

A 21 DAY JOURNEY TO A
VICTORIOUS PRAYER LIFE

VICTORIOUS

BY GARY ROHRMAYER



To my friend Tom Nebel, who for 25 years waged
war with me every day planting new churches.
I miss being in this epic battle with you.

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INTRODUCTION

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” – Ephesians 6:18

The key to living a victorious Christian life is simple to say but hard to execute.

The secret is found in four words, “pray in the Spirit.” For some time now, I have been bothered by this phrase and sensed the Spirit prompting me to understand this truth more clearly, so that I may apply it more fervently in my daily life.

*The key to living a victorious Christian life
is simple to say but hard to execute.*

So, I’ve pondered and at times even murmured over these questions:

Are my prayers spiritual prayers?

Am I missing something in my prayer life?

How do I make sure I am praying in the Spirit?

Am I open to changing my mind and reorienting my practices in my prayer life?

To find answers to these questions, I first turned to the context of the phrase “pray in the Spirit.” Truth never rests in an isolated vacuum but rests in the historical, biblical, and theological context of the inspired writers.

In Ephesians 6:18, we find this truth in the immediate context of Paul’s powerful teaching on spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10–20) and the broader context of what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Bringing these two realities together, Paul writes, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Ephesians 6:18).

What is praying in the Holy Spirit?

The Scriptures reveal three truths about this subject.

First, praying in the Spirit is praying the mind of God. Since the Holy Spirit is the primary One who reveals the mind of God to his people (I Corinthians 2: 9-16), when we are operating under the control of the Holy Spirit, our prayers will be in line with God's thoughts and desires. It is the Spirit who lifts us out of the physical world and reveals to us the spiritual dynamics at play in the epic battle for the souls of men, women, and children.

Second, praying in the Spirit is praying with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is the One who prays for us and assists us in prayer. "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans" (Romans 8:26). John Hebert V said that "no passage of Scripture provides greater encouragement for prayer. The Spirit comes to the aid of believers baffled by the perplexity of prayer and takes their concerns to God with an intensity far greater than we could ever imagine."¹ Our groans become His groans as He prays for us. The Spirit's prayers mystically empower us in our frailties and protect us from our selfish desires.

Third, praying in the Spirit is praying the will of God. Scripture teaches us that the Holy Spirit is the One who reveals the Lord's will. "And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God" (Romans 8:27). When our lives are dominated by the Holy Spirit, we have one overreaching desire—to know God's will and to see it fulfilled through our lives and world.

When we engage in spiritual warfare, the only way we are going to experience victory is when we learn how to pray in the Spirit. We experience real victory in the Spirit when we pray the mind of God, which allows us to overcome the schemes of the Devil through the "belt of truth" and "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" (Ephesians 6:14;17). As we pray in the Spirit, we discover that we are never alone. The Holy Spirit is the greatest prayer partner the world has and will ever know, one who knows how to pray for us even when we don't know how to pray for ourselves.

In battling the Devil and the forces of evil, praying in the Spirit enables us to find perspective. We see life from God's view of time and eternity. We see Satan's ongoing threats, his defeat, and his ultimate demise. We see ourselves from our position in Christ as recipients of grace, equipped and empowered by the Spirit to live a victorious life.

In teaching new believers how to pray, I first define prayer as Lifting your heart to God in the name of the Lord Jesus. We see this throughout the Psalms as David brings all his feelings, concerns, and pain to the Lord. Once believers start coming to the Lord with freedom and assurance, I expand the definition: Prayer is not only lifting our hearts to God, but it also involves aligning our lives with God's desires. Again, as the Psalmists lift their hearts to God and wrestle with the pain and problems they experience, they eventually realign and submit their lives to God's sovereign control.

Praying in the Holy Spirit is praying prayers that reflect the heart of God, that are in harmony with his Word, and seek to fulfill God's mission for this world. These prayers do not find confidence in our zeal or enthusiasm but the gift of the Holy Spirit—our Counselor, Advocate, and Intercessor.

Prayer is not only lifting our hearts to God, but it also involves aligning our lives with God's desires.

Here are four questions that help us ensure that we are praying in the Spirit:

1. Are my prayer motivations right?

The Apostle James writes, "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures" (James 4:3). Praying out of selfish motives is praying in the flesh, which is contrary to praying in the Spirit. The quickest way to disempower your prayers is to pray in a self-serving way. Self-serving prayers come right from the pit of hell and serve no heavenly purpose.

Another way to sour our prayers is to pray for personal recognition. Jesus said, "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full" (Matthew 6:5). To pray for show cheapens our prayers and robs them of all power and effectiveness. Jesus speaks directly to their motivation and teaches them that the reward they seek is the reward they receive, the praise of men, and no contact with God.

How do I check my motives in prayer? Mark Bubeck suggests we offer this admission as we enter into prayer. "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I reject the involvement of my old sin nature in my prayer. I count myself dead with Christ to my sinful nature and its control, and I ask the Holy Spirit to oversee the words of my prayer sovereignly."²

2. Am I surrendered to the control of the Spirit?

If we desire our prayers to be Spirit-filled, then our lives must be filled with the Holy Spirit. What is the filling of the Holy Spirit?

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

Interestingly, Paul compares the filling of the Spirit to being too full of wine. When we are drunk, we are not in control of ourselves but under the control of alcohol that leads to a reckless and dangerous lifestyle. But to be filled with the Holy Spirit means we are under the controlling influence or total domination of the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Holy Spirit starts with a desire that leads to repentance and culminates in obedience. When we consciously enter the presence of God with dependence on the Holy Spirit, we open ourselves to changing our ways and to committing to live in compliance with God's word. Then our prayers will be Spirit-filled.

"To have the words of Christ abiding in us, filling life and conduct, is one of the secrets of acceptable prayer."

-Andrew Murray

3. Am I praying in accordance with God's will?

Jesus said, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7). Jesus teaches that for us to offer effective prayers, our lives must be rooted in him and his words. Jesus continues, "You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you" (John 15:14-16).

Because of our unique friendship with Jesus, we can understand the Father's will and become motivated to see the Father's desires fulfilled. This is what drives our prayer life and keeps it in line with God's word. Andrew Murray wrote, "To have the words of Christ abiding in us, filling life and conduct, is one of the secrets of acceptable prayer."³

4. Do I pray from a position of victory?

All too often, we lack confidence in our prayer life because we are unsure about our relationship with God. One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the gift of adoption. Paul writes, "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him, we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Romans 8:14-17).

The Spirit fills our prayer life with confidence, assurance, and longing to know God intimately. This confidence does not come from our worthiness, but from the worthiness of Jesus who died for us, the Father who loved us, and the Spirit who adopted us. We pray from a position of victory because we are chosen children of God, legally entitled to every blessing from the Father as heirs, and we are granted every privilege and power given to Jesus as co-heirs with Christ.

Paul finishes this section of Scripture with a strong rallying cry, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:37-38).

"To pray in the Spirit is to pray like loved children... like an heir or co-heir... like a bold warrior, from a position of absolute victory."

To pray in the Spirit is to pray like a friend who knows his master's business and wants nothing more than to see it fulfilled. To pray in the Spirit is to pray like loved children running confidently to their Heavenly Father. To pray in the Spirit is to pray like an heir or co-heir, fully assured of the rightful claim to the Father's promises. To pray in the Spirit is to pray like a bold warrior from a position of absolute victory.

Over the next 21 days, our prayer is that you will experience the real secret to spiritual warfare and what it means to “be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” (Ephesians 6:10). That praying in the Spirit will not be a mystery but will become a daily practice that flows from your relationship with God, rooted in the power of God’s word.

Our desires for you are encapsulated by these encouraging words from the Apostle Jude:

“But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life” (Jude 20-21).

THE BIG FIVE PRAYER JOURNAL

In early 1535, the Protestant reformer Martin Luther was getting a haircut at the local barbershop. His barber, Peter Beskendorf, asked Luther this famous question: "Dr. Luther, do you think you could help me learn to pray better?"

Luther went back to his office and responded with a 40-page letter titled "How One Should Pray (... for Master Peter the Barber.)" His letter was eventually published as *A Simple Way to Pray*. This timeless booklet has shaped the prayers of God's people for more than 500 years.

Martin Luther taught his barber how to pray through Scripture, using the example of the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. He instructed Beskendorf to read or recite Scripture word by word while prayerfully reflecting and asking four questions. These questions were designed to allow God's Word to shape his prayers and take hold of his heart so that he could hear God's voice and submit to his will.

Over 30 years ago, I read Luther's letter to Peter the Barber. This is one of the most influential teachings ever to shape my prayer life. Building off the foundation of Luther's wisdom, I have developed what I call "The Big Five Prayer Journal," based on the following questions:

- 1. What am I learning?*
- 2. What am I thankful for?*
- 3. What do I regret?*
- 4. Who do I need to pray for today?*
- 5. What do I need to do today?*

So How Do The Big Five Work?

After reading a Scripture text word for word, one to three times, I prayerfully ask myself the following questions:

1. What am I learning?

What is God teaching me? After prayerfully reading the text, I write out some immediate thoughts or lessons I am learning about God, myself, and my relationship with God's mission. If I have time, I will do a more prayerful study on the text through cross-referencing and word searches around some of the ideas that I sense God is bringing to my attention. As we enter this study on the Holy Spirit, I would encourage you to look up the Bible references to verify the teaching in each devotional reading. Paul described the believers in the city of Berea as being "of more noble character" because "they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11). So as you enter this study, be noble like the Bereans.

2. What am I thankful for?

This is a time when I glean from the text the various things I learned about God's character and the spiritual blessings he pours out on us. As I write them down, I consciously bring them to God in an act of adoration and worship. I offer them as sacrifices of praise in Jesus's name. William Law wrote, "Prayer is the nearest approach to God and the highest enjoyment of Him that we are capable of in this life."⁴

Worship begins in our prayer closet and breaks forth in corporate worship with other believers. Too often our corporate worship is dry and lifeless because our daily devotion is dull and unmoving.

3. What do I regret?

I then reflect on any sins that are pointed out in the text or during my quietness before the Lord. I confess them by holding them out before God and agreeing that they are wrong, they violate God's holiness, they bring pain to the Holy Spirit, and they hinder the work of God in me and through me. F. B. Meyer wrote, "There are no sacrifices so dear to God as broken hearts; no offerings so precious as contrite spirits."⁵

***"There are no sacrifices so dear to God as broken hearts;
no offerings so precious as contrite spirits." - F.B. Meyer***

4. Who do I need to pray for today?

This is my intercession prayer list. I write out prayer requests for my family, friends, ministry needs, and goals. Oswald Chambers wrote, "True intercession involves bringing the person, or the circumstance that seems to be crashing in on you, before God, until you are changed by His attitude toward that person or circumstance." He also wrote, "Intercession is putting yourself in God's place; it is having His mind and His perspective."⁶

5. What do I need to do today?

This is where I write down my to-do list for the day, including projects I'm working on, meetings I will have, phone calls I need to make, and any ministry deadlines and personal goals I need to address. I have learned to pray about everything I do by bringing God into my work. Our work matters to him, so we need to pray about what we do. As Oswald Chambers told us, "Prayer does not equip us for greater works—prayer is the greater work."⁷

HOW TO USE THIS DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Jim Cymbala wrote, "The devil is not terribly frightened of our human efforts and credentials. But he knows his kingdom will be damaged when we begin to lift up our hearts to God."⁸ As you lift your heart to God during this 21-day experience, here are a few practical steps you can take to get the most out of this disciple guide.

1. Find a place to study and pray.

"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matthew 6:6).

We see Jesus often demonstrate this by withdrawing to a place of solitude to seek the Father's heart. "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:16).

The movie *War Room* depicts the mentoring relationship between an older Christian woman, Miss Clara, and a younger Christian woman, Elizabeth, who is struggling with a faltering marriage. Miss Clara teaches Elizabeth that she needs to have a secret place to pray, where she battles for her family through the spirit of prayer. She calls that place her "War Room."

Where is your War Room? Do you have a place where you can pray and not be interrupted?

2. Do this devotional as soon as you wake, if possible.

King David wrote, "In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly" (Psalm 5:3). Another Psalmist continues this theme: "I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning" (Psalm 130:6).

**"I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than the watchmen wait for the morning."
Psalm 130:6**

Andrew Murray wrote, "The student who has made personal devotion to Christ his watchword, will find in the morning hour the place where day by day the insight into his holy calling is renewed; where his will is braced up to walk worthy of it; and his faith rewarded by the presence of Christ waiting to meet him, and take charge of him for the day. . . A living Christ waits to meet us!"⁹

Let us learn to start our days with Jesus. He is waiting!

3. Undertake this 21-day study with a spouse or close Christian friend. Don't do it alone.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24). There is no such thing as being a solo Christian; Christianity is a team sport. We need others to cheer us on, as we in turn encourage others in their walk of faith. Finding a fellow believer to join you on this 21-day journey might be just the thing you need to take your prayer life to a new level, and it might be just the thing your friend needs too.

We are called to walk through this life arm in arm—not alone. Find a friend or a loved one and text each other words of encouragement and prayers of love and concern. Share what you are learning and what you are struggling with during this journey.

4. Write down your thoughts and prayers.

More than 30 years ago I was introduced to the concept of writing out my prayers and journaling my thoughts to God. It has brought such focus and clarity to my prayers that I try to never miss a day. Something amazing happens when you start writing things down. It declutters your mind. It helps you sort out your emotions. It increases gratefulness. It crystallizes your goals. It records God's mercies. It tells a story of God at work in your life. The Psalmist wrote, "I gave an account of my ways and you answered me" (Psalm 119:26).

5. Share what you are learning with those around you.

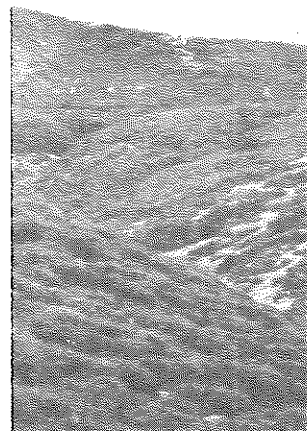
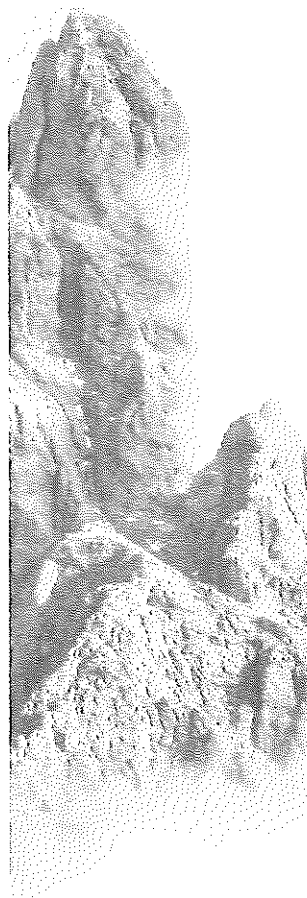
King David wrote, "I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, Lord, as you know. I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly" (Psalm 40:9-10).

Sharing what you are learning has a way of solidifying it in your heart, and in turn, can be a blessing to others. Your God-story could unlock the God-story in others. Your understanding could provide just the right insight that people are looking for in their lives. Your testimony could be used to fill their weary hearts with winds of encouragement to carry them through whatever they are facing. So, let us heed David's words and speak of God's faithfulness and saving help.

WEEK 1

"Victory is the normal experience of a Christian;
defeat should be the abnormal experience."

-Watchman Nee



A Victorious Savior



Scripture Reading: Ephesians 6:10–20

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." Ephesians 6:10

Where do we find the real power for a victorious spiritual life? Not in success principles or relational techniques. Christianity teaches us we discover it in a person, the God-Man, the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Victorious Savior. The Apostle Paul makes it crystal clear where the power comes from when he writes, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power" (Ephesians 6:10).

Sovereignly, God had a plan to defeat the fallen angel Lucifer, who had deceived Adam and Eve into a life of shame and separation from their Creator. God announced this plan as he cursed this deceptive creature. Scripture reveals what the Lord said to this evil angel, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:15). God was going to send his Son into the world to crush Satan's head (Romans 16:20), to redeem his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21), and to set them free from their bondage of fear. The Bible teaches, "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Our victory was secured "by his death." The Apostle Peter puts it succinctly: "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him, you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God" (1 Peter 1:18–21).

Jesus is our Victorious Savior because He is the
Spotless Lamb of God and the Risen Lord.

Where do we find our strength to stand against the schemes of the devil? How do we stand up to the accusations of our accuser? Where do we find the courage to stand firm in the victory Jesus has secured? We experience it through the mighty power of Jesus!

Let us take to heart Paul's prayer for the church.

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come" (Ephesians 1:18-21).

Watchman Nee wrote, "Victory is the normal experience of a Christian; defeat should be the abnormal experience."¹⁰ Our loving Father has provided a victorious life through a triumphant Savior. So, let us live triumphantly!

Father in Heaven, grant me a fresh perspective on the mighty strength of Jesus. He stepped out of eternity and into our world to rescue us from our sin and defeat his fallen foe. Jesus conquered sin, death, and the evil one by laying down his life on our behalf. Father, you raised Jesus to life and seated Him at your right hand, where he rules with authority, power, and dominion. Everything is under His care. That reigning power is the same mighty strength you impart to us to live victorious lives. Father, thank you for Jesus, our Victorious Savior.

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Victorious Life



Scripture Reading: II Corinthians 12:7-10

Sometimes the victorious life is not the life we have pictured in our minds.

From the very moment we receive the blessings of the grace of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit, we instantly find ourselves in a direct spiritual conflict. That conflict is with God's enemies, Satan, and his legion of demons. Yes, there is real, personal evil in this world that followers of Jesus face daily. Theologians call this spiritual warfare.

The Apostle Paul, in a very self-revealing letter, invites us into his inner struggles. He writes, "Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me" (II Corinthians 12:7-8).

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9).

In this passage, we learn a few things about Paul. First, he struggled with pride. Second, he lived with a painful infirmity, whether physical, emotional, or relational, we don't know. We know it was painfully debilitating. Third, Satan used this weakness to violently torture him. Satan knows where to strike; he knows our vulnerabilities and ruthlessly attacks them without mercy. Fourth, he begged God repeatedly to remove this thorn until he heard God's voice in the matter: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9). Fifth, he joyfully submitted to God's will in this matter by embracing his weakness and depending on the power of Jesus to shine through him. "Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (II Corinthians 12: 9-10). Paul learned that God has the right to say no to him and that he was responsible for submitting to God's will because his grace was sufficient to sustain him.

Paul's experience is the real picture of a victorious spiritual life!

Oswald Chambers wrote, "The Christian life is gloriously difficult..." Just let that sink in for a moment. Gloriously difficult... would that make a popular slogan for a bumper sticker today? He continues, "...but its difficulty does not make us faint and cave in—it stirs us up to overcome."¹¹ As children of God, difficulty or opposition comes with our calling, but it also comes with a victorious promise. Jesus said, "In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

What weaknesses is Satan trying to exploit in your life? Is it an emotional scar? A physical sickness or a relational wound? Where are you vulnerable to his insidious attacks, deceptive lies, and his ruthless accusations?

A victorious spiritual life means embracing our weaknesses with humility. The victorious life means facing the messengers of Satan with the truth of God. The victorious life is finding the grace of the Lord Jesus overwhelmingly sufficient to meet us in our darkest challenges.

The victorious life is gloriously difficult because it is in that difficulty that we discover the glorious power of Jesus.

*Father in Heaven, your grace is sufficient,
your power is absolute, and your mission is
unstoppable. Thank you for Jesus, the
Author, and Finisher of our faith. Thank you
for the Holy Spirit who strengthens our souls
in the battle. Thank you for the buckle of
truth and the sword of the Spirit, which are
the living word of God. Thank you for the
grace you give to overcome the attacks of
your defeated foe.
In the strong name of Jesus,*

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

A Real Enemy



Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12-17

If you were to do a Google search of the phrase "jokes about the devil," you would find over 28 million posts in 56 seconds. We live in a culture that jokes about the devil, but in reality, it is no laughing matter. When we joke about the greatest enemy of God and man, he has already deceived us. We have succumbed to one of his schemes, which is "minimize my power and influence as a joke... while I wreak havoc in your relationships and participation in God's mission."

So, let's be clear. The Bible teaches that there is a created spiritual being who personifies evil in all its fullness, continually defying God and God's purposes. This beautiful angel called Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12) once ruled with great power over the other angels (Ezekiel 28:14) and became full of pride, seeking to make himself God. Isaiah reveals Satan's arrogant intentions, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14).

In response, God cast Satan down to the earth, expelling him from the throne of God. The Lord said, "So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So, I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings" (Ezekiel 28:16-17).

Being cast out of heaven, Satan now sets up his dominion on the earth. When Adam and Eve were created and placed in the garden of Eden, Satan, demonstrating his real character, chose to deceive. He attacked God's word and charged God with evil intent, (Genesis 3:1-7) thus solidifying his reign and rule over the whole earth (I John 5:19). Satan is not in hell, ruling from a fiery abode. He is in our world working in the lives of those who are disobedient to the gospel (Ephesians 2:2) and waging war against God by attacking the church (Ephesians 6:10-12). He is continuously distracting, inciting, and tempting God's people away from God's words of hope.

Satan is a real enemy that is crafty, diabolical, and ruthless. Mark Bubeck writes, "Satan is an enemy to be respected and understood for his God created and granted position and power, but we must not fear him."

To do so is to fail to appreciate the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. The victory of Christ over Satan is total and complete." ¹²

The Apostle John writes about this victory, "We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them" (1 John 5:18). The Bible declares that there is a supernatural safety that we experience in Christ! When we sin habitually, we open up the door for Satan's influence. Yet as children of God, we have Christ's power to overcome habitual sin; thus, the evil one cannot touch us. John Stott writes, "The devil does not touch the Christian because the Son keeps him, and so because the Son keeps him, the Christian does not persist in sin." ¹³

**Friends, our enemy is real.
Yet, Jesus Christ is victorious.**

Friends, our enemy is real. Yet, Jesus Christ is victorious. Let us be more conscious today of our total victory in Christ.

*Father in Heaven, there is a Devil. A diabolical enemy who is seeking to distort my view of God and my trust in your word. Thank you that he is defeated, and I do not need to succumb to his lies, discouragement, or distractions. Thank you that Jesus, in his death, set me free from the reign of the devil in my life. Thank you that I have all the resources to deal with his deceptions and my sin by the Holy Spirit. I am safe in Jesus, and I have nothing to fear. Father, lead me not into temptation but deliver me from the evil one today.
In the name of Jesus, my Victorious Savior,*

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

A Real Battle



Scripture Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 6:12

The great evangelical statesman Francis Schaffer wrote, "Make no mistake. We as Bible-believing evangelical Christians are locked in a battle. This is not a friendly gentleman's discussion. It is a life and death conflict between the spiritual hosts of wickedness and those who claim the name of Christ. It is a conflict on the level of ideas between two fundamentally opposed views of truth and reality. It is a conflict on the level of actions between a complete moral perversion and chaos and God's absolutes. But do we really believe that we are in a life and death battle?" ¹⁴

If we have been hoodwinked into believing that we are not in an epic spiritual battle, then the Devil, God's enemy, has already won. Paul says we are in a "struggle." The word could be translated as "wrestle," which gives us a picture of up-close, hand-to-hand combat with God's mortal enemy. This enemy is not part of the natural world "flesh and blood" but is part of a vast spiritual empire filled with "rulers" (leaders of demonic hordes), "authorities" (who have the power to carry out their evil intent), "powers of this dark world" (who have no light or revelation and are filled with unbelief and ignorance of God), and "spiritual forces of evil" (spirit beings who perpetuate every degrading form of wickedness in this world). We are in a battle with a cosmic army of malignant spirits who are following a malignant leader—"the prince of this world" (John 14:30).

There are two common problems in spiritual warfare. The first is ignoring the reality of this great spiritual battle. Spiritual disaster awaits those who are ignorant of the enemy's schemes. Paul calls the church to forgiveness, "...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes" (II Corinthians 2:11). The second is being fearfully preoccupied with Satan and his kingdom of darkness. A. W. Tozer wrote, "The scriptural way to see things is to set the Lord always before us, put Christ in the center of our vision, and if Satan is lurking around, he will appear on the margin only and be seen as but a shadow on the edge of the brightness. It is always wrong to reverse this—to set Satan in the focus of our vision and push God out to the margin. Nothing but tragedy can come of such inversion. The best way to keep the enemy out is to keep Christ in." ¹⁵

Let's always remember the battle is real but let us never forget the victory is secure. "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Let's always remember the battle is real but
let us never forget the victory is secure.

*Father in Heaven, thank you for the
victory we have in our Lord Jesus Christ.
He is our conquering King, our victorious
Savior, and our triumphant Redeemer.
He has crushed our enemy, defeated our
menacing foe, and secured for us every
spiritual blessing in the heavens. Father,
help me stay focused on the cross during
the battle.
In Jesus' Name,*

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

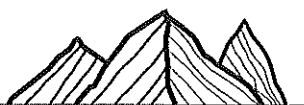
2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

Real Attacks



Scripture Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

As followers of Jesus, we are living in direct and daily conflict with His enemy. The Bible identifies Satan as our adversary (I Peter 5:8) and our enemy (Matthew 13:39).

"There is no neutral ground in the universe; every square inch, every split second is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan." -C.S. Lewis

C.S. Lewis wrote, "There is no neutral ground in the universe; every square inch, every split second is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan."¹⁶ When we scan the biblical literature for Satan's names and titles, we discover that at his core, his identity and character are driven by one specific aim: to attack God's people in any way possible. Here are three tactics the enemy uses in our world:

1. Lies: He is the source of all lies. Jesus gives him the title "father of lies" (John 8:44), meaning there is no truth in him, and he is the originator of lying. He first lied to himself in claiming he was greater than God (Isaiah 14:13-14). He lied to Adam and Eve about their relationship with God (Genesis 3:1-7). He lied to Jesus, even trying to distort the word of God (Matthew 4:1-11).

2. Slander: The word 'devil' comes from the Greek *diabolos*, meaning slanderous, or accusing falsely (Matthew 4:5). He seeks to slander God to people, which is blasphemy. The enemy seeks to diminish God's character and warp God's words to produce unbelief, false thinking, and ungodly behavior (I Timothy 5:14-15). He also seeks to slander us to God. If this enemy can get into our thought life, he will try to rob us of our dignity and rightful place before God (Revelation 12:10).

3. Deceit: He is a master deceiver whose purpose was to lead "the whole world astray" (Revelation 12:9). He is the ultimate schemer (Ephesians 6:11) and manipulator, even masquerading as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14). He blinds unbelievers from the light of the gospel (II Corinthians 4:4), he uses "all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie" (II Thessalonians 2:9), and he sets traps for church leaders (I Timothy 3:7).

Tony Evans writes, "In fact, Satan is such a masterful chameleon that rarely will you find him strutting his stuff in a red jumpsuit carrying a pitchfork. That's too obvious. His scheme is to trick you. He doesn't want you to see him for who he truly is."¹⁷

Yet our victory is found in Jesus, as Scripture teaches, "because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

So how do we overcome the lies, slander, and deception of our enemy? The Apostle Peter writes, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the Devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith..." (1 Peter 5:8-9). The path to victory comes through a sharp mind, correct thinking, and a keen awareness of the enemy's schemes. This intense vigilance must be bolstered by a growing faith that actively resists Satan's attacks by clinging to God's word, Christ's supremacy, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Father in Heaven, thank you that Jesus, our Savior and Reigning Lord, has overcome the devil's lies, slander, and deceit. Thank you for the victorious example of Jesus, who defeated the enemy's attacks through clinging to the promises of God's word and experiencing your presence in his darkest hour. Father, strengthen my faith daily through the Holy Spirit's power and the promises of God's Word so that I may have a sharp mind, keen awareness, and strength to resist our enemy's attacks. In the mighty name of Jesus, my Victorious Savior,

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

Accusations



Scripture Reading: Revelation 12:9-10; 1 John 2:1-2

Satan continually lies, slanders, and deceives for one purpose: to poison our relationship with God and his mission. Satan cannot stop God's redemptive mission, but he can rob believers and churches of the joy of being a part of it. He does this through his insidious weapon of accusation. He is called "the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night" (Revelation 12:10).

Accusation is the continual whisper of Satan, where he seeks to magnify our sins and minimize the work of Jesus on the cross. Thomas Brooks says that Satan accuses by, "Causing them...to mind their sins more than their Savior." ¹⁸ Satan's accusation can paralyze our relationship with God, which makes us vulnerable to debilitating temptation because Satan attacks our hearts with lies that produce nothing but feelings of shame.

**Accusation is the continual whisper of Satan,
where he seeks to magnify our sins and minimize
the work of Jesus on the cross.**

When I think of how Satan uses his weapon of accusation in our spiritual battle, it reminds me of how a boxer uses a jab in a boxing match. There are four basic punches used in boxing: the jab, hook, uppercut, and straight right or left. The hook, uppercut, and straight right or left are all knockout punches, while the jab is not. The jab is a short snappy punch that distracts boxers while setting them up for the other knockout blows.

Satan jabs at us by taking our past sins and throwing them in our face to drag us down. He whispers: "You will never be good enough because of your past." or "You will never be as blessed and as fruitful because of all your mistakes."

He jabs at us by taking our painful sufferings and distorts them as divine punishment. He whispers: "Haven't you done something wrong for this to happen to you?" or "Don't you deserve this because you are just a terrible leader...parent...Christian?"

How do you fight off Satan's jabs of accusation? Just like a boxer. You use a counterpunch. A counterpunch is when you block your opponent's jab while throwing your knockout punch as you catch them off balance.

What is our counterpunch in spiritual warfare? It is the advocacy of Jesus Christ. The Apostle John wrote, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2).

God has provided us with a divine advocate and perfect defender, "Jesus Christ, the righteous one" (1 John 2:1). John, in his tender appeal, writes, "so that they will not sin." Knowing that is impossible, he reminds them that they have an advocate, a perfect defender who pleads their case not based on their innocence but based on his ability to represent them fully before God. Because He has paid the full penalty that their sins deserve, He has removed their guilt and shame.

So, when you are beaten up by the enemy's constant jabs of accusation, block those jabs with the truth of God's word and strike back with your counterpunch: Jesus our Advocate and Defender. Because God says, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

Father in Heaven, thank you for Jesus, the Righteous One who is our defender and advocate! Thank you for giving us the tools to fight off the accusations of the enemy—the truth of God's word, the promises of God, and our union with Jesus. Thank you that we are justified by faith and sanctified by love. In this, we can stand with assurance, for Christ is our victory!

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

Temptation



Scripture Reading: Hebrews 2:18; 4:15-16

One of Satan's titles is 'the tempter' (Matthew 4:3), which means that he is continuously soliciting people to sin against God and violate the truth of God's word. He does this through a combination of lies, slander, deceit, and accusation. As we have already discovered, accusation is where he magnifies our sin and minimizes the work of redemption. In temptation, Satan reduces sin and its consequences while marginalizing the work of Jesus on the cross. When we take sin and the effects of sin too lightly, we cheapen God's grace. By making excuses for sin, we can abuse our freedom in Christ. Accusation says, "You are unworthy because of your sin!" Temptation says, "Go ahead, it's not that bad; you'll be forgiven."

What type of schemes does the enemy use to draw us into sin?

He will exploit our human weaknesses. He leveraged Eve's frailties to entice her into sin (Genesis 3:1–5). He attacked Job's vulnerabilities to test him (Job 2:4–5). He uses the spiritual immaturity of church leaders to trap them (I Timothy 3:7). He leverages our lack of self-control to drag us into immorality (I Corinthians 7:15). He attacks our emotional immaturity to gain a stronghold in our lives (Ephesians 4:26–31). He works even in the direst of life circumstances, such as widowhood (I Timothy 5:14–15). He attacks our lack of knowledge about God and his word to ensnare us to his will (II Timothy 2:25–26). Satan is the most ruthless and diabolical of God's enemies and has no mercy on the vulnerable.

He will manipulate our strengths. He leveraged King David's position and power to entice him into violating God's will and led to a national disaster (I Chronicles 21:1). He used Peter's loyalty to Jesus against him (Luke 22:31–34; 54–62). He can use the strength of our prosperity to trap us into a life of all sorts of evils (I Timothy 6:9–10; 17–19). He used Ananias and Sapphira's act of generosity against them when they lied about their gift (Acts 5:1–9). Which one of your God-given strengths could the enemy use to entice you into a false belief or sin against God's holiness?

He will use false teachers to distort the word of God. Satan deceptively misquoted Scripture to test Jesus (Matthew 4:6). He has used false prophets to lead God's people astray (Ezekiel 13:9; Jeremiah 23:16). He makes false teaching attractive to manipulate people (II Timothy 4:3–4). He can even

use trusting church leadership in promoting false teaching to undermine the church's mission (Acts 20:28-30). As followers of Jesus, we need to be students of God's word, verifying the teachings we receive from our leaders (Acts 17:11).

"The devil deals with men as a panther does with a beast; he hides his deformed head until his sweet scent has drawn them into danger."

-Thomas Brooks

Thomas Brooks wrote, "The devil deals with men as a panther does with a beast; he hides his deformed head until his sweet scent has drawn them into danger." ¹⁹ Satan loves to bait God's people by taking advantage of our weaknesses and immature thinking towards God's word. Yet, if he cannot entice us into sin when we are discouraged and confused, then his diabolical nature will try to use our God-given strengths against us to seduce us into his trap and away from God's perfect and pleasing will.

While Satan, who is faithless, is baiting his trap, our God, who is faithful, is setting up an escape. The Bible teaches, "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

What is that way out? It comes from our victorious Savior, our perfect High Priest, Jesus Christ.

"For 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. Let 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" (Hebrews 4:15–16).

God does not spare us from temptations. Instead, He empowers us in the midst of them so that we may experience His presence, power, and victory!

Father in Heaven, thank you for a Savior who identifies with us in every way, even experiencing the seductiveness and the force of temptation. Yet remaining unmovable, unaltered, and untainted by sin. Thank you that because of the victory of Jesus, we can now approach the throne of grace with complete confidence where mercy and grace are found. Father, thank you for Jesus, our perfect High Priest, a victorious Savior and risen Lord.

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?



WEEK 2

"I believe the reason many Christians are so dull and lifeless in their faith is because they are not in the battle, not using their weapons, not advancing against the enemy."²⁰

-George Verwer

Take Your Stand



Scripture Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

"Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the Devil's schemes...Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." Ephesians 6:11,13

As followers of Jesus, we are never on vacation. We must, with high vigilance, stand against the Devil and his schemes. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote, "You are always on duty in the Christian life; you can never relax. There is no such thing as a holiday in the spiritual realm."²¹

"You are always on duty in the Christian life; you can never relax. There is no such thing as a holiday in the spiritual realm." -Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Three times Paul refers to this posture of standing: "take your stand against" (v. 11), "able to stand your ground," and "after you have done everything, to stand." (v. 13). Each phrase has a unique meaning and offers insight into this spiritual battle raging in us and around us at all times. Let us take a closer look at each phrase.

Take your stand against: This is a military term that refers to digging in, not just casually standing by. Roman soldiers wore spiked shoes called 'caligae,' which allowed each soldier to get solid footing so they could hold their ground and not give an inch to the enemy's assaults. As followers of Jesus, we have to first dig into the spiritual resources available to us: the strength of Jesus, the power of the Spirit, and the truth of God's word to secure victory.

Able to stand your ground: This speaks to the divine empowerment that comes when we dig in by faith while engaging in hand-to-hand combat with our enemy. This is not drone warfare but up-close, face-to-face confrontation. The power he speaks of does not come from mustering up self-confidence, self-sufficiency, or self-assurance. It is divine enablement that is the only means for fighting against God's enemy. Paul said it earlier, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and his mighty power" (Ephesians 6:10).

We cannot win this battle on our own. Victory is only obtained through humble reliance on the Lord and obedience to the word of God.

After you have done everything, to stand: this word refers to a victory stance. Having done everything, digging in by faith, clinging to God's word, and being empowered by God's might, we can stand victorious over our enemy's assaults. It also carries the idea of not letting up until victory is secured. Wrestlers win a match when their opponent taps out. When a wrestler realizes it is impossible to get out of their opponent's grip, they surrender by repeatedly tapping their hand on the mat or their opponent. If we are to stand in victory, we must make sure our enemy has tapped out!

The beauty of Paul's language paints a vivid sequence; once we dig in by faith, we are enabled supernaturally to lay it all out on the battlefield until victory is secured. Yet this only happens when we are suited up for battle, when we "put on the full armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11,13).

We cannot stand if we are not suited up! Paul uses strong language here that conveys urgency and demands decisive action. As Tony Evans puts it, "God is not going to dress us, but he has given us what we need to be armed for victory. It's time to suit up! Game on!"²²

*Father in Heaven, thank you for the glorious
standing we have in Christ. We stand in grace,
we stand in the gospel, we stand in courage,
we stand in faith, we stand in freedom, we
stand in unity, we stand in the Lord, and we
stand in the perfect will of God. Father, thank
you that we can now stand victoriously with
Jesus over sin, temptation, and our enemy!
In the mighty name of Jesus,*

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Belt of Truth



Scripture Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist..."

Ephesians 6:14

In Paul's day, a belt or sash was more than a fashion statement and functioned more like a utility belt. It was the foundation of a soldier's armor where he attached his breastplate and secured his weapons. It was also a place where soldiers tucked in the hem of their tunic. In the ancient Near East, men wore long flowing tunics with a belt around their waist. These tunics were comfortable and breezy, but the hem of the tunic would often get in the way when entering battle or performing hard labor. So men would lift the hem of the tunic and tuck it into their belt. In effect, this temporarily altered the tunic into a pair of shorts, providing for more freedom of movement.²³ So it is with our lives: just as a soldier is to focus his scattered clothing into their belt to experience freedom. We are to focus our scattered emotions on God's objective truth so that we can stand victoriously against the Devil's schemes.

Paul reveals to us that the foundational aspect of the armor of God is the truth of God. The truthfulness of God is critical in facing our enemy, who, at his core, is a liar, deceiver, and manipulator of truth. The Scriptures repeatedly teach that God cannot lie because God is truth (Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:17-18).

In our world today, too many people live by the will of their emotions rather than the objective truth of God. People around us say, "I just felt it was the right thing for me to do," even if it clearly violates God's word and causes pain to others or even themselves.

Our Savior gives us the perfect example of how we are to put on the belt of truth. Satan attacks him at one of the most vulnerable times in his life, after fasting forty days, and with each specific assault, Jesus responds by putting on the belt of truth.

Being tempted to find satisfaction outside of God, Jesus put on the belt of truth by relying on Deuteronomy 8:3. He responds to Satan, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4).

When the enemy entices Jesus to sin by misquoting Scripture, Jesus puts on the belt of truth by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16. "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'" (Matthew 4:7).

When the enemy promised power and pleasure in exchange for Jesus's worship, Jesus put on the belt of truth by rebuking Satan with Deuteronomy 6:13. As Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only'" (Matthew 4:10).

"A Bible that's falling apart is usually owned by someone who isn't!" - Charles Spurgeon

Jesus personally shows us how to live victoriously by using God's objective truth in each of these situations. So, we can use the word of God as an anchor holding us secure through the emotional storms of life. Charles Spurgeon put it this way, "A Bible that's falling apart is usually owned by someone who isn't!"²⁴

How firmly is your life anchored to the truth of God?

Father in Heaven, thank you for the belt of truth, the foundation of my faith, my life, my hope, and my dreams. Father, I love you, I need you, I cling to your truth. Your truth is what sustains me and guides me through the challenges and difficulties of life. Your truth sets me free, sanctifies my soul, and keeps me on the path of righteousness. Thank you in the name of Jesus—the way, the truth, and the life.

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Breastplate of Righteousness



Scripture Reading: Romans 3 & 4

"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place..." Ephesians 6:14

Satan cannot rob you of your salvation, but he can steal the joy of your redemption. Our enemy knows he cannot remove us from our righteous standing before God, but he can make us feel miserable and marginalized as soldiers in God's army.

He does this through a direct attack on the vulnerable areas of our life, mainly our hearts.

Paul uses the imagery of a first-century soldier, one who is prepared for battle and wearing a breastplate made out of bronze or chain mail. It covered the front and back of a soldier's midsection, protecting the vital organs such as lungs, stomach, liver, kidneys, and heart. This breastplate had loops or buckles that attached it to the soldier's belt.

The breastplate Paul speaks of is not made of metal or bronze, but it is made of righteousness. God's righteousness is his moral perfection that is rooted in his divine attribute of holiness. Isaiah wrote, "But the Lord Almighty will be exalted by his justice, and the holy God will be proved holy by his righteous acts" (Isaiah 5:16). God always does what is right, just, and fair because his holy nature calls for it; thus, God defines righteousness.

So how does God make sinners like ourselves righteous?

First, righteousness is delivered by Jesus, the Holy and Righteous One (Acts 3:14). The Bible teaches, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (II Corinthians 5:21). Through our faith in Christ's death on the cross, we are made righteous before God. Paul writes, "This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Romans 3:22). He says again, "However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness" (Romans 4:5). Being right before God means God does not see us through our sin, but he sees us through Christ's sinlessness. We are given a completely new identity. Theologians call this 'imputed' (credited) righteousness.

Second, God is continually transforming us by his righteousness. Those who have been made right with God, or justified, and now being made right, or sanctified, are growing in righteousness as they discover victory over sin, temptation, and the Devil's schemes. The Bible teaches, "Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness" (Romans 6:19). God not only saves us from the penalty of sin, but he is saving us from the power of sin through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:10). Theologians call this 'imparted' righteousness, which makes us more like Jesus in our attitudes and behavior.

The imparted righteousness of God is what Paul speaks of as a breastplate, which protects our hearts from the enemy's demonic attacks. This righteousness defeats Satan because he is evil to the core (John 8:44), and it is this righteousness that Jesus uses to defend us before God (I John 2:1-2). For the breastplate to function, it must be properly attached to the belt. If it is not, it can become loose or unstable, causing the breastplate to slip out of position and make the soldier vulnerable. One direct blow from a sword or spear could be fatal. So, it is with followers of Jesus. If the breastplate is not fastened to the belt of truth correctly, it could slip out of place and make us vulnerable to the enemy's deadly attacks.

Victory is ensured when our breastplate is tightly secured to the belt of truth.

**"Wearing the breastplate of righteousness
involves walking securely in your imputed
righteousness by virtue of the cross..."**

- Tony Evans

Tony Evans writes, "Wearing the breastplate of righteousness involves walking securely in your imputed righteousness by virtue of the cross, coming clean with God in your practice of righteousness and feeding your spirit with the word of God so that the Spirit will produce the natural outcomes of right living from within you."²⁵

Father in Heaven, you are righteous in all you do because your holiness demands it. Thank you for making us righteous through the death of Jesus, the Righteous One, on the cross of Calvary. Thank you for the Holy Spirit's gift, who imparts righteousness to us by empowering us to a life of holiness and continual sanctification. Righteous Father, I cling to you. I hunger, and I thirst for your righteousness, in the righteous name of Jesus.

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

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4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Shoes of Peace



Scripture Reading: Romans 5:1-2; Philippians 4:6-9

"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." Ephesians 6:14-15

The shoes referred to in the text are the shoes of a soldier. We already mentioned in Day 8 that Roman soldiers wore very thick-soled sandals with embedded spikes called 'caligae.' They gave the soldier traction to stand with stability. They were rugged as well as lightweight which gave soldiers the agility needed in an unpredictable battle.

Just as these war-sandals were critical to a soldier's preparation for battle in the physical world, so the gospel of peace is essential for readying us for the spiritual conflicts we encounter with God's enemy.

Here are three ways the gospel of peace prepares us for battle:

First, the gospel of peace provides a gripping assurance or heavenly confidence. Paul teaches, "Therefore since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Knowing who you are in Christ is essential to experiencing a victorious life. Why? Because the enemy will directly attack your assurance of salvation and identity in Christ. Remember, Satan does not fight fair. He knows exactly where to strike to make you a miserable and despondent soldier of Christ. Neil Anderson writes, "Understanding your identity in Christ is essential for living the Christian life. People cannot consistently behave in ways that are inconsistent with the way they perceive themselves. You don't change yourself by your perception. You change your perception of yourself by believing the truth."²⁶ The truth is that we have peace with God, and we stand firmly in God's grace, not because of what we have done but because of what Jesus has done for us (Titus 3:5).

"Understanding your identity in Christ is essential for living the Christian life." - Neil Anderson

Second, the gospel of peace provides a toughness that protects our hearts and minds. Paul teaches, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7). There is a mental toughness that comes from a heart at peace with God. This peace transcends our circumstances by guarding our hearts and minds like a mighty army guards a city. It is a peace that provides inner strength, outer calmness, and supernatural confidence that says, "I am okay, even if my world is falling apart." When the enemy attacks our inner peace and emotional strength, we need to see this as a warning light that flashes 'PRAYER.' Prayer is the weapon that combats anxiety and secures the peace of God (Philippians 4:6). Mark Bubeck writes, "If peace with God is an intellectual peace, the peace of God is an emotional, experiential peace. We can know all the facts about God's provision, but if emotions do not support our knowledge, we will not be able to act upon what we know to be true."²⁷

Third, the gospel of peace provides relational agility or skill that comes from a peaceable demeanor. Paul writes, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18). To live at peace means to be at peace. As we have seen, peace is a settled confidence that comes from being right with God (Romans 5:1), which leads one to experience inner tranquility and a profound sense of being protected (Philippians 4:7). This peace also provides a relational poise and gracefulness that builds a unified church (Ephesians 4:3). Satan attacks our relationships, and he wants to divide the church. These attacks come in all manners, false teaching, bitterness, immaturity, pride, or unchecked anger because he wants to disrupt God's mission.

Let us prepare ourselves by putting on the gospel of peace like a soldier puts on his war-time sandals.

Father in Heaven, thank you for the gospel of peace, which declares me justified by my faith in the Lord Jesus. It offers me peace of mind that transcends human understanding and grants me a relational poise that protects my relationships. Father in Heaven, increase my awareness of Satan's attempts to steal my peace and give me the stability, protection, and agility that comes from the gospel. In the name of Jesus, my Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Shield of Faith



Scripture Reading: II Peter 1

"In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." Ephesians 6:16

The opening scene of *Saving Private Ryan* gives a dramatic glimpse into Normandy's horrific invasion on D-Day, June 6, 1944. The movie shows the allied soldiers in ramp-fronted Higgins boats landing on the beach. As I watched the ramps open, it felt as though I was there. I felt like bullets were whipping by my head and bombs were blasting right next to me. I could hear soldiers screaming in agony, commanders shouting orders, and medics scrambling to save lives. For that 23-minute scene, I was gripping the chair's armrests, just wishing this would end.

When Paul speaks of flaming arrows, he refers to the enemy creating chaos and confusion that produces fear and doubt. The enemy wants to emotionally plunge us into chaos through his specific lies, blasphemous thoughts, and suspicious beliefs about others. He loves to create doubts about God, distrust in God's Word, and burning desires for sin and self-justification. These attacks can come from anywhere, at any time, from anyone in any situation. Paul teaches us that the spiritual answer to these emotional attacks is to raise the shield of faith.

What is the shield of faith? Faith is the transfer of trust. Saving faith is when we transfer our trust in our righteous deeds to the righteousness of Jesus. Sanctifying faith is when we transfer our trust in our emotions, will, or abilities to God's promises, power, and sovereignty. The Bible teaches, "The righteous will live by faith." (Romans 1:17) and "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4 ESV). If we are to experience daily victory over these fiery attacks, we need to transfer our trust moment by moment from ourselves to God and his promises.

If we are to experience daily victory over these fiery attacks, we need to transfer our trust moment by moment from ourselves to God and his promises.

Faith protects us like a shield. The shield Paul refers to is a Roman shield, about the size of a door, made of wood and animal skins dipped in water to absorb and extinguish the fiery arrows. These shields provide a blanket of protection and serve as the first barrier against the enemy's attacks.

When we transfer our trust from ourselves to God's character and promises, we experience a profound sense of security and safety amid confusion and chaos.

If faith is really like a shield, how do we ensure it is sturdy and robust? Just as the quality of a soldier's shield meant life or death, so does the quality of one's faith in our spiritual battle with God's enemy. Let's remember that faith is a gift (Ephesians 2:8–9) and that faith comes from hearing God's Word. Paul writes, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (Romans 10:17). But let us also remember that our faith must grow and not become stagnant. Peter writes, "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love" (II Peter 1:5–7). The quality of one's faith determines the quality of one's life—a life filled with defeats or a life filled with victories. Remember, faith is a gift, but it is also a muscle to be worked, stretched, and grown. This growth will keep us, as Peter says, "...from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:8).

In a world filled with chaos and confusion, let us raise the shield of faith by trusting in God's truth, righteousness, and peace that comes from the message of Christ. In this, we stand against the schemes of the enemy—victoriously.

Father in heaven, thank you for the precious gift of faith. Thank you for the word of God that produces faith in my heart. Thank you for the promises of God that make my faith strong. Thank you, for in this moment; I transfer my trust in myself to you, the God of love, truth, and peace. In the name of Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith.

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

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4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Helmet of Salvation



Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1

"Take the helmet of salvation ..." Ephesians 6:17

As a teenager, my father, an avid motorcyclist, lost control of his bike, which led to a terrible crash. He suffered multiple road wounds and a broken leg. As I accompanied my mother to the hospital, we entered the emergency room. I can still see my dad in intense pain as the medical team was working on him. My dad's friend, who was riding with him, came up to me with my father's helmet in his hands. He showed me a massive gouge in the helmet and said to me, "I saw your dad land on his head in the middle of the road. If he weren't wearing this helmet, he would not be with us today. So remember, never get on a motorcycle without a helmet." Every time I see motorcyclists riding their bikes without a helmet, I think of that story.

As believers, we must be vigilant to put on the helmet of salvation every day because it protects our minds from the assaults of God's enemy. Satan wants to destroy our thought lives because it will kill our love for Jesus. Paul reveals that this strategy is as old as Adam and Eve, "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (II Corinthians 11:3).

How do we put on the helmet of salvation every day?

First, we need to grasp the full extent of God's salvation. When Paul speaks of salvation in this context, he uses it in all-encompassing terms that reflect the complete nature of the spiritual blessings we enjoy in Christ: past, present, and future. To grasp the full extent of God's salvation, we must embrace these three tenses. Past: Jesus saved us from the penalty of our sins: justification (Romans 5:1). Present: Jesus is saving us from the power of sin: sanctification (I Corinthians 1:18). Future: Jesus will save us from the presence of sin: glorification (Romans 5:9). Through Christ's salvation, we can experience freedom from our past, confidence in our current struggles, and a settled hope for our future. This truth protects our minds like a helmet on a soldier in a fierce battle.

Second, we need to have an ever-expanding view of God's salvation.

Paul offers this prayer for the Ephesian Church, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe" (Ephesians 1:18-19).

Paul offers this prayer because he knows the thing limiting our spiritual growth is a small view of God's work of salvation. Satan is determined to shrink our view of God's work in our lives because he desires to attack our identity. In praying like Paul, we put on the helmet of salvation.

When we live in prideful independence from God,
we are entering the battlefield helmetless.

Third, we need to learn how to work out our salvation. "Therefore, my dear friends... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12-13). Notice, Paul does not tell us to 'work for' our salvation because salvation is a gift. He does teach us to 'work out' what God is 'working in' us: his salvation. When we approach salvation with great care, sober humility, and loving obedience, this reveals that God is working out his salvation through us. A helmet is only helpful and protective when it is worn appropriately. When we live in prideful independence from God, we are entering the battlefield helmetless.

So remember never to leave home without the helmet of salvation, for it is our constant source of hope (I Thessalonians 5:8).

Father in heaven, thank you for the helmet of salvation. May I grasp the depth of your saving work in my soul. May the eyes of my heart be enlightened so that I may experience the hope of my calling, the riches of my spiritual inheritance, and the same victorious power that raised Jesus from the dead. Father, with great care, sober humility, and loving obedience, I put on the helmet of salvation that you have so freely given me through my Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Sword of the Spirit



Scripture Reading: Luke 4:1-13

"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17).

For thousands of years, the sword was the weapon of choice for soldiers. Swords were a sign of honor, strength, and courage. Many times, the sword was more famous than the soldier. Excalibur was more prominent than King Arthur, Zulficar's fame outlasts Ali ibn Abi Talib, and the Word of God will outlive everyone and everything in this world. Isaiah writes, "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

I find it interesting that this is the only weapon described in Paul's list. He could have easily mentioned a spear or a javelin which most soldiers carried in his day. Yet, Paul chooses to single out the importance of God's Word as the weapon of choice for the Christian warrior because it is the sword of the Holy Spirit. He reveals that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate source of authority behind the 66 books and 40 human writers of the Bible. The Holy Spirit spoke God's message through human authors, working in and through their unique circumstances and writing styles, to reveal God's message through them. Paul declares the truth of this process in writing, "All Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). The Holy Spirit is the power behind the Word of God that makes it so penetrating. The book of Hebrews states, "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

How do we wield the sword of the Spirit?

We discover a great insight from the Apostle John. As he describes the various levels of spiritual maturity, he writes, "I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one." Then he describes how they became victorious, "I write to you, young men because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:13-14). How did these warriors overcome Satan's schemes? They did so because God's Word had captured their hearts, minds, and souls. They trusted and obeyed the eternal precepts of God and, in doing so, found God's omnipotent strength to overcome the attacks of the evil one. John Piper writes, "We have one offensive weapon: the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). But what many Christians fail to realize is that we can't

draw the sword from someone else's scabbard. If we don't wear it, we can't wield it. If the Word of God does not abide in us, we will reach for it in vain when the enemy strikes. But if we do wear it, if it lives within us, what mighty warriors we can be!" ²⁸

If the Word of God does not abide in us, we
will reach for it in vain when the enemy strikes."
-John Piper

When the Devil tempted Jesus, he flashed the sword of the Spirit in quoting three Scriptures that cut the enemy to the heart, causing him to retreat in defeat (Luke 4:1-13). So it is for us. At the level we study, memorize, and submit to the living Word of God, so will be our ability to overcome the evil one.

Father in Heaven, thank you for the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The Holy Spirit divinely inspired the Word of God. The Word of God is powerful, penetrating hearts and minds and souls. The Word of God convicts the sinner and sanctifies the child of God. The Word of God calms our fears, quenches our doubts, fuels our faith, and defeats our enemy. Father, I cling to this sword of truth, I yield my will to your Words, I rest in the power of its promises, and I wield it in the name of Jesus,

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

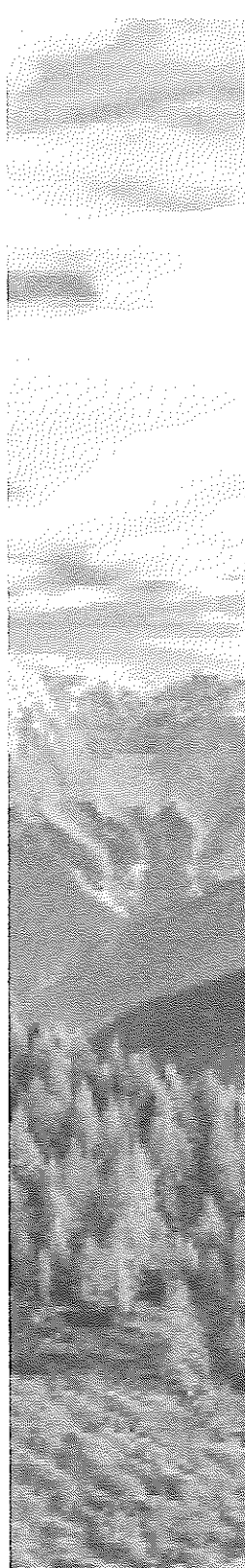
4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

WEEK 3

"The reason why many fail in battle is because they wait until the hour of battle. The reason why others succeed is because they have gained their victory on their knees long before the battle came...Anticipate your battles; fight them on your knees before temptation comes, and you will always have victory."²⁹

-R. A. Torrey



The Preeminence of Prayer



Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people" Ephesians 6:18.

It is in our prayer lives where the battle for spiritual victory is won or lost. The absence of prayer makes putting on the armor of God nothing but an intellectual experience completely void of spiritual vitality. Remember, when Paul speaks of the armor of God, he is metaphorically speaking of the spiritual blessings we have in Christ. We unlock the divine truth of the gospel through prayer and constant communion with the Father.

We see this truth come alive in the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, where Paul lays out thirteen of the spiritual blessings we have in Christ. Let's take a quick survey: We are chosen, made holy and blameless before God, and loved unconditionally (v. 4). We are spiritually adopted as children of God (v. 5). We find complete acceptance in Christ (v. 6). We are redeemed through the blood of Christ, forgiven, and are given all the riches of God's grace (v. 7). We are lavished with all spiritual wisdom and understanding (v. 8). We understand the mystery of God's will (v. 9). We are guaranteed an eternal inheritance (vs. 11, 14). We received the Word of truth and were sealed with the Holy Spirit (v. 13).

At the end of this robust list of blessings, Paul offers a prayer of enlightenment. Paul does not pray for us to get these spiritual blessings because he knows that we already have them as chosen children of God. Paul prays that we will experience the wonder and depth of what we already possess so that we will "know God better" (v. 17) and so that "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened" (v. 18). He desires that we have an ever-expanding view of God's infinite blessings so that Christ will transform our lives. He wants us to be people marked with hope and full of assurance. People marked with unlimited spiritual resources and full of heavenly confidence, and people marked with supernatural spiritual power and full of unstoppable strength (vs. 18–20). He wants to equip us to be the victorious warriors God intended.

Just like each piece of armor can be turned into an intellectual exercise void of spiritual power, spiritual blessings can become lifeless Christianity through prayerlessness. Oswald Chambers writes, "Prayer is the exercise of drawing on the grace of God."³⁰ Paul's emphasis on the preeminence of prayer at the end of this study drives this point home.

"The devil hates prayer." - John Piper

If we are not regularly encountering God through meaningful prayer, the Devil is winning. He is outsmarting us! He is outwitting us! He is robbing us of spiritual power and distracting us with trivial things. John Piper writes, "The devil hates prayer. Our flesh does not naturally love it. Therefore, it does not come full-born and complete and passionate from the womb of our heart. It takes ever-renewed discipline."³¹ Throughout the next seven days, we hope to strengthen your private prayer life as we seek to stand victoriously against the schemes of our arch enemy.

Father in heaven, thank you for every spiritual blessing I have in Christ. Thank you for every piece of armor you have given me so that I might stand victorious against the devil's schemes and experience the strength and power of Jesus during the battle. Heavenly Father, grant me the resolve and discipline to meet with you daily and to carry with me an attitude of prayer, for without you and your power, my armor will malfunction. This malfunction will be the difference between experiencing defeat or victory. Father, may I be found victorious in the strong name of Jesus.

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Consistency of Prayer



**Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:17;
Colossians 4:2; Luke 21:36; 1 Peter 4:7**

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions..." Ephesians 6:18

Oswald Chambers wrote, "Prayer is not only asking, but an attitude of mind which produces the atmosphere in which asking is perfectly natural."³²

Prayer is a constant state of humility and dependence on our loving Father. When Paul writes, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions," he reminds us of the four keywords for living a victorious Christian life: "pray in the Spirit." We define "praying in the Spirit" as the means of praying the mind of God, under the will of God, by the continued assistance of the Spirit of God.

We define "praying in the Spirit" as the means of praying the mind of God, under the will of God, by the continued assistance of the Spirit of God.

Now he adds that we are to pray "on all occasions." Meaning there is never a bad time to pray. Prayer should never be isolated to certain places or occasions but should be exercised whenever and wherever the Spirit prompts us to pray. Reflecting on the context of spiritual warfare, we can understand Paul's urgency for ongoing prayer as our enemy never takes a rest from scheming against us. This is why we are admonished to "pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

As soldiers in this epic spiritual battle, our armor will function at a high level if we continuously communicate with the commander-in-chief. Soldiers on the front lines rely heavily on their unbroken contact with their commanding officers to help them navigate the battlefield. Without that unceasing communication, they could be quickly overrun by the enemy, making them vulnerable to attacks and ultimately defeats. So it is with us as followers of Jesus, the armor of God will only be effective as our continual dependence on the Father.

There are three strategies that Satan uses to attack our prayer lives:

First, he will try to discourage us from praying. Have you ever thought that your prayers were useless? Do you ever get tired of praying prayers that go

unanswered? Have you ever said to yourself, "What is the use? I pray, and nothing happens!" Those discouraging doubts are planted in our minds by our scheming enemy. It's at that moment we are to put on the belt of truth like David in Psalm 13, who in one breath said, "How long, O Lord?" (v. 1) and in the next said, "But I trust in your unfailing love" (v. 5).

Second, he will try to distract us from praying. We should not be amazed that when we give time to focused prayer, crazy things happen. Satan is the master of distractions. Jesus asked his disciples to pray for him for one hour. What happened? They all fell asleep! Jesus said to them, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

Third, he will try to deter us in our prayers. Satan wants to weaken our prayer lives and does it in many ways: He will entice us into sin (Psalm 66:19). He will place idols in our lives (Ezekiel 14:1-3). He will cause relational strife (I Peter 3:7). He will seduce us to pray with the wrong motives (James 4:3). He will use our selfishness against us. Solomon wrote, "Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered" (Proverbs 21:13).

John Piper offers this challenge to our prayer lives, "Prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief. It is not surprising that prayer malfunctions when we try to make it a domestic intercom to call upstairs for more comforts in the den." ³³

May we find victory today as we allow prayer to permeate our lives.

Father in heaven, thank you for your merciful intentions towards us who are weak and vulnerable. Thank you that your throne of grace is always approachable. There is no time of the day that we cannot call out to you in humble dependence. Father, grant me victory in my prayer life. Help overcome the doubts, distractions, and selfish habits that can deter my uninterrupted communion with you. I come to you in the precious name of Jesus, my Advocate, and my Atoning Sacrifice.

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

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5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Depth of Prayer



Scripture Reading: Philippians 4:4-9; Colossians 4:2-6

"...with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert..."
Ephesians 6: 18.

Warren Wiersbe writes, "Prayer is the energy that enables the Christian soldier to wear the armor and wield the sword."³⁴ If prayer is the energy to a victorious life, then how deep is the well of your prayer life? Has your prayer life moved beyond the surface level of asking God to do something for you?

Has your prayer life moved beyond the surface level
of asking God to do something for you?

There is more than one kind of praying. The Scriptures are rich with different expressions and forms of prayer. Here is a short sample of the different types of prayer we discover in the Bible. Each one uniquely affects our lives, touches God's heart, and impacts our enemy.

Thanksgiving is the act of thanking God for what he has done or provided. The Psalmist repeatedly encourages God's people to give thanks to God. "Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind" (Psalm 107:8). Paul teaches we are to "give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). When we find reasons to give thanks during loss, brokenness, and trials, God receives glory, and the Devil is irritated. Job, a man who suffered unimaginable loss, stood victorious over Satan and offered these words of thanksgiving, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21).

Adoration is worshiping God for who he is, his essence, character, and attributes. David calls all beings, both angelic and human, to worship the Lord for who he is, "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness" (Psalm 29:1). Joyful adoration assumes we know who God is. Our prayer lives falter from our lack of intimacy with God's character. When our knowledge and experience of the essence and attributes of God expands, our adoration deepens. Satan hates praise! Because it reminds him that he is not God and was cast out of God's presence (Ezekiel 28:17).

Confession agrees with God that we live in a sinful state, and our private sins (thoughts, behaviors) violate His holy character and desires for us.

Scripture is unequivocal on the importance of confessing our sins to God. In I John 1:8-10, we learn that those who claim to be without sin in their lives are self-deceived (v. 8). They make God out to be a liar and do not have God's truth living in them (v. 10). Yet those who acknowledge their sins experience cleansing forgiveness (v. 9) through Jesus, our Advocate, and Atoning Sacrifice (I John 2:1-2). Satan hates authenticity! From the beginning, he has sought to minimize the impact of our sins (Genesis 3:4-5). Every time we confess our sins specifically, Satan is crushed, and our souls are set free.

Supplication is an earnest plea on behalf of ourselves and others. It is a needy cry for God to move in and through our lives. Hannah pleaded with God intensely to give her a child. "In her deep anguish, Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly" (I Samuel 1:10). Even Jesus offered intense cries to his Father. The Bible says, "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death" (Hebrews 5:7). Supplication reflects a whole new level of brokenness, neediness, and reliance on God, which puts the Devil in his place as a defeated foe.

Intercession is a constant imploring for others before God. In other words, to intercede is to make a case for others before God through our prayers. The Holy Spirit does this for us as believers (Romans 8:26). The Scriptures tell us this is the ministry of Jesus, "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). So we have the privilege to stand in the gap for others, bringing their needs, burdens, and cares before the throne of God. Prayers of intercession are crucial to seeing spiritual victories in our lives. This is why Paul appealed to the churches to pray for him and his team (Ephesians 6:19-20; I Thessalonians 5:25).

Watchfulness is prayers of protection and discernment. Paul writes, "With this in mind, be alert..." (Ephesians 6:18). We have a spiritual enemy stalking us. Peter writes, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (I Peter 5:8). Jesus, knowing the enemy's ability to strike at any time, told his disciples, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). Paul taught that one of the disciplines of prayer is not just being thankful but also watchful. "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful" (Colossians 4:2). Satan does not want God's people to be on the watch for him or to have a heightened sense of awareness of his schemes. He wants us sleepy morally, spiritually, and physically so that we will be caught off guard and fall into his trap.

As you consider these different forms of prayer, take some time to reflect on the areas of strength you can build on and growth areas where you can stretch yourself. Personally, for me, my place of growth relates to the prayers of watchfulness. I need to increase my vigilance and awareness in my prayer life, my weaknesses, and the enemy's schemes.

Father in Heaven, thank you for the gift of prayer and its various forms that enrich my life. Each one strengthens my faith. They make me more dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit, the advocacy of Jesus, and the richness of your great love. Father, I need you, I worship you, I confess my sins to you, and I thankfully receive your grace. In the name of Jesus,

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

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5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Perseverance of Prayer



Scripture Reading: Luke 11:1-13; Luke 18:1-9

"... always keep on praying..." Ephesians 6:18

Prayer is mysterious. And yet, the need for perseverance in prayer takes the mystical nature of prayer to a new level. To make repeated requests with dogged determination to a Heavenly Father who loves and cares for us is a faith-stretching exercise. Yet once we understand the spiritual warfare context of Paul's exhortation, "...always keep on praying..." (Ephesians 6:18), we have a better idea of why we are to persevere in prayer. The Devil is always scheming against us and will do anything to cause God's people to give up on petitioning our loving Father.

Steve Brown writes, "The mere act of prayer is abhorrent to the forces of evil, and you will find that there will be all kinds of hindrances (depression, doubt, frustrations, and so on)." He continues, "Many of those hindrances will have the smell of sulfur smoke about them."³⁵

Can you smell the sulfur when discouragement sets in, as your prayers go unanswered? Can you taste the sulfur on your lips when your prayers are interrupted by a distracted mind? Can you see the smoke rising from the pit in the form of self-will, self-reliance, or self-sufficiency instead of our heavenly Father?

After teaching the disciples how to pray in Luke 11:1-4, Jesus tells two stories to illustrate the power of persevering prayer.

In Luke 11:5-8, He tells the story of a persistent friend, who relentlessly bothered his neighbor for food for a surprise guest who arrived at his home late that evening. The friend would not take no for an answer until his neighbor finally relented and gave him the bread he needed. Jesus applies this principle to our prayer lives, "I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need" (v. 8). Do you think of the words "shameless audacity" when it comes to prayer? One author described it as "perseverance in its highest energy."³⁶ This is the same energy that happens when we get into an argument, where you forcefully try to get your point across. What do you think about arguing with God? Is it acceptable? Or disrespectful? Here I believe Jesus is not only permitting us but encouraging us to enter into a holy argument with our Heavenly Father on the highest level.

**What do you think about arguing with God?
Is it acceptable? Or disrespectful?**

Then in Luke 11:11-13, He tells the story of persistent children and loving fathers. He appeals to the fathers in the audience, asking, "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" (vs. 11-12).

Can you hear the people chuckling as they are listening to Jesus? This is naturally absurd. Even in this evil world, it would be rare for a father to harm his child purposely. Jesus again applies this story to our prayer lives, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (v. 13). What a comfort to know that we have a perfect Father who wants more for us than we, at times, desire for ourselves. He bears good gifts in light of his sovereign love. He gives the supreme gift of God, the Holy Spirit. How many in Jesus' audience were even thinking of the Holy Spirit as a gift? We have a loving Father who is not only approachable but whose goodness is beyond our imagination. We have a Holy and Righteous Father who can be trusted, even when our prayers seemingly go unanswered or delayed.

In between these stories, Jesus entreats us to be bold in our prayers: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9). We see an increased intensity level with each invitation to pray, which drives us deeper into the Father's arms. Knocking is greater than seeking, and seeking is greater than asking. Jesus removes any thought of timidity or shyness when it comes to prayer. Instead, He encourages boldness, confidence, and a level of fierceness in our prayer lives, which He culminates with a great promise. "For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened" (Luke 11:9-10).

So many times, we are just one more prayer away from victory. So let us always keep on praying!

Father in heaven, thank you for the gift of prayer and the encouragement to be bold, fierce, and tenacious in our petitions. Thank you for being my perfect Father, for being good, holy, and right. Father, you are to be trusted with full assurance and greater boldness in my asking. You are faithful with every request that burns in my heart. Father, teach me to press forward in prayer and what it means to press through in prayer. In the name of Jesus,

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Expanse of Prayer



Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."
Ephesians 6:18

In 1887, a young missionary couple working with J. Hudson Taylor accepted an appointment to one of China's most resistant provinces. Taylor gave them these words of counsel, "Brother, if you would enter that province, you must go forward on your knees."³⁷

I believe this is the sentiment behind Paul's call for prayer in his letter to the Ephesian church. "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people" (Ephesians 6:18). If we are to stand victoriously against the enemy's schemes, we must learn how to advance together on our knees in humble intercession.

Prayer is the glue that binds us together as fellow soldiers in God's army. Paul challenges us to "pray for all the Lord's people," not just Christians with whom we agree or have a particular affinity. Paul calls us to expand our prayers beyond our personal preferences to bring together a unified stand against our common enemy.

When we study the prayers of Paul, we discover vital principles revealing how we are to pray for each other as God's people. Here are a few:

His prayers are dominated by spiritual needs rather than physical ones.

He desires that we experience the gospel's deep and profound hope during difficult circumstances (Romans 15:13; Ephesians 1:18). He prays for them to experience spiritual wisdom and divine understanding so that they will know God better (Ephesians 1:17–18). He asks for their love to grow and flourish, "...that you, being rooted and grounded in love ..." (Ephesians 3:17–19) and "may abound more and more" (Philippians 1:9). He prays for them to experience God's power in their spirits to strengthen them (Ephesians 3:17) and that this spiritual strength will unify the church (Romans 15:5–6). He pleads for the integrity, purity, and the sanctification of the church so that it may bear spiritual fruit (Philippians 1:9–11; 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24). Knowing that Paul wrote most of these prayers from prison humbles my soul and causes me to focus more on the church's spiritual needs rather than the temporal needs of God's people.

His prayers are marked with gratitude for others. His thankfulness for the spiritual impact of the churches burst forth in his prayers repeatedly. To the Christians in Rome, he writes, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world" (Romans 1:8). Again, to the church in Ephesus, he writes, "I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers ..." (Ephesians 1:16). When we are thankful for others, we are not stroking their egos, but we are reinforcing the work of God in them and through them.

His prayers are filled with personal devotion and worship with a focus on the fatherhood of God. Paul writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort ..." (II Corinthians 1:3). He is following and reinforcing the pattern taught by Jesus to his disciples, "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name ..." (Matthew 6:9). Paul blesses the Father. He kneels before the Father in praise and thanksgiving. He glorifies the Father, and he appeals to the Fatherhood of God to answer his prayers. Through these prayers, we are invited into the beauty and intimacy of Paul's relationship with God. Oswald Chambers wrote, "God's Son is born into me through the direct act of God; then I as His child must exercise the right of a child—the right of always being face to face with my Father through prayer."³⁸ Let us practice this beautiful privilege like a child running enthusiastically into its Father's arms.

His prayers are packed full of vision for the mission. On a micro-level, Paul prays for his friend to be active daily in the mission of God. "I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith" (Philemon 1:6). He does this because he believes this can have a soul-changing effect on his friend, "so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ." Paul prays on a macro level for the church in Ephesus to catch a vision for what God desires to do through them. "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21). Paul knows that God works in and through his people to accomplish his mission. Finally, when Paul asks for prayer for himself, he does not ask to be rescued from prison but to be used in proclaiming the gospel. "Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should" (Ephesians 6:19-20).

Prayer not only unites the church but it also has a mystical way of emotionally binding the church together.

A.W. Pink wrote, "We have long been convinced there is no better way—no more practical, valuable, and effective way—of expressing solicitude and affection for our fellow saints than by bearing them up before God in the arms of our faith and love."³⁹ Prayer not only unites the church but it also has a mystical way of emotionally binding the church together. Therefore, let us expand our prayers to include "all the Lord's people" (Ephesians 6:18).

*Father in heaven, thank you for the gift of prayer,
the joy of freely accessing your throne of grace and
for the intimate communion Jesus has provided for
us. Father, help me expand my prayers to include
those true followers of Jesus that are different from
me. Father, teach me to pray prayers like Paul did,
for the spiritual health, unity, and effectiveness of
the global church.
In the name of Jesus our Great High Priest,*

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Focus of Prayer



Scripture Reading: Romans 15:30–33; II Corinthians 1:10–11; Ephesians 6:19–20; Philippians 1:19–20; Colossians 4:2–4; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1–2; Philemon 22

"Pray also for me..." Ephesians 6:19

A few days after I started my first ministry internship, a veteran missionary gave me a small book entitled *Power through Prayer* by E.M. Bounds. The impact of this simple book laid a profound foundation for my ministry.

This book champions Paul's attitude towards prayer when he writes, "in everything by prayer ..." (Philippians 4:6). He knew that prayer is a continual state of personal surrender that leaves no room for self-reliance or self-confidence. This is why Paul, at the end of his teaching on spiritual warfare, makes a humble plea, "Pray also for me..."

"Paul is a preeminent example. He asks, he covets, he pleads in an impassioned way for the help of all God's saints"
- E.M. Bounds

E.M. Bounds writes, "That the true apostolic preacher must have the prayers of others – good people to give his ministry its full quota of success, Paul is a preeminent example. He asks, he covets, he pleads in an impassioned way for the help of all God's saints, He knew that in the spiritual realm...faith, desire, and prayer increased the volume of spiritual force until it became overwhelming and irresistible in its power."⁴⁰

It takes hard work to build an intercession team. To keep a prayer team engaged and motivated takes great focus and continual effort. Satan fears nothing more than a well-prayed for pastor, missionary, and leader. Prayer is the antithesis of all that Satan stands for. In prayer, we express a humble dependence, personal surrender and acknowledge that we cannot do anything of lasting spiritual significance without God. E.M. Bounds writes, "The more the preacher's eyes are opened to the nature, responsibility, and difficulties in his work, the more will he see...the necessity of prayer; not only the increasing demand to pray himself, but to call on others to help him by their prayers."⁴¹

Eight times in his letters, Paul asks for prayer for himself and his team that traveled with him. Being on the front lines of missional advancement made them a target of the enemies' assaults. Spiritual warfare was not a theory to Paul; it was an ever-present reality.

Here are a few lessons we can learn from Paul's prayer requests:

They were missional in nature. All of Paul's prayers and prayer requests were in the context of advancing God's mission. Paul asks for prayer specifically around the communication of the gospel. He asked for clarity and great spiritual boldness because his mission was all about the message (Colossians 4:3-4).

They were serious in tone. Multiple times Paul uses the words "deliver," "deliverance," and "kept safe." He uses sober words to describe each situation he found himself in, such as "deadly peril," "whether by life or by death," "delivered from wicked and evil people." Finally, he describes himself as "an ambassador in chains." Paul never sugar-coated his prayer requests but always used an appropriate level of urgency for each occasion.

They were personal in spirit. We see Paul asking people "to struggle with him in prayer." He was so desirous of fellowship, "that I may come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed" (Romans 15:32). Paul asked for prayer out of a relational context. He calls them "brothers and sisters" and reports to them how their prayers are powerfully working in his life, "... as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many" (II Corinthians 1:10-11).

"Pray also for me" is simply a battle cry. We must never be shy in asking for prayer. God blessed Paul's humility as he found victory upon victory in this heroic spiritual battle. E.M. Bounds writes, "'Put the saints everywhere to praying' is the burden of the apostolic effort and the keynote of apostolic success."⁴²

*Father in heaven, may I see everything I do through
the lens of prayer. May I be humble enough to ask
God's people to pray for me. May I be vulnerable
enough to admit I cannot live without continual
dependence on you and the prayers of God's people.
In Jesus' name,*

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

The Victorious Prayer Life



Scripture Reading: James 4:1-10

Why do so many of us have spasmodic prayer lives? Start and stop. Hot and cold. Sometimes our prayer lives are like a car with a faulty fuel injector that just sputters down the road. It doesn't matter if it is a Maserati or Yugo. If the fuel injector isn't working correctly, the car will never have enough power. So it is with followers of Jesus, if we do not have a working prayer life, we will lack the spiritual power to face the enemy and live the victorious life God desires.

In his letter dealing with Christians trying to live dual lives, one of devotion and the other with recklessness, the Apostle James outlines two reasons our prayer lives tend to sputter.

The first is the neglect of prayer. "You do not have because you do not ask God" (James 4:2). Prayer is a living, breathing conversation with the God of the universe. If we are not talking to God, we are losing the battle, and Satan is outwitting us. The prayerless life reveals a heart filled with self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

The second is selfish prayers. "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures" (James 4:2-3). If we are simply coming to God as a butler to meet all our needs and wants, we will be spiritually weak and harmfully immature. Our worship will be dull, our confession will be shallow, and our prayers will be powerless.

So how does one attain a victorious prayer life? James offers us five attitudes that will fine-tune the fuel injector of our prayer lives.

Spirit-driven. "Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the Spirit he caused to dwell in us longs jealously?" (v. 5). We started the book with the premise that the secret to a victorious life is to "pray in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18). James reinforces the truth that effective prayer is driven, guided, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, who jealously longs for our devotion. Praying in the Spirit is praying the mind of God, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to fulfill the will of God.

Humble in posture. "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble" (v.6). Humility is a mark of utter dependence on God. It is, in essence, coming to God with empty hands. If you want God to battle against your prayers, just

come to him like an entitled, willful and self-indulgent child. Jonathan Edwards wrote, "Nothing sets a Christian so much out of the devil's reach than humility."⁴³ If humility sets us free, then pride puts us right into Satan's painful grip. (Ephesians 4:27).

Submissive spirit. "Submit yourselves, then, to God" (v. 7). The word submit is a military term that means to voluntarily place yourself under one's authority. Watchman Nee wrote, "The Lord's prayer in Gethsemane is the highest expression of submission to God's authority. Our Lord's submission to God's authority far exceeds His sacrifice on the cross."⁴⁴ Unless we are willing to say with Jesus, "Not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 24:42), our prayer lives will always be susceptible to the enemy's schemes.

"Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan." - John Bunyan

Resistant stance. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (v. 7). Active resistance against the Father of Lies is where we began 21 days ago. Paul writes, "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Ephesians 6:11). We resist the lies, the accusations, and the temptations through the spiritual blessings we have in Christ (the armor of God), which renders the Devil powerless. Active resistance takes mental preparation. Peter writes, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (I Peter 5:8). The attacks on your prayer life are a serious issue, and it takes serious-minded people to overcome them.

Repentant heart. "Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom" (vs. 8–9). James paints a beautiful picture of repentance. Repentance is changing one's mind, which leads to changing one's direction in life. Repentance is essential in salvation (Acts 3:19) and necessary for sanctification, as seen in James' words. His words are a serious call to change our minds and our behavior. Come, wash, purify. Grieve, mourn, wail and change. There is no mistaking his sobering tone. If our prayer lives are to be victorious, there must be a hunger for holiness. Paul writes, "Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands..." (I Timothy 2:8).

John Bunyan summarizes what a victorious prayer life looks like when he writes, "Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan."⁴⁵

*Father in heaven, may my prayers bring honor to you. May they touch your heart as you have touched mine. May my prayers be Spirit-driven, humble in nature, submissive in spirit, active in resisting, and repentant in tone. Grant me a victorious prayer life. Filled with constant dependence, continual hope, and victorious freedom.
In the name of Jesus my victorious Savior,*

Amen.

Prayer Journal Questions

1. What Am I Learning?

2. What Am I Thankful For?

3. What Do I Regret?

4. Who Do I Need to Pray for Today?

5. What Do I Need to Do Today?

WHAT IS NEXT IN THIS EPIC BATTLE?

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (II Corinthians 10:4-5).

After this 21-day journey, we hope that your view of the world has changed. We trust you see the world as a spiritual battleground and not a pleasure-filled playground. That you embrace your role in this world as battle-ready soldiers on mission with God and not as a self-indulgent child carried away by the whims of this world. We pray that you have learned how to overcome spiritual strongholds with the spiritual weapons of truth, prayer, and humility. We hope you view yourself as not a victim of circumstance but as a victorious warrior recognizing the schemes of the evil one through the knowledge of Christ and the power of the gospel.

The victorious life is simple, but it is not easy.

The victorious life is a majestic struggle.

It is a struggle because our enemy is real.

It is majestic because our Savior is victorious.

Our hope is that you have developed a war-time mentality over the last 21 days. As you meet with the Lord, open your bibles and surrender your hearts to obedience and prayer. It is in this daily habit that we discover the simple path to a victorious life. The victorious life is simple, but it is not easy. The victorious life is a majestic struggle. It is a struggle because our enemy is real. It is majestic because our Savior is victorious. Our prayer is that this 21-day journey will become a 365-day, life-changing habit.

Jim Elliot gave his life as a martyr in 1956. He and his friends lost their lives as they sought to bring the gospel of Jesus to remote tribes in Ecuador. He wrote these thoughtful and yet challenging words as a 21-year-old college student, "We are so utterly ordinary, so commonplace, while we profess to know a Power the Twentieth Century does not reckon with. But we are 'harmless'; and therefore unharmed. We are spiritual pacifists, non-militants, conscientious objectors in this battle-to-the-death with principalities and powers in high

places. Meekness must be had for contact with men, but brass, outspoken boldness is required to take part in the comradeship of the Cross. We are 'sideliners' —coaching and criticizing the real wrestlers while content to sit by and leave the enemies of God unchallenged. The world cannot hate us, we are too much like its own. Oh, that God would make us dangerous!" ⁴⁶

If we are to be dangerous soldiers in this epic spiritual battle. Then we must be convinced that the Bible is our operation manual and that prayer is our war-time walkie-talkie. It is only with the daily use of these weapons that we can advance against the powers of darkness and join our victorious Savior in his great redemptive mission.

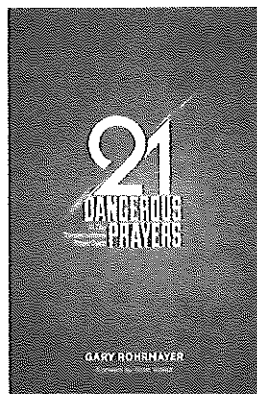
"Oh, that God would make us dangerous!"

21-DAY DISCIPLESHIP MATERIALS

21 Dangerous Prayers:

A 21-Day Transformational Prayer Guide

All too often we pray safe prayers: God, bless me. God, help me. God, protect me. God, heal me. God, provide for me. In this 21-day journey, Gary Rohrmayer will lead you in exploring the dangerous prayers that have been prayed by Moses, David, Mary, Nehemiah, and Paul. Our hope is that God will meet you in a life-transforming manner and that your prayer life will be changed forever.



21 Days of Prayer and Fasting:

A Fasting Guide for Spiritual Breakthroughs

In this 21-day journey, Gary Rohrmayer introduces you to the rich spiritual discipline of fasting through the holy Scriptures and the great Christian thinkers throughout the ages. Our prayer is that your passion for God will lead you to the breakthroughs you are seeking personally and for your church.



21 Courageous Prayers:

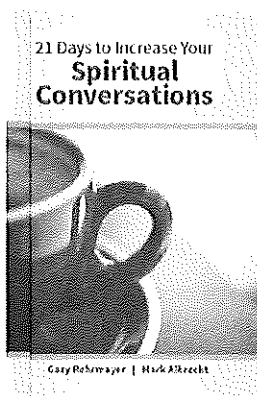
A Transformational Journey for Moving from Fear to Faith

We live in times where God's people must find a greater level of courage in order to see God's blessings in their lives and the gospel advance in our world. In 21 Courageous Prayers, Gary Rohrmayer introduces you to the spiritual discipline of reading, meditating on, and praying through the book of Psalms. Our hope is that this 21-day journey will turn into a 365-day spiritual habit.



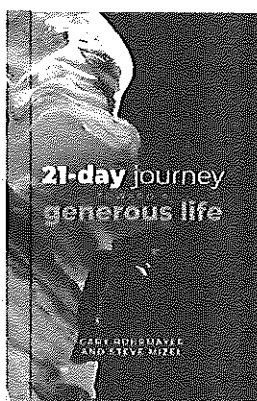
21 Days to Increasing Your Spiritual Conversations:

One of the marks of a follower of Jesus is that they can naturally engage others in spiritual conversations. Gary Rohrmayer and Mark Albrecht's hope for this 21-day missional experiment is that you will be surprised at how God is working in your relationships as you learn to listen, serve, bless and engage your friends, co-workers, and family in meaningful dialogues with Jesus.



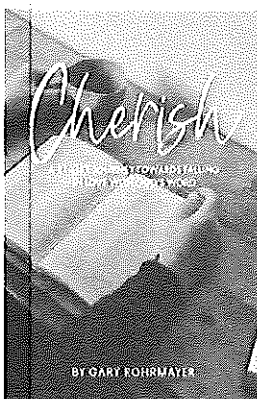
21 Days to a Generous Life:

During this 21-day journey toward a generous life, Gary Rohrmayer and Steve Mizel are praying that your love for God will increase and your experience of God's grace will deepen; that through the insights of God's Word you will gain a broader perspective on work, money, and true financial freedom. They are praying that you will not be the same, that you will have a defining moment and receive a giving testimony by experiencing the words of Jesus himself, who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).



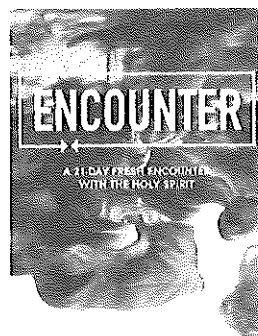
Cherish: A 21-Day Journey

As we take this 21-day journey through the longest chapter in the Bible, our hope is that you will fall in love with the Word of God and the God of the Word. That you will see it as a sacred text worthy of your honor. That you will entrust your life to its truth and promises. That you will bring your life in compliance to its standards and values. That the Holy Spirit will quicken your heart and mind and reveal to you the wonders of God's Word. In essence, our hope is that you will learn to cherish God's Word in your heart. In Cherish, Gary Rohrmayer introduces you to the spiritual discipline of daily reading, memorizing, studying, and meditating on God's Word. Our hope is that this 21-day journey will teach you how to study the Bible for yourself and turn it into a 365-day spiritual habit.



Encounter: A 21-Day Journey

In Encounter: A 21- Day Fresh Encounter with the Holy Spirit, Gary Rohrmayer desires to help us work out in our minds and hearts what it means to have "fellowship with the Holy Spirit." No subject is as essential to the spiritual development of the church and the advancement of the mission of Jesus than the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Our prayer that these 21 days will turn into a 365-day habit as you deepen your understanding of and dependence on the Holy Spirit.



BY GARY ROHRMAYER

**To purchase these 21-day books at a volume discount,
go to www.yourjourneyresources.com**

**They are also available digitally through Amazon, Apple
App Store, and Google Play.**

Who is Gary Rohrmayer?



Gary Rohrmayer was born in Waukesha, Wisconsin, and grew up in a family of entrepreneurs. After a dramatic conversion, he turned his entrepreneurial energy into starting new churches throughout the Midwest. As a pastor, author, speaker, coach, trainer, and leader, he has a unique focus in mobilizing and mentoring leaders in the mission of

Jesus. He specializes in equipping leaders in areas of spiritual formation, church planting, and church health. Gary has been a force in church planting since 1987. During this time, he has been involved in over 161 new church plants and has trained thousands of church planters across the country. He currently is serving as the president and executive minister of Converge MidAmerica, overseeing its business and ministry interests that support regional church planting and ongoing care of its partner churches. Gary's vision is to see "that no leader travels their ministry journey alone." Gary and his wife, Mary, have three grown children and live in the greater Chicago area.

Who is Converge?



CONVERGE

MIDAMERICA | SOUTHEAST | CARIBBEAN

Converge is a movement of 1,400 churches. We were born out of a mission to reach immigrants in the 1850s. These new believers cherished the Word of God and depended on God through prayer. From these humble beginnings, a multi-generational, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic group of churches was formed. We voluntarily work together in the starting and strengthening of churches worldwide.

Converge is sold out to starting new churches. As a proven church-planting force, we are reaching people from every segment of society. Over the last 15 years we have started more than 700 churches in the United States.

Converge is serious about strengthening churches with a number of new church-strengthening initiatives. We have a commitment to seeing every church in our movement get stronger relationally, financially, theologically, and missionally.

Converge is determined to see the least-reached people groups throughout the world touched by the gospel of Jesus through the sending of missionaries and supporting of national leaders in this great task.

Converge is relentless in its pursuit to reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the country. We believe the future of every movement is found in God's harvest field. The new leaders, new churches, and new missionaries will be found as "we make disciples of all nations."

**For more information about Converge,
go to www.convergemidamerica.org**

Who is the PRAYER || FIRST Movement?

The apostle Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:1, "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone." We need to be constantly reminded as a movement of churches that prayer must be of first importance. Simply put, healthy churches are praying churches. So we offer several opportunities to help encourage pastors and churches to be about PrayerFirst.

PrayerFirst Weekends

A PrayerFirst Weekend is a focused time of passionate teaching on prayer, consulting with church leadership in the area of prayer, coaching prayer team leaders on how to expand their prayer ministry, and engaging the whole church in the act of prayer. To that end, we hope that this PrayerFirst emphasis will ignite and refresh the priority of prayer which will have lasting results on your church and community.

PrayerFirst Regional Gatherings

Annually, we desire to see our pastors gather in regions not to talk about prayer but to pray! There is nothing more beautiful than seeing pastors gather together for a focused time of prayer, praying for one another as workers in the harvest fields and petitioning God to revive our churches and awaken our communities with the fresh wind of His Spirit.

PrayerFirst Campaigns

The prophet Daniel, deeply concerned over the spiritual condition of his people, prayed and fasted for 21 days. There are certain seasons in our lives when we need to focus our attention on the spiritual needs of our churches and communities. These 21-day PrayerFirst Campaigns are designed to create spiritual momentum and greater dependence on God at strategic times in our ministries. Example: Fall Ministry Kick-Off, New Year Focus, or Lenten Season

21 Days of Prayer—August, September, or October

21 Days of Prayer and Fasting—January, February, or March

To schedule a PrayerFirst Weekend, attend a PrayerFirst Regional Gathering, or to get more information on a PrayerFirst Campaign:

**Visit our PrayerFirst Resource Page
www.convergemidamerica.org/prayerfirst**

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