

PRAY FIRST Part 1 HANDOUT

DRAW NEAR | Hebrews 4:14–16 | 10/18/26

How important is prayer actually to your life?

If someone looked at your calendar, your habits, your priorities, your decisions, your worries, and the way you respond when life gets difficult—would they be able to tell that you believe prayer is essential?

Prayer was never meant to be the emergency button of the Christian life. Prayer is dependence on God.

PRAY FIRST means that we intentionally turn toward God before we turn toward ourselves.

Can I actually come near to God? And the answer of the gospel is **yes**.

Hebrews 4:14–16 (NIV) Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

1. WE HAVE SOMEONE WHO GIVES US ACCESS

Under the Old Covenant, God established priests to serve as mediators between God and His people.

- The priests represented the people before God.
- And Hebrews is going to say: **Jesus is better.**
- Jesus has gone through the heavens into the very presence of God.

KEY THOUGHT #1: Jesus didn't just open the door, He became the way in.

Prayer is powerful because of who gives you access. **Jesus.**

2. WE HAVE A HIGH PRIEST WHO UNDERSTANDS OUR WEAKNESS

Hebrews 4:15 - Jesus knows what it means to experience temptation. And: **"yet he did not sin."**

KEY THOUGHT #2 Jesus understands our weakness **without sharing our sinfulness.**

Jesus says: **"I know what you're going through—and I can actually help you."**

- Jesus understands temptation without being defeated by it.

Some people think: *"If God really knew what was going on in my heart, He wouldn't want me."* Hebrews says: **He already knows.** And He still says: **Come.**

3. WE ARE INVITED TO THE THRONE

Hebrews 4:16 - The One sitting on the throne has every right to judge sin. And yet, for those who are in Christ, the throne we approach is a throne of **grace.**

KEY THOUGHT #3 Because of Jesus, you don't approach God merely as a subject approaching a king. **You approach as a child coming to the Father.**

The challenge is getting prayer from the category of: **"I should pray more"** into: **"I need to pray."**

- Where do you go when you're overwhelmed? When you've sinned? When you don't know what to do?

KEY THOUGHT #4 Prayer isn't primarily about getting something from God. **Prayer begins with getting near to God.**

Hebrews 4 isn't ultimately telling us: *"Try harder to pray."* It's telling us: **Look at Jesus.** Our access to God isn't based on our goodness. **It's based on His.**

THE PRAY FIRST CHALLENGE — WEEK ONE

Before you pick up your phone in the morning, talk to God.

- Start with **five minutes.**
- Before the world gets your attention, give God your attention.

Don't run from God in your weakness, **run to God** in your weakness.

LIFE POINT: Because of Jesus, I can draw near to God