keep my eyes on Jesus! Amen.

PRAYING FOR EVANGELISTIC OPPORTUNITIES COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

“Devote yourself.” That’s language we don’t hear too often. To be devoted speaks of dedication and an unswerving commitment. Today’s passage begins with the instruction that our prayer life, and any fruit that flows from these prayers, begins with devotion.

What should we pray for? We should pray for an open door for our message, clear proclamation, wisdom, and that opportunities are not missed. How do we do this? We do so graciously, seasoned in a way that adds flavor (not irritation), and that provides insights to life’s many questions.

It sounds simple, right? At this point, some people will tell you it’s not, that the people don’t want to hear our message, that culture has changed and is hostile to the church.

Jesus disagrees. He told His clumsy followers, who had a record of getting it wrong, that the fields are ripe for the harvest; the problem was that the laborers were few, unconvinced, or simply unwilling.

Today, our prayer is that we are not counted among the few, the unconvinced, and the unwilling. In contrast to many of our prayers, we have a significant part to play in answering this prayer. How? By being willing.

Will you, like Jesus, look for open doors? Will you knock on these doors often—aware that in ourselves, we cannot save anyone? Jesus loves to come in and eat with everyone who invites Him in.

The Holy Spirit prompts the hearts of the hearers. May our feet walk in tune with His leading.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord, may we make the most of every opportunity, in grace, through our words and our actions. Would You help us believe with confidence in the good news, and may we be devoted to this cause. We love You. Amen.

PRAYING FOR SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

EPHESIANS 1:17

Prayer, like other spiritual disciplines, is meant to lead us into intimacy with God. Prayer is spending life with God, a conversation with the Lover of our souls. It includes what is dear to our heart and what is dear to Him. If our approach to prayer is like a vending machine, getting answers for payment, we will not comprehend the Apostle Paul's words in Ephesians 1:17.

Inspired by the Spirit, the best thing Paul could pray for the Church was that they would be given the wisdom and insight to know God intimately. Scripture tells us that God desires to give us good gifts in the context of relationship. He is all-knowing and all-wise; wisdom and insight are His to give. Consider the opposite—the teachers of the Law in Jesus' time knew the Law, but they did not know the Father. Therefore, they lacked insight into what the Law meant for people's lives. Do you desire spiritual insight and wisdom? Good. Proverbs 2:6 says, "For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." James 1:5 tells us that God desires to give us wisdom. Get to know your Lord who desires for you to know Him intimately. Ask Him, and you will have what you need.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father, we want to know You more and more each day.

Holy Spirit, please give us the spiritual insight and wisdom to navigate this complex world. I want to see what You see and have Your heart for the people I encounter and situations I face.

Jesus, You made all this possible. Teach us how to live in this world as You did.

May it all be for the glory of God! Amen.

PRAYING FOR DELIVERANCE

MARK 9:14-29

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you felt powerless to make something happen yet were unsure of the reason why? Today, in our passage of Scripture, we find the disciples confused. They had been following Jesus for some time and had seen God use them to set people free. Yet in today's story, they were powerless to cast out demons. Once Jesus set the boy free, the disciples privately asked Jesus why they were powerless. He tells them, "This kind can come out only by prayer" (Mark 9:29).

Jesus is making a connection between our spiritual authority and prayer. He is telling His disciples that a consistent life of prayer is necessary. Did you notice that Jesus didn't stop and pray before He cast out the demon? But He did pray consistently; His life was marked by prayer. Over and over in Scripture we read of Jesus going away to pray. The prayer that Jesus is talking about is not when you find yourself in a position of need but before you have the need. It's a prayer that builds your faith muscles and produces greater intimacy with Jesus.

Remember that our positional authority comes from our position as children of God who are seated with Christ in the heavenly realm, but our practical authority comes through prayer. When we fast and pray, our dependence transfers from one of depending on our own abilities to depending on the all-sustaining power and presence of Jesus.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Jesus, we come to You desperate to know You and to become more like You. Would You teach us how to live a life of consistent prayer? May we be known as people who regularly get away to be with our Father, so much so that we carry the aroma of Christ. And when people see us, let them see You. Help us to carry Your presence well as we walk with You through our daily lives, loving and serving those You put before us. In Jesus' name, amen.