PRAYER IS HEAVEN TOUCHING EARTH
AND HUMANITY BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH DIVINITY.

WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHES EARTH

THE SEVEN DIMENSIONS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL PRAYER

COMPANION WORKBOOK

FOR INDIVIDUALS – SMALL GROUPS – LEADERSHIP TEAMS



SCRIPTURE STUDY

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

KINGDOM PRINCIPLES

LEADERSHIP INSIGHT

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

BISHOP DR. ANTHONY COLLINS

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WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHES EARTH

Companion Workbook

This Companion Workbook aims not only at helping you to understand biblical truth but also at enabling you to go through a spiritual transformation as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit, because of the authority of God's Word, and through deliberate application. Each session has been thought out so that you will progress from a stage of learning to one of living, from belief to obedience, and from personal growth to aiding others in their growth in Christ.

Our purpose is not to produce better church members but to produce mature disciples who in turn make mature disciples, and every graduate is expected to become a disciple maker.

This companion workbook is intended to be used with the book "When Heaven Touches Earth".

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"To help people know Christ deeply, walk with Him daily, and represent Him faithfully through lives transformed by the presence of God."

The CDI Learning Cycle

Learn

↓

Live

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Lead

↓

Launch

↓

Repeat

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

As I begin this journey, I come before You with gratitude for the extraordinary privilege of prayer. Thank You for Jesus Christ, my Great High Priest, who has opened the way into Your presence. Thank You that the veil has been torn, the invitation has been extended, and the throne of grace remains open. I do not come because I have earned the right to enter. I come because Jesus purchased my access through His sacrifice on the Cross.

Father, I do not want this workbook to become merely another study that I complete. I want it to become a journey that changes me.

Teach me to pray. Teach me to listen. Teach me to surrender. Teach me to wait. Teach me to trust. Teach me to worship when the answer has not yet come. Teach me to seek Your face more than Your hand and Your presence more than Your presents.

As I work through each session, take me beyond information into transformation. Do not allow me merely to learn principles about prayer. Develop within me a life of prayer. Holy Spirit, illuminate the Scriptures. Reveal areas of my heart that need correction. Expose attitudes that hinder intimacy with You. Strengthen what has become weak. Awaken what has become dormant. Heal what has been wounded. Break what needs to be broken, restore what needs to be restored, and align my heart with Your heart.

Teach me the *privilege of prayer* so that I will never neglect the access Jesus purchased. Teach me the *plan of prayer* so that heaven may touch earth through my surrendered life. Teach me the *pattern of prayer* so that Your priorities become my priorities. Teach me the *purpose of prayer* so that knowing You becomes greater than receiving something from You. Teach me the *posture of prayer* so that my heart remains humble, confident, surrendered, and dependent upon You. Teach me the *promise of prayer* so that I will trust Your heart even when I cannot trace Your hand. Teach me the *power of prayer* so that when midnight comes, I will know how to pray, praise, worship, stand, and believe. Father, make prayer more than something I do. Make prayer part of who I am.

May my home be affected because I pray. May my family be strengthened because I pray. May my church be blessed because I pray. May others find freedom because I pray. May the lost encounter Jesus because I pray. And may my own heart become increasingly familiar with Your presence because I have learned to live in continual conversation with You.

I surrender this journey to You. Speak, Lord for I am listening. Lead, Lord because I will follow. Transform me - I am willing. Let heaven touch my heart so that through my life I may be changed and even those that I encounter - all for Your glory.

In the mighty and matchless name of Jesus Christ,
Amen.

DEDICATION

This companion workbook is for every believer who wants more than information about prayer and longs for a deeper relationship with the God who invites us to enter into His presence through prayer.

It is for those who have discovered that knowing about prayer is not the same as praying, and that understanding God's presence is not the same as learning to live in His presence.

To those who are hungry for more of God; To those learning to seek His face more than His hand; To those who have prayed and received an immediate answer; To those who have prayed and are still waiting; To those who have heard God say yes; To those who have struggled to understand His no; To those who have experienced midnight seasons and are learning to worship while the chains are still attached; To those who are discovering that prayer does not always change circumstances immediately, but that time in the presence of God will inevitably change us; this workbook is dedicated to you.

May these pages become more than exercises to complete. May they become places of encounter. May Scripture deepen your understanding. May reflection reveal your heart. May spiritual formation develop your character. May obedience strengthen your walk. May worship deepen your intimacy. And may prayer become more than an activity scheduled into your day. May it become a lifestyle.

My prayer is that when you complete this workbook, you will not simply know more about prayer. You will know God more deeply. And may your life continually demonstrate this truth: *Prayer is heaven touching earth and humanity becoming familiar with divinity.*

Ad Gloriam Christi - *For the Glory of Christ*

THE BISHOP'S NOTE

There is a significant difference between learning about prayer and actually learning to pray.

We have the opportunity to study prayer. We can read books on the subject of prayer. We can go to conferences which are focused on prayer. We can listen to sermons about prayer. We can memorize the Scriptures that relate to prayer. We can indeed teach other people about prayer. And then still fail to lead a prayerful life. That is the reason why this companion workbook has been produced.

The book titled *"When Heaven Touches Earth: The Seven Dimensions of Transformational Prayer"* was written to help believers understand prayer beyond the narrow idea of simply asking God for things. Prayer is much greater than presenting requests before heaven. It invites relationship, communion, surrender, transformation, dependence, spiritual formation, and participation with God. The companion workbook aims at getting the truths from a state of understanding to one of application. The goal is not simply to go through seven sessions. The goal is transformation.

Throughout this journey, you will explore seven dimensions of transformational prayer:

The Privilege of Prayer reminds us that prayer begins with an invitation. Because of Jesus Christ, we have been given access to the Father. We do not pray to gain access to God. We pray because Jesus has already secured our access.

The Plan of Prayer shows that prayer is the point at which our human weaknesses meet God's sufficiency - when heaven comes into contact with earth and people become acquainted with divinity.

The Pattern of Prayer teaches us to reorder our priorities until God's Kingdom, God's will, and God's glory outweigh our own agendas.

The Purpose of Prayer goes beyond simply asking for God's intervention and shows us how to seek His presence. The greatest reward from prayer is not the things that God bestows upon us; it is *God Himself*.

The Posture of Prayer deals with the state of our hearts. Effective prayer is not based on eloquence or performance, but on humility, confidence, consistency, intimacy, and dependence.

The Promise of Prayer teaches us to trust God's character. Sometimes His answer is yes. Sometimes His answer is wait. Sometimes His answer is no. Spiritual maturity learns to say in every circumstance, "Father, I trust You."

Finally, **The Power of Prayer** shows us the results that occur when prayer becomes part of our everyday life. We learn to pray at midnight, to worship even though the chains are still on us, to detect spiritual opposition, to stand firm in faith, to intercede on behalf of others, and to place our trust in God for what human strength is unable to achieve.

Yet these truths will achieve very little if they are no more than words on a page. *Truth must become practice.* That is where this workbook becomes important. The various exercises included in these sessions will request that you slow down, look into your heart, study the Bible, reflect honestly, practice spiritual disciplines, make practical applications, pray deliberately, and respond obediently to what the Holy Spirit shows you. Don't go through them quickly. This is not a race to complete another workbook. Leave room for God to work.

When a question feels uncomfortable, don't avoid it. If the Bible brings to light something in your heart, don't defend it. When the Holy Spirit gives you a sense of conviction, respond positively. When God asks you to surrender, surrender quickly. When He says to wait, then wait. When He tells you to act, act. When He calls you to go deeper, then go into the deep. The aim is not perfection but formation.

At times prayer seems powerful. At other times it demands perseverance. There are moments when one has a remarkable awareness of God's presence, and ordinary days when faithfulness means keeping up the conversation, both are important.

One of the most important lessons we can learn is that spiritual habits are not developed during storms. They are revealed during storms. We must not wait for midnight to become praying people. Paul and Silas prayed at midnight because prayer was already part of who they were. *The prison did not create their prayer life. The prison revealed it.*

I want prayer to be so thoroughly incorporated into your life that when you are happy your instinct is to pray, when you are suffering your response is to pray, when facing uncertainty your reaction is to pray. Prayer should be your means in the struggle against evil. Your position when you are waiting should be one of prayer, and your way of responding to God's goodness should be worship. Prayer should be as natural to the believer as breathing.

When you start, take with you not only your Bible, a pen and this workbook but also an open heart. Take your questions with you, your disappointments, your victories, your fears, your weaknesses, your expectations, your wounds, your dreams and the areas where you need mercy. Take with you the places that call for grace. And most important of all - take yourself**.**

The throne of grace remains occupied. The invitation remains open. Mercy still flows. Grace is still available. Heaven still welcomes praying people.

I pray that at some point in the course of these sessions a basic change takes place. I pray that you no longer see prayer simply as something you have to do and instead come to regard it as something you have been invited to do, by God Himself. I also pray that by the end of this experience you will realize something even more significant: prayer has become more than just something you do. *Prayer has become part of who you are.*

Bring it into your home. Bring it into your church. Bring it into your leadership, into your relationships, and into your midnight hours. And bring it into those places where people are hurting, broken, bound, confused, and looking for hope.

Act as a praying disciple to help develop other praying disciples. Because God's people pray, surrender, listen, obey, and remain aware of His presence. Heaven is not a remote theological concept. God desires for heaven to touch earth through the invitation of prayer.

And remember: when you reach the final page, the journey has not ended. The conversation is not over. It has only begun.

+ Bishop Dr. Anthony Collins
Ad Gloriam Christi — For the Glory of Christ

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INTRODUCTION

From Understanding Prayer to Living a Life of Prayer

Prayer was never intended to be confined to a church service, a morning devotional, a desperate moment, or a list of requests.

Prayer invites us into a life with God. It is conversation. It is communion. It is dependence. It is surrender. It is worship. It is spiritual formation. It is where human weakness encounters divine sufficiency and where earthly circumstances are brought into the presence of Almighty God.

Prayer is heaven touching earth and humanity becoming familiar with divinity.

This truth is at the heart of *When Heaven Touches Earth: The Seven Dimensions of Transformational Prayer*. But understanding that truth intellectually is only the beginning. This companion workbook helps you live it.

Knowing the principles of prayer and becoming a person of prayer are different. We can know that prayer is important without praying consistently. We can believe that God answers prayer while still depending primarily upon ourselves. We can understand that God desires relationship while approaching Him only when we need something. We can quote Scriptures concerning prayer while remaining unfamiliar with the secret place. And we can study the power of prayer without ever developing the spiritual disciplines necessary to stand faithfully when midnight comes.

This workbook has been created to close that distance.

Prayer Must Move From Information to Formation

Christian discipleship is never complete when we merely understand truth. Truth must be believed. Truth must be practiced. Truth must be obeyed. Truth must become part of who we are.

Jesus did not merely call people to accumulate information about Him. He called people to follow Him. That distinction is especially important when studying prayer. Prayer cannot be mastered merely by reading about it.

Eventually, *we must pray*. We must enter God's presence. We must learn to listen. We must surrender our agendas. We must confront our motives. We must bring our fears before Him. We must learn to wait. We must forgive. We must intercede. We must worship. We must trust God when we understand His answer and when we do not. We must learn to remain faithful when heaven appears silent. We must develop a relationship with God strong enough to sustain us when circumstances become difficult. That is spiritual formation.

The goal of this workbook is therefore not simply to make you more knowledgeable about prayer. *The goal is to help you become more prayerful.*

Seven Dimensions - One Continuing Conversation

This journey will take you through the seven dimensions of transformational prayer.

The Privilege of Prayer: We begin with the extraordinary truth that prayer is possible because Jesus Christ has opened the way into God's presence. Prayer is not humanity struggling to gain God's attention. It is humanity responding to God's invitation. The Cross purchased our access. The veil has been torn. The throne of grace is open. We have been invited by the Almighty God Himself, to come.

The Plan of Prayer: We then discover why prayer exists. Prayer brings our weakness into contact with God's strength, our confusion into His wisdom, our fear into His peace, and our insufficiency into His sufficiency. Prayer teaches us one of the most important confessions of the Christian life: “Lord, I need You.” Prayer begins where self-sufficiency ends.

The Pattern of Prayer: Jesus did more than tell His disciples to pray. He taught them how to pray. The pattern He gave us rearranges our priorities. God first. Others second. Ourselves third. Prayer begins to mature when we move from:

My kingdom to Thy Kingdom. My will to Thy will. My glory to Thy glory.

The Purpose of Prayer: Why do we pray? Certainly, we bring our needs to God. Scripture invites us to do so. But prayer is greater than receiving answers. The deepest purpose of prayer is relationship with God. We seek His face more than His hand. We learn His character. We become familiar with His presence. And as we spend time with Him, something begins to happen: *We change.* The greatest evidence that prayer is working is not always a changed circumstance. Sometimes the greatest evidence is a changed person.

The Posture of Prayer: Prayer also requires us to examine the condition of our hearts. We learn to approach God with humility without losing confidence. We learn brokenness without hopelessness. We learn boldness without arrogance. We learn consistency. We learn the importance of the secret place. And we discover that although prayer is deeply personal, God never intended the Christian life to be lived in isolation. Our posture matters.

The Promise of Prayer: Prayer requires trust. Sometimes God answers immediately. Sometimes He tells us to wait. Sometimes His answer is different from what we requested. Faith must therefore become deeper than receiving our preferred outcome. Mature prayer learns to say: If You say yes, I trust You. If You tell me to wait, I trust You. If Your answer is no, I still trust You. There will be seasons when we cannot trace God's hand. In those seasons, we must learn to trust His heart.

The Power of Prayer: Finally, we discover what happens when prayer moves from an occasional activity into a lifestyle. Paul and Silas teach us how to pray at midnight. They were beaten. They were imprisoned. Their feet were placed in stocks. The doors remained locked. The chains remained attached. And they prayed and worshiped anyway. Their prison became a sanctuary. Their midnight became a worship service. Their chains could not silence their prayers. And when heaven touched that prison, the effects extended beyond Paul and Silas. This is the power of a praying life.

This Workbook Requires Participation

You will encounter Scripture study, theological reflection, personal questions, spiritual formation exercises, practical applications, declarations, guided prayers, leadership insights, challenges, worship responses, and opportunities to journal. Do not approach these simply as assignments to finish. Use them as opportunities to encounter God. Write honestly. Pray honestly. Reflect honestly. There is no benefit in giving the answer you believe a mature Christian is *supposed* to give if it does not reflect where you really are. Spiritual formation requires truthfulness.

If you are struggling, say so. If you are disappointed, admit it. If you are angry, bring that anger before God. If you are afraid, identify the fear. If you are waiting, acknowledge how hard waiting is. If your prayer life has become inconsistent, confront it. If God reveals disobedience, repent. If He reveals pride, surrender it. If He reveals unforgiveness, forgive. Suppose He reveals self-sufficiency, return to dependence. And when He reveals growth, give Him glory.

Do not use this workbook to hide from God. Use it to become more transparent before Him.

Do Not Rush the Process

Transformation rarely happens through hurried encounters with God. Permit yourself to slow down. Some questions may require more than a few minutes. Some Scriptures may need to remain before you for several days.

Some exercises may expose areas of your life that require prayer, repentance, conversation, forgiveness, or obedience. Allow that process to happen. The objective is not to finish quickly. *The objective is to finish differently.*

If you reach the final page with every blank filled in but your prayer life remains unchanged, you will have missed the purpose of this workbook. But if you finish with a greater hunger for God, a deeper dependence upon Him, a stronger commitment to prayer, a more surrendered heart, and an increased awareness of

His presence, then this journey will have accomplished what it was designed to accomplish.

From the Workbook Into Your Life

Eventually you will write on the final page. But prayer must continue. Take what you learn here into your marriage. Take it into your family. Take it into your ministry. Take it into your workplace. Take it into your leadership. Take it into your decisions. Take it into your disappointments. Take it into your victories. Take it into your waiting seasons. Take it into your midnight. And take it into the lives of others.

Become the person who prays when others panic. Become the person who worships when others complain. Become the person who seeks God's wisdom before making decisions. Become the person who intercedes when others criticize. Become the person who recognizes that people are not the enemy. Become the person who can stand in darkness because you have learned to walk with God in the light. Become the person whose first response is no longer: "What am I going to do?" but: "Father, what are You saying?" That is when prayer begins moving from an activity into a lifestyle.

The Invitation Is Still Open

As you begin, remember where this entire journey starts. Not with your discipline. Not with your ability. Not with your spiritual accomplishments. Not even with your desire to become better at prayer. *It begins with God's invitation*.

The throne of grace remains occupied. Mercy still flows. Grace is still available. The Great High Priest still intercedes. The invitation remains open. And heaven still welcomes praying people.

So, come. Come boldly. Come humbly. Come expectantly. Come honestly. Come when you are strong. Come when you are weak. Come when you understand. Come when you have questions. Come when you have something to ask. And come when you desire to be with your Father.

Then keep coming until prayer is no longer simply something you schedule. Keep coming until His presence becomes familiar. Keep coming until dependence replaces self-sufficiency. Keep coming until His Kingdom becomes more important than yours. Keep coming until His will becomes more desirable than your own. Keep coming until prayer becomes woven into the fabric of your life. This workbook invites you to begin that journey more intentionally.

Prayer is heaven touching earth and humanity becoming familiar with divinity.

Now open your heart. Open your Bible. Enter His presence. And let the conversation continue.

WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHES EARTH

Companion Workbook

The Disciples Journey

Session One - The Privilege of Prayer
Invited into the Presence of God

Prepare Your Heart

Prayer is not merely another Christian activity to complete. You have been invited into the presence of Almighty God. Take several moments and become conscious of that reality. The Creator of universes has invited you to come. The King of kings has opened His throne room. Your Heavenly Father desires fellowship with you. Before reading another word, become still before Him. Thank Jesus for making access to the Father possible. Then quietly say: **"**Father, I am here because You have invited me. Help me treasure the privilege of being in Your presence." Remain quiet for a few moments. Do not rush. You are not merely beginning another lesson. You are responding to an invitation.

Before You Begin

Consider this question: If you were personally invited to meet with the most powerful earthly leader in the world, how would you respond? You would probably prepare. You would recognize the significance of the invitation. You would understand that access had been granted to you that many others did not receive. Consider it an honor simply to have been invited. Yet every believer possesses an invitation infinitely greater than any invitation an earthly leader could extend. God has invited us into His presence.

Prayer is that invitation. We sometimes become so familiar with prayer that we forget how extraordinary it really is. We say, "I need to pray," when perhaps we

should sometimes say, “I get to pray.” Through Jesus Christ, sinful humanity has been granted access to a holy God. Before beginning this session, ask yourself: Have I been treating prayer primarily as an obligation or have I learned to treasure it as a privilege? Write your initial response: _____

Opening Scripture

Hebrews 4:14–16 - “*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God… Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*.”

Read Hebrews 4:14–16 slowly at least three times. As you read, pay particular attention to these expressions: Great High Priest; Come boldly; Throne of grace; Obtain mercy; Find grace; Time of need. These phrases reveal why prayer is such an extraordinary privilege.

The Main Point

Prayer is a purchased privilege through which Jesus Christ has given us continual access to the presence of God, where we receive mercy, find grace, experience relationship, and discover that the greatest gift of prayer is God Himself. We do not pray to earn access to God. We pray because Jesus has already secured our access to God.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

• State the reasons why prayer should be considered a privilege rather than just a religious duty.
• Describe the way in which the sacrifice of Christ removed the barrier that existed between sinful humanity and a holy God.
• Acknowledge the importance of the torn veil.

• Explain why it is important to differentiate biblical boldness from arrogance, presumption, or irreverence.
• Explain the relationship between mercy and grace.
• Understand that those who believe always have access to God through Jesus Christ.
• Come to have a greater appreciation of prayer as being a relationship rather than just making requests.

- Explain why it is important to understand the importance of Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest. Consider whether the way you pray focuses more on asking for God's hand or on seeking His face.
- Start the act of praying with more confidence, gratitude, intimacy, and expectation.

Chapter Overview

The fundamental question behind this chapter is: ***Why can we even pray at all?*** The answer begins with Jesus Christ. Humanity did not naturally possess unrestricted access to God. Sin created separation between sinful humanity and a holy God. Under the Old Testament system, access to the Holy of Holies was restricted. Only the High Priest entered, and he entered once a year with blood. The veil stood as a visible reminder: *God is holy. Man is sinful. Access is restricted.*

Then Jesus came. Jesus became our Great High Priest. Unlike the priests who preceded Him, His priesthood is eternal, His sacrifice is perfect, and His ministry never ends. He did not merely bring a sacrifice. He became the sacrifice.

At Calvary, Jesus purchased what humanity could never earn: access to God. When Jesus declared, "*It is finished*," the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. The barrier had been removed. Through Jesus Christ, believers could now approach the Father. But prayer is more than access. Prayer is relationship. God has always desired fellowship with humanity. He walked with Adam and Eve. He spoke with Abraham. He met with Moses. David desired His presence. The disciples walked with Jesus.

The story of redemption is the story of God pursuing relationship with humanity.

Therefore, the greatest reward of prayer is not healing, provision, protection, guidance, or even answered requests. The greatest reward of prayer is God Himself. Prayer brings us to a throne, but because of Jesus Christ, it has become a throne of grace. There we receive mercy for our failures and grace for our needs. And this access is unrestricted. There are no office hours. No geographical limitations. No waiting lists. Our Great High Priest continually intercedes for us. The invitation remains open. The throne remains occupied. Mercy still flows. Grace is still available. And through Jesus Christ, heaven still welcomes praying people.

Theology Corner: Christ Our Great High Priest

The priesthood of Jesus Christ is essential to understanding the privilege of prayer. Under the Old Covenant, priests stood between God and the people. The High Priest occupied a unique position because he alone entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. But that system was temporary. The priests themselves were imperfect. Their sacrifices had to be repeated. Their ministries ended when they died. Jesus Christ changed everything. Hebrews identifies Him as our Great High Priest. His priesthood does not end. His sacrifice does not need to be repeated. His blood does not temporarily cover sin. His sacrifice provides the basis for forgiveness and reconciliation with God. Jesus became both: The Priest who offered the sacrifice and The Sacrifice that was offered.

This is why Christians do not approach God based on personal worthiness. We approach God the Father through God the Son - Jesus Christ. Our confidence is not: “I have been good enough.” Our confidence is: “Jesus is enough.” This distinction protects us from two spiritual errors. The first is pride - believing we deserve access because of our righteousness. The second is condemnation - believing our failures have made God's presence permanently inaccessible. The Gospel answers both. We are not worthy enough to earn access. And our failures are not greater than Christ’s sacrifice. Therefore: We do not pray to gain access to God. We pray because Jesus has already secured our access to God.

Digging Inside Scripture

Hebrews 4:14 - “We have a Great High Priest”
- What does the word “have” communicate to you about your present relationship with Jesus? _____
- Why is it important that Jesus is described not simply as a priest, but as our Great High Priest? _____

Hebrews 4:15 - He understands our weaknesses.
Jesus is not a distant High Priest incapable of understanding human struggle.
- How should knowing that Jesus understands weakness affect the honesty of your prayers?

_____
- Are there areas you have been reluctant to bring before God because of shame, fear, or embarrassment?

_____
Hebrews 4:16 — “Let us therefore come”
Notice that Scripture does not say: Stay away. Hide. Earn your way back. Make yourself worthy first. It says: Come.
- What does this reveal about the heart of God toward His children?

_____
Matthew 27:50–51 — The Torn Veil
Read the account of the veil being torn when Jesus died.
- Why do you think it is significant that the veil was torn from top to bottom?

_____
- What spiritual reality did the torn veil announce?

_____
Exodus 33:11 — Friendship with God
Scripture describes the Lord speaking with Moses as a man speaks with his friend.
- How does this change your understanding of what prayer can become?

_____
Esther 4–5 — Approaching the King
Esther approached an earthly king uncertain whether she would be received.
- How is your approach to your Heavenly King different because of Jesus Christ?

_____

Word Study

BOLDLY - Hebrews 4:16 tells believers to: "*Come boldly unto the throne of grace*." Boldness must not be confused with arrogance. Biblical boldness does not mean approaching God casually, disrespectfully, or presumptuously. It means approaching Him with confidence, assurance, and freedom of access. Our boldness rests upon Christ. We come boldly: Not because we are worthy - but because Christ is worthy. Not because we are righteous—but because Christ is righteous. Not because we deserve access - but because Jesus purchased it.

Consider your present prayer life. Which word best describes how you normally approach God? Fearful? Hesitant? Ashamed? Formal? Confident? Expectant? Grateful? Write your answer and explain why: _____
What would change if you truly believed you were welcomed into God's presence? _____

Leadership Insight

Christian leaders must never allow familiarity with ministry to replace intimacy with God. It is possible to preach about God without spending adequate time with God. It is possible to teach prayer without being a praying person. It is possible to lead worship without personally worshiping. It is possible to shepherd others while neglecting your own fellowship with the Shepherd. This is dangerous.

Public ministry can never become a substitute for private communion. Leaders especially need the throne of grace. We need mercy. We need wisdom. We need correction. We need strength. We need discernment. We need grace. And we need God Himself. Leadership does not decrease our dependence upon God. Leadership magnifies it. *The most dangerous moment in leadership may be when our gifting allows us to function publicly beyond the depth of our private relationship with God.* Never become so busy working for God that you neglect the privilege of being with God.

Principle of the Kingdom

Access precedes assignment: Before God calls us to represent Him before people, He invites us to know Him personally. Kingdom effectiveness does not originate in activity. It originates in presence. Therefore, the secret place is not a distraction from Kingdom work. The secret place is where Kingdom work begins.

Walking it out

This week, intentionally change the language and attitude surrounding your prayer life. Instead of saying: "I have to pray." Begin saying: "I have been invited to pray." Before presenting requests, take time to acknowledge the privilege of access. Practice these four movements:

Come — consciously enter God's presence.
Thank — thank Jesus for purchasing your access.
Receive — receive mercy and grace.
Remain — spend time with God without rushing away.

At least once this week, have a prayer time in which you ask God for absolutely nothing. Worship Him. Thank Him. Listen. Remain. Enjoy His presence.

Individual Reflection

Answer honestly.

1. What is the personal significance to you of Jesus Christ having purchased your access to the Father through prayer?

_____

2. Do you tend to see prayer as a duty or a privilege?

_____

3. Why do you pause when you are going towards God?

_____

4. Do. you believe that God wants to have fellowship with you? And if you think he doesn't, then why is that?

_____

5. Are you more interested in God's hand or God's face?

_____

6. What have you learned about mercy from this chapter?

_____

7. What have you learned about grace?

_____

8. How would your prayer life change if you became convinced that God genuinely welcomes you into His presence?

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise

Practicing the Privilege of Presence: For seven consecutive days, set aside at least fifteen uninterrupted minutes to practice simply being with God. Do not begin with your prayer list. Begin with His presence.

Minutes 1–5: Remember
Meditate upon Hebrews 4:14–16. Remind yourself: Jesus is my Great High Priest. The way has been opened. I am invited. I may come boldly.

Minutes 6–10: Receive
Ask: Where do I need mercy? Then receive His mercy.
Ask: Where do I need grace? Then receive His grace.

Minutes 11–15: Remain
Ask for nothing. Remain conscious of God's presence. If your thoughts wander, quietly return your attention to Him. At the conclusion of each day, write one sentence describing what you experienced or learned.

Living the Principle

For the coming week, live according to this truth. The throne of grace is always accessible. When you become anxious - pray. When you become frustrated - pray. When you fail - pray. When you need wisdom - pray. When you experience joy - pray. When you are tempted - pray. When you are grateful - pray. When you do not know what to do - pray. Do not wait for a scheduled prayer time to acknowledge God. Develop the habit of turning toward Him throughout the day. The goal is to move prayer from an occasional activity toward continual relationship.

Weekly Declaration

Repeat this every day this week: Because of Jesus Christ, I have been invited into the presence of Almighty God. I will not allow condemnation to keep me from the throne of grace. I will not approach God based upon my worthiness, but upon the worthiness of Jesus Christ. Jesus is my Great High Priest. The way has been opened. The veil has been torn. I have been invited. I will come boldly. I will receive mercy. I will find grace. I will seek God's face more than His hand. I will treasure His presence more than His gifts. Prayer is not merely something I have to do. *Prayer is something I have been privileged to do.* And today, I accept the invitation.

Guided Prayer

Father, thank You for inviting me into Your presence. Thank You that I do not have to earn access to You. Thank You for Jesus Christ, my Great High Priest. Thank You for the Cross. Thank You for the blood that was shed for me. Thank You that the veil has been torn and the way into Your presence has been opened. Forgive me for the times I have treated prayer casually. Forgive me for approaching prayer merely as an obligation. Forgive me for seeking Your hand while neglecting Your face. Teach me to treasure Your presence. When I fail, remind me that there is mercy. When I am weak, remind me that there is grace. When I am afraid, remind me that I have been invited to come boldly. When I feel alone, remind me that Jesus is interceding for me. I do not want merely what You can give me. I

want You. Teach me to know You. Teach me to recognize Your presence. Teach me to enjoy fellowship with You. Teach me to make prayer a conversation rather than an event. Today I accept Your invitation. I come boldly to Your throne of grace, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Here is my challenge to you: Stop treating as ordinary what Jesus died to make possible. We can become so familiar with prayer that we lose our sense of wonder. Think about what has happened. The veil has been torn. The barrier has been removed. The sacrifice has been made. The Great High Priest is interceding. The Father has invited you. And the throne of grace is open. Yet an open throne room means very little to the person who never enters. Do not merely admire the privilege. Use it. Do not merely study prayer. Pray. Do not merely believe that God's presence is available. Enter His presence. For the next seven days, honor the price Jesus paid for your access by intentionally spending time with the Father every day. The invitation has been extended. Come.

From The Shepherd's Heart

There are privileges in life that we sometimes fail to appreciate until they are gone. Prayer should never become one of them. I want you to understand something deeply: God wants you in His presence. Some of us have developed an image of God that makes Him difficult to approach. We imagine Him distant, impatient, angry, or continually disappointed. But Jesus shows us the Father. Our Father is personally present. He cares about us. He knows our weaknesses. He is compassionate toward us. He disciplines us because He loves us. He is not cruel. He is not abusive. He is not absent. He has invited us to come. I have learned that the longer I walk with God, the less interested I become in prayer merely as a way of getting things. I want His presence. I want His wisdom. I want His heart. I want to know Him. And this is what I want for you. There will be times when you desperately need God to change your circumstances. Bring those needs before Him. But do not miss the greater gift. Sometimes, while we ask God to change what is around us, He uses prayer to change what is within us. Keep

coming. Keep seeking. Keep talking with Him. Keep listening. The throne of grace is still occupied. And you are still invited.

Worship Response

Set aside your requests for a few moments. Do not ask God to fix anything. Do not ask Him to provide anything. Do not ask Him to change anyone.
Worship. Begin with these words: Father, if You never gave me another thing, You have already given me Jesus. Thank Him for: The Cross. The blood of Christ. The torn veil. Mercy. Grace. Access. Adoption. His presence. His love. His faithfulness. Then express your worship in your own words. Write your personal response of worship:

Journal

What did God reveal to me about Himself in this session?

What did God reveal to me about my present prayer life?

Where do I need mercy?

Where do I need grace?

What has kept me from approaching God boldly?

What does seeking God's face rather than His hand mean for me personally?

What commitment am I making to God this week?

Prayer requests:

Answers to prayer:

What I sense the Holy Spirit emphasizing to me:

WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHES EARTH

Companion Workbook

The Disciples Journey

Session Two - The Plan of Prayer
Heaven Touches Earth

Before You Begin

One of the greatest obstacles to prayer is not unbelief. Sometimes it is self-sufficiency. We pray differently when we finally realize there are things we cannot fix. There are wounds we cannot heal. There are habits we cannot break in our own strength. There are burdens we cannot carry. There are answers we cannot discover. There are battles we cannot win. Before beginning this session, identify one situation in your life where you need something only God can provide. What am I presently facing that is reminding me of my need for God?

_____

_____

Now complete this sentence: "Jesus, I need You because…"

_____

_____

Opening Scripture

Judges 10:10–16 - "*And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord*…"

Read the entire passage slowly. As you read, look for the movement taking place in Israel: *Sin → Bondage → Suffering → Repentance → Deliverance → Peace*

Pay particular attention to Israel's cry. Their circumstances finally brought them to the place where they recognized their need for God. Their cry became the beginning of restoration.

The Main Point

Prayer is God's strategy for bringing humble humanity into the presence of divine power, where our weakness meets His sufficiency and our brokenness encounters His mercy. Prayer begins where self-sufficiency ends. When we finally say: "I cannot - but Jesus can," we have begun to understand the plan of prayer.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

- Explain why humility is basic to prayer.
- See self-sufficiency as a barrier to depending on God.
- Realize the spiritual value of being broken.
- Explain how desperation can deepen devotion.
- Recognize the importance of a praying community.
- Identify Jesus Christ as the center and object of Christian prayer.
- Explain the Trinitarian nature of Christian prayer.
- Understand how focusing upon God's greatness changes our perspective.
- Explain the "Great Exchange" that occurs through prayer.
- Recognize prayer as participation with God rather than manipulation of God.
- Identify an area of personal independence that needs to become dependence upon Christ

Chapter Overview

The plan of prayer answers an essential question: ***Why does prayer exist?*** *Prayer exists because God desires heaven to touch earth and humanity to become familiar with divinity.* Judges 10 illustrates this through Israel's recurring struggle. The nation repeatedly wandered from God and experienced the consequences of its choices. Eventually suffering brought Israel back to a place of dependence. They cried unto the Lord. Prayer began when pride ended. This same principle remains true today. Human nature values independence. We want control. We want solutions. We want to believe we can handle whatever comes. But Jesus

declared: "*Without Me you can do nothing*." Prayer confronts the illusion of self-sufficiency.

Brokenness can therefore become spiritually productive when it brings us into dependence upon God. Hannah demonstrates this truth. She brought her raw, painful, desperate heart before the Lord and poured out her soul. Brokenness was not the end of her story. It became the place where she encountered God. But prayer is not merely the recognition of human insufficiency. It is also recognition of divine sufficiency. Prayer says: I cannot - but Jesus can. I do not know - but Jesus does. I am limited - but Jesus is unlimited.

Prayer shifts our attention from the magnitude of our problem to the greatness of our God. And in that encounter, a great exchange begins. Weakness encounters strength. Fear encounters peace. Confusion encounters wisdom. Despair encounters hope. Prayer is therefore not merely requesting divine intervention. *Prayer is participation with God.*

As we remain in His presence, our desires begin aligning with His desires, our priorities with His priorities, and our will with His will. *That is the plan of prayer.*

Theology Corner

The Trinitarian Nature of Christian Prayer: Christian prayer is distinctly centered upon the Triune God. We pray*: To God the Father - In the name of Jesus Christ God the Son - Through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.* This is not simply a formula for our prayers. It describes relationship within redemption.

The Father invites us: God is not reluctant to hear His children. He desires fellowship with us. The Son grants us access: Our confidence before God is possible because of the finished work of Jesus Christ. Christian prayer must therefore remain Christ-centered. The Holy Spirit empowers us: The Holy Spirit assists us in our weakness, shapes our desires, develops spiritual sensitivity, and helps align our prayers with God's purposes.

Prayer is therefore participation in the life of God. The Christian does not pray to an undefined spiritual force. We approach the Father because the Son has

opened the way and the Holy Spirit works within us. *Jesus must remain at the center of our prayers.*

Digging Inside Scripture

Judges 10:10: Israel eventually *"cried unto the Lord."*
What had happened before they finally cried out?

What does Israel's experience teach you about the relationship between suffering and dependence?

John 15:5: Jesus said: "Without Me you can do nothing."
Why is this statement offensive to human pride?

What areas of your life are easiest for you to manage without consciously depending upon God?

Could competence sometimes become an obstacle to dependence? Explain.

---

1 Samuel 1 — Hannah
Hannah went into God's presence having with her many years of disappointment, misunderstanding, and pain. What characterized her prayer?

What can Hannah show you regarding the honest presentation of painful emotions before God?

Psalm 51:17
What promise does God make regarding a heart that is broken and repentant?

What could be the reason why being broken makes one more teachable spiritually?

Daniel 9:18
Daniel acknowledged that his appeal rested upon God's mercy rather than human righteousness. How should this truth affect your confidence in prayer?

Deuteronomy 3:24
Moses focused upon God's greatness.
What happens to your perception of problems when your awareness of God's greatness increases?

Word Study

Dependence is the recognition that we require someone or something beyond ourselves. Spiritually, dependence is not weakness. It is reality. Jesus did not say: "Without Me you can accomplish less." He said: *"Without Me you can do nothing."*

The flesh interprets dependence as weakness because human pride values autonomy. The Kingdom sees dependence differently. Dependence upon God is strength because it connects human limitation with divine sufficiency. The strongest Christian is therefore not the Christian who needs God the least.

The strongest Christian is the Christian who realizes they need God the most.

Where is God presently teaching you dependence?

Leadership Insight

Leadership can create a dangerous illusion: "I know how to handle this." Experience is valuable. Training is valuable. Wisdom is valuable. Competence is valuable. But none of these replaces dependence upon God. The longer we lead, the easier it can become to rely upon yesterday's experience rather than today's grace.

Christian leaders must remain dependent. Moses needed God. David needed God. Paul needed God. Jesus Himself continually withdrew to commune with the Father.

Effective spiritual leadership is not proving that we can function without help. It is demonstrating what God can accomplish through surrendered people. Leaders must also recognize that they need community. Sometimes our faith carries someone else. Sometimes their faith carries us. There is no spiritual maturity that makes Christian community unnecessary. *Isolation is not strength.* Healthy spiritual leaders know how to pray for others - and how to allow others to pray for them.

Principle of the Kingdom

Human insufficiency becomes an opportunity for divine sufficiency. The Kingdom does not require us to pretend we are strong when we are weak. It calls us to bring our weakness to the One who is strong. Prayer says: *My limitation does not limit God.*

When we stop pretending to possess what we do not have, we become positioned to receive what only God can give.

Walking it out

Identify one burden you have been trying to carry primarily through your own strength. Write it here:

_____

Now divide a page into two columns. On the left write: WHAT I CANNOT DO. On the right write: WHAT GOD CAN DO. Be specific. Then turn each statement into prayer. For example:

I cannot control this situation - but God can give me wisdom.
I cannot change another person's heart - but God can.
I cannot see tomorrow - but God is already there.
I cannot carry this burden indefinitely - but God can sustain me.

Practice moving deliberately from self-sufficiency to God-sufficiency.

Individual Reflection

1. What circumstances have most clearly revealed your need for God?

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2. Where are you still relying primarily upon yourself?

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3. Has brokenness ever increased your intimacy with God? Explain.

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4. When you experience pain, is your first instinct withdrawal, self-reliance, or prayer?

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5. Who are the people God has placed around you to strengthen your prayer life?

---

6. Is Jesus genuinely central to your prayers?

---

7. What burden do you need to surrender today?

Spiritual Formation Exercise

The Great Exchange: For the next seven days, bring one area of insufficiency before God each day. Sit quietly and identify what you are carrying. Then intentionally make the exchange: my problems for His praise, my concerns for His Word, my frailty for His strength, my chaos for His wisdom, my worry for His peace, my misery for His hope, and my burdens for His strength.

Do not merely recite the words. Identify something real. Bring it before God. Release it. Then ask Him to form His character and perspective within you.

At the end of each prayer time, write: "Today, heaven touched my earth by…"

Living the Principle

For one week, whenever you encounter a situation that produces anxiety, frustration, fear, or uncertainty, interrupt your normal reaction with four words: "Jesus, I need You." Let those words become a spiritual reflex. Before responding to the email. Before making the decision. Before confronting the problem. Before attempting to fix the situation. Before allowing anxiety to dominate your thoughts. Say: "Jesus, I need You." Dependence becomes transformational when it moves from theology into instinct.

Weekly Declaration

I need Jesus. I will not place my confidence in my own strength. I will not allow pride to convince me that I can live independently of God. Where I am weak, Jesus is strong. Where I am confused, Jesus is wisdom. Where I am afraid, Jesus is peace. Where I am broken, Jesus is my healer. Where I am limited, Jesus remains unlimited. I surrender self-sufficiency. I choose dependence. I will seek God in my victories and in my struggles. I will allow others to pray with me and for me. I will keep Jesus at the center of my prayers. I cannot - but Jesus can. And when my weakness encounters His sufficiency, heaven touches earth.

Guided Prayer

Father, I acknowledge today that I need You. Forgive me for the times I have allowed pride, experience, ability, or self-confidence to replace dependence upon You. I cannot do this life without You. There are things I cannot fix. There are wounds I cannot heal. There are burdens I cannot carry. There are answers I do not possess. There are battles I cannot win in my own strength. Jesus, I need You. Take my weakness and reveal Your strength. Take my confusion and give me Your wisdom. Take my fear and give me Your peace. Take my despair and give me Your hope. Take my brokenness and pour Your grace into it. Teach me to depend upon You before desperation forces me to. Teach me to seek You when life is good as faithfully as I seek You when life hurts. Help me to keep Jesus at the center of my prayers. Holy Spirit, align my desires with the heart of the Father. Let Your will

increasingly become my will. Let Your priorities become my priorities. Let Your desires become my desires. Let heaven touch earth in me.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

My challenge to you this week is simple: *Stop pretending you don't need help.* Pride tells us that admitting weakness diminishes us. Scripture teaches the opposite. Brokenness can become the doorway to grace. Hannah did not receive Samuel because she convinced everyone that she was fine. She poured out her soul before God. Israel's restoration began when they cried unto the Lord. Some of us are exhausted because we are carrying things God never expected us to carry alone. Put them down. Ask for prayer. Seek help. Cry out to God. Say the words that help destroy pride: "I need Jesus." There is no shame in needing Him. That is the Christian life.

From The Shepherd's Heart

I have learned that some of our deepest lessons about prayer are learned in places we never would have chosen. We would not choose the furnace. We would not choose disappointment. We would not choose betrayal. We would not choose uncertainty. We would not choose brokenness. But sometimes those places teach us what comfort never could: *We need God.* When everything is working, we can easily confuse God's grace with our ability. Then life introduces us to something we cannot fix. And suddenly our prayers change. They become less polished. More honest. More desperate. More dependent. Do not waste those seasons. If pain drives you toward Jesus, allow it to take you all the way into His presence. But do not remain dependent only while you are hurting. The goal is to learn something in the crisis that remains after the crisis: I need Jesus when life is difficult, and I need Him just as much when everything is going well.

Worship Response

Read aloud: *"Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty."*

Turn your attention away from your problem and toward the greatness of God. Complete these statements as worship: Lord, You are greater than…

Lord, You are able to…

Lord, I trust You with…

Lord, I praise You because…

Now spend several minutes worshiping God specifically for who He is, rather than merely for what you need Him to do.

Journal

What did God reveal to me about Himself?

Where has self-sufficiency entered my life?

What has brokenness taught me about dependence upon God?

What burden am I surrendering to God?

What do I need from my Christian community right now?

Who needs me to stand with them in prayer?

Where do I need to experience the Great Exchange?
My weakness:

His sufficiency:

What is the Holy Spirit asking me to change?

My prayer today:

What I want to remember from this session:

WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHES EARTH

Companion Workbook

The Disciples Journey

SESSION THREE: THE PATTERN OF PRAYER
Learning to Pray God's Way

Before You Begin

The disciples watched Jesus closely. They watched Him teach. They watched Him heal. They watched Him perform miracles. They watched Him confront demons. But one characteristic of His life stood behind everything He did: Jesus prayed.

His authority flowed from prayer. His wisdom flowed from prayer. His discernment flowed from prayer. His power flowed from prayer. His peace flowed from prayer. The disciples eventually recognized that the secret of His public ministry was His private communion with the Father. So, they asked: *"Lord, teach us to pray."* Before beginning this session, answer: What do I most need Jesus to teach me about prayer?

_____

_____

What usually receives the greatest attention in my prayers?

_____

_____

Opening Scripture

Matthew 6:9–13 - "*After this manner therefore pray ye*…"

Read the Lord's Prayer slowly. As you read, identify its three movements: *Upward* **-** God first. *Outward* **-** Others second. *Inward* **-** Our needs third. Now read it again and notice how Jesus places worship, God's Kingdom, and God's will before personal provision.

Ask yourself: What does this reveal about God's priorities?

_____

_____

The Main Point

The pattern of prayer teaches us that God must remain our first focus, people our second concern, and personal needs our final consideration. When our priorities align with heaven, our prayers become powerful, transformative, and pleasing to God. Prayer is not simply asking God to support our agenda. Prayer is allowing God to rearrange our agenda until it reflects His.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

- Give the reason why the Lord's Prayer should be considered a pattern rather than just a prayer to be repeated.
- Specify the upward, outward, and inward movements of prayer.
- Know the reason why God should continue to be the main emphasis of prayer.
- Know why should God be addressed as Father?
- Explain how adoption affects a person's Christian identity and prayer.
- See worship as being preparatory to making a petition.
- Know the meaning of praying, *'Thy Kingdom come'*?
- Know the reason why it is necessary to surrender when praying, "*Thy will be done*."
- See forgiveness and intercession as essential aspects of prayer in the external sense.
- Think of daily bread as a way of showing ongoing dependence.
- Tell the difference between material needs and deeper spiritual needs.

- See prayer as a form of preparation for facing temptation and for engaging in spiritual warfare.
- Check if the way you carry out your personal prayers aligns with heaven's priorities.

Chapter Overview

The Pattern of Prayer answers the question: ***How do we properly pray according to the model Jesus gave His disciples?*** The disciples recognized that everything Jesus did flowed from His relationship with the Father. Jesus's public ministry was sustained by His private communion. When Jesus taught them to pray, He did more than give them words. He gave them *a divine order.*

The Lord's Prayer begins upward. *"Our Father…" "Hallowed be Thy name." "Thy Kingdom come." "Thy will be done."* Jesus begins with God because prayer begins with relationship, worship, surrender, and alignment.

Then prayer moves outward. We become concerned about forgiveness. We pray for people. We release offenses. We intercede even for those who oppose us.

Finally, prayer moves inward. We bring our daily needs before God. We ask for forgiveness. We seek spiritual protection. We ask for deliverance from temptation and evil.

The order matters. Human nature begins with self. Jesus begins with the Father.

The mature prayer life progressively moves from:

My kingdom to Thy Kingdom
My will to Thy will
My glory to Thy glory

Prayer is therefore not simply learning what to say to God*. Prayer is learning to think like God.*

Theology Corner

The Theology of Adoption: Jesus begins: "Our Father…" That language is foundational. Through Jesus Christ, believers have not merely been forgiven. We have been adopted. Adoption gives us:

- A new identity.
- A new family.
- A new inheritance.
- A new future.
- A new relationship with God.

We no longer approach Him merely as creatures approaching their Creator. We approach Him as children approaching their Father. This changes prayer. A slave approaches authority differently than a son approaches a father. An employee speaks differently than family. The Christian does not pray hoping to convince God to love them. We pray because He already does. Prayer flows out of identity. Our confidence is not based upon how well we performed today. It rests upon our relationship with God through Jesus Christ. This does not remove reverence. It deepens it. The God who is: Sovereign – Holy – Exalted and Supreme is also our Father. That is the extraordinary tension of Christian prayer: The same person possesses both majesty and intimacy.

Digging Inside Scripture

Matthew 6:9 — "*Our Father*"
What do you think led Jesus to start with building relationships rather than making requests?

What is conveyed about your identity by referring to God as "Father"?

Matthew 6:9 — "*Hallowed be Thy name*"
What is the meaning of hallowing God's name?

What is the reason that worship should come before making requests?

Matthew 6:10 — "*Thy Kingdom come*"
What areas of your life are easiest for you to surrender to God's authority?

What areas are most difficult?

Complete this statement:
"Lord, let Your Kingdom come in my…"

Matthew 6:10 — "*Thy will be done*"
Read Luke 22:42.
What did surrender cost Jesus in Gethsemane?

Why is "*Thy will be done*" sometimes harder to pray than "*Give us*"?

Colossians 3:13 — Forgiveness
What relationship does Scripture establish between receiving forgiveness and extending forgiveness?

Is there anyone whose offense you are still carrying?

Matthew 6:11 — Daily Bread
What do you think led Jesus to tell us to ask for daily bread rather than aiming for long-term independence?

How does relying on each other every day make a relationship stronger?

Matthew 26:41 — Watch and Pray
What role does prayer play in preparing us for temptation before temptation actually comes?

Word Study

KINGDOM: Jesus taught us to pray: *"Thy Kingdom come."* The Kingdom of God refers to the reign, rule, and authority of God. Where God's authority is welcomed, His Kingdom is being expressed. Therefore, praying for the Kingdom is

more than asking God to change society. It begins personally. It is asking God to rule in my heart, in my marriage, in my family, in my decisions, in my finances, in my ambitions, and to rule in my future.

To pray, "*Thy Kingdom come*," is to surrender competing kingdoms. The deepest competition may not be between God's Kingdom and Satan's kingdom. Sometimes it is between: God's Kingdom and my kingdom. Where are you presently asking God to bless something that you have not fully surrendered to His authority?

_____

_____

Leadership Insight

The secret of Jesus' public ministry was His private communion with the Father. That should challenge every Christian leader. Leadership creates constant outward demands. People need answers. Decisions need to be made. Problems need to be solved. Messages need to be prepared. Ministry needs to be performed. But public effectiveness can never replace private communion. If Jesus needed solitary prayer, leaders certainly do.

There is another leadership lesson in the Lord's Prayer: Kingdom leaders must resist building personal kingdoms. Our calling is never: "My influence come." "My platform come." "My agenda be done." It is always: "*Thy Kingdom come*." Leadership becomes dangerous when gifted people begin asking God to advance their kingdom in His name. A healthy leader continually returns to prayer and asks: "Father, whose kingdom am I actually building?"

Principle of the Kingdom

Whatever is first in prayer will eventually become first in life. Jesus places the Father first; His holiness first; His Kingdom first; His will first. Kingdom living requires Kingdom order. When God is first, everything else can find its proper place. When God is displaced, disorder eventually follows.

Walking It Out

For the next seven days, deliberately structure one daily prayer around the pattern Jesus gave.

Upward **-** Begin with: Worship, God's character, God's holiness, God's Kingdom, God's will. Do not make a personal request yet.

Outward **-** Pray for: Family, Church, Leaders, Friends, those who are struggling, those who have offended you, those whom you find difficult to love.

Inward **-** Then bring your needs before the Father: Provision, Forgiveness, Spiritual growth, Protection, Wisdom, and Deliverance. At the end, ask: "Did my prayer reflect God's priorities or primarily mine?"

Individual Reflection

1. Why do you think Jesus placed God's glory before personal needs?

---

2. What does calling God "Father" mean to you personally?

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3. In what ways have your prayers become self-centered?

---

4. What does "Thy Kingdom come" require you to surrender?

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5. Is there someone you need to forgive?

---

6. How does praying for someone change your attitude toward them?

---

7. Do you seek God's Kingdom or mainly ask Him to bless your plans?

---

8. What spiritual need in your life is greater than your present material concerns?

Spiritual Formation Exercise

Reordering Your Prayers: For seven days, resist beginning prayer with personal needs. Instead, use this pattern:

First Five Minutes — Upward
Speak only about God, His holiness, His goodness, His faithfulness, His greatness, His Kingdom and His will.

Next Five Minutes — Outward
Pray exclusively for others. Especially include one person who has hurt, disappointed, or offended you.

Final Five Minutes — Inward
Now present your own needs. But before each request, ask: “How can this request ultimately serve God’s glory and Kingdom?”

Journal what changes in your heart as the week progresses.

Living the Principle

Select an area in your life in which your own will has been opposing God's will. Write it here:

_____

I urge you to pray every day: "*Father, I give up the result that I want, to You. Though I will ask frankly for what I desire, I prefer Your will to mine."*

Do not regard surrender as being passive. You can still ask with confidence, you can still hope and you can still believe. But surrender means: "Even if you differ from my own preference, I still place my trust in You." Keep working on that principle until "*Thy will be done*" becomes more than just a phrase. Make it become part of your posture.

Weekly Declaration

Repeat this every day this week: God will remain first in my prayers and first in my life. I am a child of God. He is my Father. I am loved. I am accepted. I have access through Jesus Christ. I will worship before I request. I will seek His Kingdom above my kingdom. I will surrender my will to His will. I will forgive because I have been forgiven. I will pray for others, including those who have hurt me. I will trust my Father for daily provision. I will seek spiritual transformation above temporary comfort. I will watch and pray so that I am prepared for temptation. My prayer will become: Not my kingdom but Thy Kingdom. Not my will but Thy will. Not my glory but Thy glory. And as my priorities align with heaven, heaven will touch earth through my life.

Guided Prayer

Father, thank You that through Jesus Christ I can call You Father. Thank You that I am not an orphan. Thank You that I am accepted, redeemed, adopted, and loved. Teach me to pray Your way. Forgive me for the times I have made prayer almost entirely about myself. Hallowed be Your name. You are holy. You are good. You are faithful. You are worthy. Let Your Kingdom come in me. Rule over my thoughts. Rule over my decisions. Rule over my relationships. Rule over my finances. Rule over my ambitions. Rule over my future. Let Your will be done. Where my desires conflict with Yours, change mine. Give me grace to forgive those who have offended me. Teach me to pray for people rather than simply complain about them. Give me what I need today. Create in me a clean heart. Renew a right spirit within me. Protect me from temptation. Sharpen my discernment. Strengthen my resolve. Keep me close to Jesus. Father, rearrange my priorities until they resemble heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

My challenge to you is to examine the order of your prayer life. Many of us do pray. But the question is: *What receives first place when we pray?* If most of our prayer time is consumed with: My problem, my needs, my money, my family, my future, and my comfort then we may be praying sincerely while still praying out of

order. Jesus did not tell us to ignore our needs. He told us where they belong. God first. Others second. Us third. Try it.

For one week, refuse to begin your prayer time with yourself. Begin with Him. His holiness. His Kingdom. His will. Then carry somebody else before the throne. Then bring your needs. You may discover something surprising: *When God changes the order of your prayers, He begins changing the order of your heart.*

From The Shepherd's Heart

I believe one of the great challenges in prayer is that we often come to God already knowing what we want Him to do. We have developed the answer. We have chosen the outcome. We have written the script. Then we ask God to bless it. *But prayer is not bringing God into agreement with me. Prayer is bringing me into agreement with God.* That is why: *"Thy will be done"* can be one of the hardest prayers we ever pray. There have been times in my life when I knew what I wanted. I knew what I thought should happen. I knew what seemed reasonable. But maturity requires us to eventually reach the place where we can say: *"Father, I trust You more than I trust my own understanding."* That is not weakness. That is faith.

Bring your desires honestly before God. He already knows them. But leave room for Him to be God. His wisdom is greater. His view is clearer. His timing is better. His Kingdom is greater than ours. Learn to trust Him enough to pray: *"Thy will be done."*

Worship Response

Do not ask God for anything during this portion of the session. Simply hallow His name. Complete each statement:
Father, You are holy because…

Father, You are worthy because…

Father, You have been faithful when…

Father, I surrender…

Father, let Your Kingdom come in…

Father, let Your will be done concerning…

Now spend several minutes worshiping without presenting requests.
Let worship enlarge your vision of God.

Journal

What did God reveal to me about Himself?

What did God reveal about the order of my present prayer life?

What does "*Our Father*" mean to me personally?

Where is God asking me to surrender my kingdom?

Where am I struggling to pray, "*Thy will be done*"?

Who do I need to forgive?

Who do I need to begin praying for consistently?

What spiritual need requires more attention than my material concerns?

How is God asking me to reorder my priorities?

What is the Holy Spirit emphasizing to me from this session?

My prayer of surrender:

What I want to remember:

WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHES EARTH

Companion Workbook

The Disciples Journey

SESSION FOUR: THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER
More Than Getting Answers

Before You Begin

Most believers have experienced prayer as a response to need. We pray when something hurts, something breaks, something is uncertain, or something is beyond our control.

There is nothing wrong with bringing needs before God. But prayer was never intended to become only a spiritual emergency hotline. The question is: Would I still pray if I had nothing urgent to ask for? Write your response:

_____

_____

Now answer: If God answered none of my current requests today, would His presence still be enough for me?

_____

_____

Opening Scripture

Psalm 145:17–19 - "*The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth*."

Read the passage slowly. Pay attention to this truth: The Lord is near. Prayer is not merely sending words toward heaven. Prayer is an invitation to nearness. Read the passage again and ask: What does this text reveal about God's willingness to draw near to those who call upon Him?

_____

The Main Point

The highest purpose of prayer is not to get something from God, but to know God so deeply that His presence transforms our character, strengthens our faith, and causes our lives to bear fruit for His glory. The greatest evidence that prayer is working is not always a changed circumstance. It is a changed person.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

- Explain why the purpose of prayer goes beyond receiving answers.
- Understand prayer as an invitation into the presence of God.
- Distinguish between knowing about God and knowing God.
- Recognize intimacy as the first purpose of prayer.
- Explain how God's presence produces transformation.
- Understand how prayer produces spiritual fruit.
- Recognize revelation of God's character as a purpose of prayer.
- Explain how knowing God more deeply diminishes fear.
- Understand how prayer strengthens faith.
- Recognize the importance of spiritual memory in building trust.
- Evaluate whether your prayer life is primarily request-centered or relationship-centered.
- Identify evidence of personal transformation resulting from time with God.

Chapter Overview

The Purpose of Prayer answers the question: ***Why do we pray?***
Many believers answer that question in terms of need. They need direction, help, healing, provision, or intervention. These are legitimate reasons to pray. But they are not the deepest reasons.

Prayer is designed to bring us closer to God. Prayer draws us into His presence. Prayer reveals His character. Prayer strengthens our faith. Prayer produces spiritual fruit. Prayer transforms us.

The first purpose of prayer is **intimacy**. There is a difference between knowing facts about God and actually knowing Him. We can know Scripture. We can know doctrine. We can know church language. And still fail to know God intimately. Prayer moves theology into experience.

The second purpose of prayer is **revelation**. Prayer helps us see who God really is. He is not distant. He is not reluctant. He is not uninterested. He is generous. He is near. He is faithful. He is loving.

The third purpose of prayer is **increased faith**. As we pray, we remember what God has done before. We notice His provision, His guidance, His protection, and His faithfulness. Faith grows as spiritual memory strengthens. And all of this produces transformation. A bitter person becomes forgiving. A fearful person becomes peaceful. A selfish person becomes generous. A proud person becomes humble. An anxious person becomes trusting. Prayer changes us. That is the deeper purpose.

Theology Corner

The Presence of God and Spiritual Transformation: The Christian life cannot be reduced to moral self-improvement. Transformation is more than trying harder. It is more than modifying behavior. It is more than controlling habits. Biblical transformation occurs as believers remain in relationship with God in His presence. Jesus said: *"He that abides in Me… bringeth forth much fruit."* A branch does not create fruit independently. It remains connected to the source of life. In the same way, spiritual fruit is produced through abiding - staying connected to the presence of God. Prayer is one of the primary ways we remain consciously connected to God. His presence produces: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control. Therefore, prayer is not simply about changing what happens to us. Prayer helps change who we are becoming. The goal is Christlikeness. The longer we remain in His presence, the more His character will become visible in us.

Digging Inside Scripture

Psalm 145:18 — "*The Lord is near*"
What does God's nearness communicate to you about His desire for relationship?

How would your prayers change if you became more conscious that God is near?

Philippians 3:10 — "*That I may know Him*"
What is the difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Christ?

Where do you see evidence of information without intimacy in your spiritual life?

Exodus 33:18 — "*Show me Your glory*"
Moses had already seen extraordinary miracles.
Why do you think he still wanted more of God Himself?

What does this reveal about spiritual maturity?

John 14:23
What does Jesus promise concerning fellowship with those who love Him?

How should this affect your understanding of God's desire to dwell with His people?

John 15
What does abiding teach you about how spiritual fruit develops?

Matthew 7:11
What does the phrase *"how much more"* reveal about God's heart?

Where do you still underestimate God's goodness?

Hebrews 11:6
Why is faith so important in our relationship with God?

How has prayer strengthened your faith through remembrance?

Word Study

ABIDE: To abide means: to remain, to continue, to dwell, to stay connected. Jesus teaches that spiritual fruit comes through abiding. This means the Christian life is not sustained merely by occasional encounters with God. Fruitfulness grows through continual relationship.

Prayer helps us remain aware of His presence. Prayer keeps the heart tender. Prayer keeps the mind focused. Prayer keeps the spirit receptive. Prayer helps turn moments with God into a life with God. Ask yourself: Am I visiting God occasionally or am I learning to abide with Him continually? Write your response:

_____

_____

Leadership Insight

Leaders are especially vulnerable to confusing activity with intimacy. It is possible to be busy doing things for God while slowly becoming distant from God. Martha served. Mary sat. Service was not wrong. But Jesus said Mary had chosen the better portion. This is a warning to every leader. Ministry activity can never replace the presence of God. Sermon preparation is not the same as prayer. Church administration is not the same as prayer. Leadership meetings are not the same as prayer. Serving people is not the same as being with Jesus. Healthy leaders minister *from the place of God's presence*, not simply from preparation. *The leader who neglects intimacy eventually begins giving others what they remember about God instead of what they are presently receiving from God.* Never allow performance to replace presence.

Principle of the Kingdom

Presence precedes transformation. We are not transformed merely by getting more information. Transformation occurs through relationship with the King. The closer we walk with Him, the more His character will become visible in us. Therefore*: The goal of prayer is not simply to get God to change what is around us, but to allow God to change what is within us.*

Walking it out

For the next seven days, begin each prayer time with this question: "Father, what do You want to reveal about Yourself to me today?" Do not begin with your request list. Spend time asking God to reveal: His character, His heart, His wisdom, His faithfulness, and His love. At the end of each prayer time, write one sentence beginning: "Today I learned that God is…"

At the end of the week, review all seven statements. Look for patterns.
What is God teaching you about Himself?

Individual Reflection

1. Why do you pray?
2. Have your prayers become more about requests than relationship?
3. What evidence of transformation can you identify in your life?
4. What aspect of God's character has prayer helped you understand more deeply?
5. In what area do you still underestimate God?
6. How has prayer strengthened your faith?
7. What spiritual fruit is God presently developing in you?
8. Are you seeking God's hand more than His face?

Spiritual Formation Exercise

Seeking His Face: Set aside one prayer period this week in which you intentionally ask God for nothing. Do not pray for provision. Do not pray for healing. Do not pray for solutions. Do not pray for circumstances to change. Instead: Worship Him. Thank Him.

Read a Psalm slowly. Meditate upon His character. Sit quietly in His presence. Then write: *What did I discover about God when I was not asking Him for anything?*

_____

_____

Repeat this exercise at least twice during the week.

Living the Principle

Choose one area where you are currently asking God to change your circumstances. Write it here:

_____

Now ask a second question: "Father, how do You want to change me through this circumstance?"

_____

Every day this week, continue praying for the situation. But also pray: *"Lord, do not allow me to miss the transformation You want to accomplish in me while I am waiting for the answer."* Look for changes in your attitude, your patience, your trust, your compassion, your humility, and your faith.

Weekly Declaration

Repeat this every day this week: I will seek God's face more than His hand. I will not reduce prayer to requests. I will pursue intimacy. I will choose presence over performance. I will know God, not merely know about Him. His presence will transform me. His character will reshape my character. His love will drive out fear. His faithfulness will strengthen my faith. His Spirit will produce fruit in my

life. I will remember what God has done. I will trust Him for what He will do. I will not measure the effectiveness of prayer only by changed circumstances. I will look for changed character. I am becoming more familiar with divinity, and by His grace I am becoming more like Jesus.

Guided Prayer

Father, I thank You that prayer is more than asking. Thank You that You invite me to know You. Forgive me for the times I have treated prayer like an emergency hotline. Forgive me for seeking Your hand more than Your face. I want You. I want Your presence. I want to know Your heart. Reveal Your character to me. Show me Your goodness. Show me Your faithfulness. Show me Your mercy. Show me Your love. Teach me to abide in You. Transform me in Your presence. Where I am bitter, make me forgiving. Where I am fearful, make me peaceful. Where I am selfish, make me generous. Where I am proud, make me humble. Where I am anxious, teach me to trust. Strengthen my faith. Help me remember every way You have already been faithful. Produce good spiritual fruit in my life. Let my life become evidence that I have spent time with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

My challenge to you this week is this: Stop measuring prayer only by answers. We often judge prayer by whether the situation changed. Did the door open? Did the money come? Did the person recover? Did the problem disappear? Those things matter. But they are not the only evidence that prayer works. Ask another question: What happened to me while I was praying? Did I become more patient? More trusting? More compassionate? More forgiving? More surrendered? More aware of God? If God changes the circumstance but never changes you, you have received a blessing but missed a deeper purpose. Do not miss what God wants to do *in you* while you are waiting for Him to work around you.

From The Shepherd's Heart

There comes a point in our walk with God when His presence must become more valuable than His presents. Most of us begin our prayer lives because we need something. And that is okay. God knows that. He invites us to ask. But He loves us too much to leave our relationship there. Eventually, He begins teaching us to want Him. Moses had seen miracles that most people could only dream about. Yet Moses said: *"Show me Your glory."* That is maturity. I want us to become people who can say: "Lord, I appreciate everything You have done for me. But more than what You can give me, I want You." There is a depth of peace that comes when God Himself becomes enough. There is a freedom that comes when our relationship with Him is no longer dependent upon whether He answered the last request the way we wanted. Keep seeking Him. Seek not just answers, not just blessings, not just miracles. Seek Him.

Worship Response

Spend several minutes responding to God simply because of who He is.
Complete these statements: God, I love You because…

_____

God, You have shown Yourself faithful when…

_____

God, Your character is beautiful because…

_____

God, I want to know You more in the area of…

_____

God, I surrender my need to understand…

_____

Now worship without asking for anything. Let His presence become the reward.

Journal

What did God reveal to me about Himself?

_____

_____

Why do I really pray?

Where have my prayers become too request-centered?

What aspect of God's character am I learning to trust more deeply?

Where do I still underestimate God?

What spiritual fruit is becoming more visible in my life?

What spiritual fruit still needs development?

What circumstance am I asking God to change?

How might God be using that circumstance to change me?

What has God done before that I need to remember today?

What is the Holy Spirit emphasizing from this session?

My prayer today:

What I want to remember:

WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHES EARTH

Companion Workbook

The Disciples Journey

SESSION FIVE: THE POSTURE OF PRAYER
Positioning the Heart Before God

Before You Begin

It is possible to say the right words while having the wrong heart. It is possible to sound spiritual while remaining proud. It is possible to pray publicly while neglecting private prayer. It is possible to appear strong while refusing to let others help carry our burdens. Jesus repeatedly demonstrated that God looks beyond words. The tax collector prayed only: *"God, be merciful to me, a sinner."* His prayer was simple. But his heart was properly positioned. Before beginning this session, answer: Which matters more in prayer: impressive words or a surrendered heart? Why?

_____

_____

Now ask yourself: Which of the five postures of prayer presently needs the greatest development in me? Contrite? Confident? Constant? Closet? Community?

_____

_____

Opening Scripture

1 Kings 8:54–61 - *"And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying… he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven."*

Read the passage slowly. Notice both Solomon's physical posture and the condition of heart he calls God's people to maintain. Then consider:

What does physical posture sometimes reveal about spiritual posture?

The Main Point

The posture of our hearts in prayer determines the depth of our fellowship with God. When our hearts become contrite, confident, constant, committed to the closet, and connected in community, we position ourselves to experience the transforming power of God's presence. God is not looking for perfect words. He is looking for surrendered hearts.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

- Describe the reason why it is more important to have the correct heart posture than to be eloquent in prayer.
- State the five essential postures of prayer.
- Understand how brokenness, surrender, and restoration are related.
- Distinguish humility from timidity.
- Understand the reason one can have confidence in prayer should be based on Jesus Christ and not on one's own worthiness.
- See prayer as a way of life rather than as something you only do occasionally.
- Explain why it is important to understand the value of private prayer and the secret place.
- Explain why Christian prayer needs the involvement of the community.
- Accurately look for evidence of pride, fear, inconsistency, isolation, or the desire to perform in your personal prayer life.
- Choose one position for intentional spiritual development this coming week.

Chapter Overview

The Posture of Prayer answers the question: ***How should we approach God?*** Prayer is not merely the arrangement of correct words. God looks at the heart. The Pharisee could speak impressively while remaining proud. The tax collector could speak simply while standing broken before God. The difference was posture. This chapter identifies five essential postures.

Contrite: Prayer begins with brokenness and humility. Brokenness is not weakness. Brokenness is honesty. It acknowledges: "I need God." A broken heart does not defend sin, blame others, or hide behind excuses. It repents.

Confident: Brokenness must be balanced with confidence. Humility does not mean apprehension. Because of Jesus Christ, believers have bold access to the throne of grace. Our confidence rests not in our righteousness, but in His.

Constant: Prayer must become more than something we occasionally do. It must become part of who we are. The mature believer moves from doing prayer toward being a praying person.

Closet: God desires private, secret, personal fellowship with us. The secret place protects the believer from performance. Public strength is developed through private communion.

Community: The Christian life is personal, but it was never intended to be private. We pray with others. We pray for others. And we allow others to pray for us.

Together, these five postures position the believer for deeper fellowship with God.

Theology Corner

Brokenness, Grace, and Restoration: Brokenness is often misunderstood. Biblical brokenness does not mean worthlessness. It does not mean self-hatred. It does not mean spiritual defeat. Brokenness is the end of self-defense before God. David illustrates this clearly. After his sin with Bathsheba, he could have: Denied –

Defended – Blamed - Excused. Instead, he repented. From that brokenness came the prayer: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God."* Brokenness positioned David for restoration. This chapter expresses an important spiritual principle: *In the economy of God, brokenness comes before surrender, and surrender comes before restoration, promotion, and resurrection.*

Why? Because grace flows most freely where pride has been surrendered. Broken people understand dependence. Broken people remain teachable. Broken people know they need God. The issue is not whether life will break us. The deeper issue is: What will our brokenness produce? Will it produce bitterness or surrender; Distance or dependence; Pride or grace?

Digging Inside Scripture

Psalm 51:17 — The Contrite Heart
What does God say He will not despise?

Why do you think brokenness creates greater openness to God?

Psalm 51:10 — David's Prayer
David prayed: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God."*
What does this reveal about genuine repentance?

Where do you need God to create something new within you?

Hebrews 4:15–16 — Confidence
What is the basis of our boldness before God?

What is the difference between confidence and arrogance?

Psalm 55:17 — Constant Prayer
David prayed evening, morning, and noon.
What does this reveal about the place prayer held in his life?

Is prayer currently a rhythm of your life or primarily a response to crisis?

Matthew 6:6 — The Closet
What is there for Jesus to gain by stressing private prayer?

What hazards may arise when public spirituality goes beyond private intimacy?

Exodus 17 — Community
What occurred when Moses grew tired?

What can we learn from the support given by Aaron and Hur regarding spiritual community?

Acts 12 — The Praying Church
What was the church doing while Peter was imprisoned?

What does Peter's deliverance teach you about corporate prayer?

Word Study

CONTRITE: To be contrite is to possess a heart that has been humbled, broken, and made tender before God. Contrition is not despair. It is responsiveness. A contrite person does not say: "I have done nothing wrong." A contrite person says: "Lord, search me." A contrite person does not justify disobedience. They surrender it. A contrite heart remains teachable. A proud heart resists correction. Ask yourself: When God confronts me, do I defend myself or do I become teachable?

Complete this sentence: "A bowed heart before God looks like…"

Leadership Insight

Leadership magnifies the importance of posture. Gifted leaders can sometimes function publicly while becoming unhealthy privately. This is dangerous. A leader must remain: *Contrite enough to receive correction. Confident enough to obey God despite human opposition. Constant enough to maintain fellowship with God under pressure. Committed enough to the closet that public ministry does not replace private intimacy. Connected enough to community to admit when help is needed.*

No leader is beyond the need for support. Moses needed Aaron and Hur. Peter needed the praying church. Paul repeatedly requested prayer. Strong leadership is not demonstrated by never needing help. Strong leadership recognizes when God intends to provide strength through other people. And perhaps most importantly: *Public gifting must never outgrow private character.* Power without prayer becomes performance. Influence without intimacy becomes dangerous.

Principle of the Kingdom

Those who bow before God can stand courageously before people. Humility before God does produces courage before men. When God's approval becomes sufficient, human approval loses its control. A surrendered believer becomes difficult to intimidate.

Walking it out

Review the five postures:

Contrite **-** Am I humble and teachable?
Confident - Do I approach God based upon Christ or condemnation?
Constant - Is prayer becoming part of my lifestyle?
Closet - Do I have a healthy private prayer life?
Community - Do I allow others to carry burdens with me?

Rate yourself from 1 to 5 in each area.

Contrite: _____
Confident: _____
Constant: _____
Closet: _____
Community: _____

Now identify your lowest score. That becomes your primary area of spiritual attention this week. Write one practical step you will take:

_____

_____

Individual Reflection

1. What area of your life still needs brokenness and repentance?

_____

2. Do you approach God with confidence or condemnation?

_____

3. What is your confidence in prayer based upon?

_____

4. Is prayer an occasional activity or an increasing lifestyle?

_____

5. How healthy is your secret prayer life?

_____

6. Who has strengthened you through prayer?

_____

7. Whom is God calling you to intercede for?

_____

8. Which of the five postures needs the most development in your life?

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise

The Five-Posture Examination: For the next five days, focus on one posture each day.

Day One — Contrite
Pray Psalm 51:10 and Psalm 51:17.
Ask: "Lord, where am I resisting Your correction?"
Write what God reveals. _____

Day Two — Confident
Read Hebrews 4:15–16.
Approach God intentionally on the basis of Christ's righteousness rather than your performance.

Day Three — Constant
Set three intentional prayer pauses:
Morning.
Midday.
Evening.
At each pause, simply reconnect consciously with God.

Day Four — Closet
Spend at least thirty uninterrupted minutes alone with God. No audience. No performance. No ministry preparation. Just fellowship.

Day Five — Community
Contact another believer. Ask how you can pray for them. Then share one genuine need of your own and allow them to pray for you. At the end of the five days, answer: Which posture produced the greatest conviction or growth?

_____

_____

Living the Principle

Choose one expression to use this week: “Lord Jesus, keep me humble before You.” “Jesus, You call me boldly to Your throne of grace.” “My private life is important to God.” “I don’t have to carry this burden alone.” Write your chosen phrase:

_____

Go on doing so all during the week. Let it serve as a deliberate reminder of the posture that God is forming in you.

Weekly Declaration

Repeat this every day this week: I will properly position my heart before God. I will remain contrite. I will be humble, teachable, and surrendered. I will come confidently. My confidence is not in my righteousness. My confidence is in Jesus Christ. I will become constant. Prayer will move from activity to identity. I will protect the closet. My public life will never replace my private fellowship with God. I will remain connected to community. I will pray with others. I will pray for others. I will allow others to pray for me. I will bow before God so that I can stand courageously before people. My heart belongs to God, and I choose the posture that welcomes deeper fellowship with Him.

Guided Prayer

Father, search my heart. I do not want merely to say the right words. I want my heart to be rightly positioned before You. Make me contrite. Break pride. Remove self-sufficiency. Keep me teachable. Where I have sinned, give me courage to repent quickly. Create in me a clean heart. Make me confident. Remind me that my access is based upon Jesus Christ. Deliver me from condemnation. Teach me to approach Your throne boldly. Make me constant. Let prayer become part of who I am. Teach me to remain conscious of Your presence throughout the day. Protect my closet. Do not allow public activity to replace private intimacy. Develop my character in secret. And keep me connected to community. Teach me to ask for help. Teach me to carry others. Teach me to allow others to carry me. Make me broken enough to repent, bold enough to

believe, faithful enough to persevere, private enough to know You, and connected enough to strengthen others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

My challenge to you is to stop evaluating your prayer life primarily by how you sound. Ask instead: How is my heart positioned? You can know Scripture and still be proud. You can pray publicly and neglect God privately. You can believe God is powerful while approaching Him as though you expect rejection. You can encourage everyone else to receive prayer, while refusing to admit that you need prayer yourself. God wants more than words. He wants you. He wants your heart, your surrender, your dependence, your confidence, your consistency, your intimacy, and your connection. This week, do not try to impress God. Position yourself before Him.

From The Shepherd's Heart

There is something powerful about a person who has learned how to kneel before God. I am not speaking only about physical kneeling. I am speaking about the heart. A heart that says: "You are God. I am not." "Your wisdom is greater than mine." "Your will is better than mine." "I surrender." That posture does not make us weak. It makes us strong. Some of the strongest people I know are people who understand how desperately they need God. And some of the most dangerous people to the kingdom of darkness are believers who are both humble before God and confident in Christ. They do not need human applause. They do not crumble under every criticism. They know whose they are. Keep your heart bowed. Keep your confidence high. Keep your prayers constant. Protect the secret place. Stay connected to people who know how to pray. That is how strong Christians remain strong.

Worship Response

Take several moments to worship through surrender. Complete these statements:

Lord, I bow my heart before You concerning…

Lord, I surrender my need to control…

Lord, thank You that because of Jesus I can confidently approach You with…

Lord, I want my secret life with You to become…

Lord, thank You for the people who have prayed for me, especially…

Now worship God without trying to impress Him. Be honest, humble, and present.

Journal

What did God reveal to me about the posture of my heart?

Where do I need greater brokenness?

Where has pride hindered my prayer life?

Do I approach God confidently? Why or why not?

How can prayer become more constant in my daily life?

What needs to change in my private prayer life?

Who has helped carry me spiritually?

Who is God calling me to help carry?

Which posture is God emphasizing most strongly?

What is the Holy Spirit asking me to do this week?

My prayer today:

What I want to remember:

WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHES EARTH

Companion Workbook

The Disciples Journey

SESSION SIX: THE PROMISE OF PRAYER
How to Pray with Confidence

Before You Begin

Every sincere believer eventually encounters difficult questions about prayer. Why was this prayer answered immediately? Why has that prayer been delayed? Why did God open one door and close another? Why did one person experience healing while another did not? Why does God sometimes appear silent? These questions are not necessarily evidence of weak faith. Biblical men and women wrestled with the same questions. But Scripture repeatedly returns us to an unchanging truth: *God hears. God responds. God can be trusted.* Before beginning this session, identify one prayer whose answer you have struggled to understand.

_____

_____

Now complete this statement honestly: "The answer I most want God to give me is…"

_____

Then complete: "But even if God answers differently, I want to learn to…"

_____

_____

Opening Scripture

Proverbs 15:8 - "*The prayer of the upright is His delight*."
Read the verse several times.

Notice the word: Delight. God does not merely tolerate the prayers of His people. He delights in relationship with those whose hearts are rightly positioned toward Him. Now read Psalm 34:4, John 15:7, and 1 John 1:9.
Ask: What do these passages teach me about the relationship between God's promises and my response to Him?

_____

_____

The Main Point

The promise of prayer is not that God always gives us what we want, but that He always hears His children and responds according to His glory, His wisdom, His love, and our ultimate spiritual good. Faith does not require God to agree with us. Faith trusts God enough to agree with Him.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

- Give the reason why those who believe can pray with confidence.
- Understand the biblical principle of *'If - Then'*.
- Understand the difference between the conditions of a covenant and the efforts to win God's favor.
- Give the reason why a relationship must come before making requests.
- Understand abiding to mean having a continuous fellowship with Christ.
- Realize the connection between obedience and confidence when praying.
- Assess the reasons for personal prayer requests.
- Distinguish faith from presumption.
- Describe the three responses of God that are stressed in this chapter: yes, wait, and no.
- Understand that delaying does not mean denying.
- See that God's "No" can be a way of showing love and offering protection.

- Explain why it is important to become more confident in the character of God even though His answers are difficult to understand.

Chapter Overview

The Promise of Prayer answers the question: ***Why can we pray confidently?*** Scripture teaches that God hears and responds to His children. But prayer is not a formula through which we manipulate God. Prayer is a covenant relationship. Throughout Scripture we find an important principle: *If—Then.* If we respond to God according to His Word, then we can trust the promises He has attached to that response. This is not earning God's favor. It is aligning ourselves with His purposes.

The chapter identifies three primary conditions:

If We Are in Christ: Relationship comes before requests. Prayer flows from identity. We are forgiven, redeemed, accepted, adopted, made new, and brought near. As we abide in Christ, our desires increasingly begin to resemble His. Prayer stops being an attempt to get God to agree with us and becomes the process through which we learn to agree with God.

If We Are Obedient: Obedience and intimacy are connected. Obedience is not legalism. It is love. It says: "I trust Your wisdom." "I accept Your authority." "I believe Your ways are higher than mine." A surrendered conscience produces greater confidence before God.

If We Ask with Correct Motives: God examines why we want what we want. The highest motive in prayer is God's glory. Mature believers increasingly ask: Will this honor God? Will this advance His Kingdom? Will this glorify Christ?

When we are properly positioned, we can trust that: *God hears. God helps. God heals.* But His answers do not always look the same. Sometimes the answer is: *Yes—right now*. Sometimes the answer is: *Yes—but not right now.* Sometimes the answer is: *No.* Mature faith eventually reaches the place where it can say: "Whatever Your answer, Father, I trust You."

Theology Corner

Divine Sovereignty and Answered Prayer: Prayer presents Christians with an important theological truth. *God genuinely invites us to ask, while retaining perfect sovereignty over the answer.* These truths are not contradictory. God hears our requests. Prayer matters. Prayer changes circumstances. God intervenes. Yet God possesses something we do not: Perfect knowledge. He knows the beginning from the end. He understands every consequence. He sees tomorrow while we see today. He knows how one answered request will affect countless future circumstances. Therefore, God's wisdom must govern God's answers. This means unanswered prayer is not necessarily unheard prayer. A delay does not mean God is indifferent. A "No" does not mean God is cruel. Sometimes love gives. Sometimes love waits. Sometimes love refuses. Faith trusts that the Father knows what is best for us. Prayer therefore requires both: Bold asking and humble surrender. Jesus Himself demonstrated this in Gethsemane. He expressed His desire honestly. Yet He surrendered completely. Mature prayer does the same.

Digging Inside Scripture

John 15:7 — Abiding and Asking
Jesus connects abiding with asking. What does it mean to abide in Christ?

Why would continual fellowship with Christ affect what we ask for?

---

1 John 2:5 — Obedience and Love
How does obedience demonstrate love for God?

Is there an area where you are asking God for blessing while resisting His instruction?

John 14:15
Jesus said: "*If you love Me, keep My commandments."*
How does this challenge the idea that obedience is merely legalism?

James 4 — Asking Amiss
Why do motives matter to God?

Choose one significant prayer request and ask: Why do I really want this?

John 14:13 — God's Glory
How would your prayers change if God's glory became the highest test of every request?

---

2 Corinthians 12:9 — Paul's "No"
Paul wanted his thorn removed. God gave grace instead.
Was Paul's prayer unanswered or answered differently?

What might God give us instead of removing a difficult circumstance?

Psalm 34:4 — God Hears
What confidence comes from knowing that no sincere cry disappears into emptiness?

Word Study

ABIDE: Jesus said: *"Abide in Me."* To abide means: To remain, to continue, to dwell. To make one's home. This is more than occasional contact. You can visit somewhere without living there. Jesus calls believers to make their home in Him. Abiding means that relationship with Christ becomes the environment in which we live. We seek His wisdom. We hear His Word. We submit to His correction. We enjoy His presence. We depend upon His strength. And as we abide, our desires change. We increasingly want what He wants. This is why abiding affects prayer. Prayer becomes powerful when our hearts become increasingly aligned with His heart. Ask yourself: Am I visiting Jesus—or making my home with Him?

Leadership Insight

Leaders must be especially careful not to confuse confidence with entitlement. Spiritual authority does not mean God is obligated to approve every leader's desire. Positions and titles do not guarantee correct motives. Experience does not make surrender unnecessary. In fact, the greater our influence becomes, the more carefully our motives should be examined. Before asking God to enlarge something, leaders should ask: Why do I want it enlarged? Before asking for greater influence: Whose glory am I seeking? Before asking God to open a door: Will walking through it advance His Kingdom or merely my reputation? Kingdom leadership requires the maturity to accept both open and closed doors. Sometimes God's greatest protection is a door He refuses to open. The mature leader learns: I do not need every opportunity. I need God's opportunity.

Principle of the Kingdom

God's promises invite confidence. God's sovereignty requires trust. We can ask boldly because He is our Father. We can surrender peacefully because He is God. Confidence says: **"**God can." Trust says: "God knows whether He should." Mature faith requires both.

Walking it out

Choose one significant prayer request. Write it here:

_____

Now examine it through three questions.
Relationship
Is this request coming from a heart that is rooted in Christ?

_____

Obedience
Is there anything I am refusing to do which God has already instructed me to do?

_____

Motive
Why do I want this?

Now ask: How could this prayer honor God and promote His Kingdom?

Finally write: “Father, this is what I want. But I surrender both the request and the outcome to Your wisdom.” Sign below as an intentional act of surrender:

Individual Reflection

1. What does it mean for you to truly abide in Christ?
2. Is there an area of disobedience affecting your confidence in prayer?
3. Why do motives matter in prayer?
4. What prayer request most needs a motive check?
5. Have you ever received a “No” that later appeared to be God's protection?
6. Which answer is hardest for you to accept: yes, wait, or no?
7. How does knowing that God hears every prayer strengthen you?
8. What request do you need to surrender completely to God's wisdom?

Spiritual Formation Exercise

Yes — Wait — No

For the next seven days, bring the same significant request before God. Each day pray: "Father, I am asking You for _____. I believe You hear me. I trust You to answer according to Your wisdom." Then deliberately pray through all three possibilities:

If Your Answer Is Yes - "I will thank You and use the answer for Your glory."
If Your Answer Is Wait - "I will trust Your timing and allow waiting to develop my character."
If Your Answer Is No - "I will trust that Your wisdom sees what mine cannot."

At the end of each prayer time, remain silent before God for several minutes. The purpose is not to discover the answer immediately. The purpose is to develop trust before the answer arrives.

Living the Principle

Whenever anxiety about an unanswered prayer surfaces this week, say: "God has heard me. Now I will trust Him." Do not repeatedly interpret delay as rejection. Do not interpret silence as absence. Do not allow uncertainty to rewrite God's character. Return to what you know: God is good. God is wise. God loves you. God hears. God sees further than you do. God knows what you do not. God's character remains trustworthy even when His decisions remain mysterious.

Weekly Declaration

Repeat this every day this week: God hears me. I am in Christ. I am forgiven, I am redeemed, I am accepted, and I am adopted. I will remain in Jesus. I will live in obedience. I will seek God's glory more than my own comfort. I will ask boldly without being presumptuous. I will believe without trying to control God, and if He says yes, I will praise Him. If He says wait, I will trust Him, and if He says no, I will still trust Him. Delay is not always a refusal, and a closed door may be a form

of protection. Faith means trusting God's nature even when I do not understand His decisions. I have decided to trust Him.

Guided Prayer

Father, thank You that You hear me. Thank You that prayer does not disappear into some great void. Thank You that through Jesus Christ I have relationship with You. Teach me to abide. Make Your home in me as I make my home in You. Reveal any area of disobedience in my life. Where I am resisting Your Word, give me grace to surrender. Purify my motives. Remove selfish ambition. Remove pride. Remove the desire for recognition. Teach me to desire Your glory above my comfort. Father, You know the requests I carry. You know what I want. You know what I fear. You know what I hope will happen. I bring all of it to You. If Your answer is yes, I will thank You. If Your answer is wait, strengthen me. If Your answer is no, give me grace to trust You. Protect me from presumption. Strengthen genuine faith. I believe You are good. I believe You are wise. I believe You love me. I believe You see further than I can. So, I surrender my requests to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Here is my challenge to you: *Stop requiring God to prove His goodness by giving you the answer you want.* That is not faith. Faith trusts His goodness *before* the answer. Some of us are peaceful when God says yes. But anxious when He says wait. And offended when He says no. That means our peace may have been resting in the answer rather than in God. Mature faith says: "Father, I have told You what I want. Now I trust You with what is best." Bring your request. Bring it boldly. Believe God can do exceedingly abundantly. But then leave room for God to remain God. His wisdom is greater than yours. And sometimes the answer you would choose is not the answer love would choose.

From The Shepherd's Heart

One of the hardest lessons in prayer is learning that God's love cannot be measured by how often He says yes. Every good parent understands this. Sometimes love says yes. Sometimes love says wait. And sometimes love has to say no. The child may not understand. The child sees what they want. The parent sees what the child cannot see. Our Father sees infinitely further than we do. There have been things I have asked God for that I was convinced I needed. There have been doors I wanted opened. Circumstances I wanted changed. Answers I wanted immediately. But time has a way of revealing that God knew something I did not. So, keep praying, keep believing, keep asking. But keep surrendering. There is tremendous peace when we can finally say: "Father, I trust Your answer because I trust Your heart."

Worship Response

For this portion, do not ask God to change His answer. Worship Him regardless of the answer. Complete these statements:

Father, if You say yes, I will…

_____

Father, if You say wait, I will…

_____

Father, if You say no, I will…

_____

I trust Your wisdom because…

_____

I trust Your love because…

_____

I surrender this request to You:

_____

Now worship God as the perfect Father whose character does not change with circumstances.

Journal

What did God reveal to me about His character?

What does abiding in Christ mean for my prayer life?

Is there an area of disobedience I need to surrender?

What request needs a motive check?

Is my highest motive God's glory or my comfort?

Which answer is hardest for me to receive - yes, wait, or no? Why?

Where might waiting be preparing me?

Where might God's “No” actually be protecting me?

What request am I surrendering completely to God?

What would trusting God before receiving the answer look like?

What is the Holy Spirit emphasizing to me?

My prayer of surrender:

What I want to remember:

WHEN HEAVEN TOUCHES EARTH

Companion Workbook

The Disciples Journey

SESSION SEVEN: THE POWER OF PRAYER
When Prayer Changes Everything

Before You Begin

Paul and Silas did not begin praying because they suddenly found themselves in prison. They were already praying people. They prayed before the prison. They prayed in the prison. And because prayer had become part of who they were, suffering did not silence their relationship with God. Their crisis revealed their spiritual habits. Before beginning this session, answer honestly: If a serious crisis occurred today, what would my present spiritual habits reveal about me?

_____

_____

Do I naturally pray when trouble comes or do I panic first and pray later?

_____

_____

What "midnight" circumstance am I currently facing?

_____

_____

Opening Scripture

Acts 16:16–26 - "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."

Read the entire passage slowly. As you read, notice the progression. They were going to prayer. Opposition appeared. Deception was confronted. Persecution increased. They were beaten. They were imprisoned. They prayed. They worshiped. God moved. The prison shook. The doors opened. The chains fell.

What then does this passage reveal to me about prayer, opposition, worship, and divine intervention?

_____

_____

The Main Point

The power of prayer does not come about as a result of human effort but arises from a continuous relationship with God. This relationship is about us being in His presence. The more of His presence we experience, the more power we have. His presence sets His power in motion in our lives. His power breaks the chains, transforms hearts, and alters circumstances, all for His glory. We are not powerful. Prayer is powerful. Prayer has power because it puts us in His presence and God has all power.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

- Make it clear that prayer should be something lived throughout one's life rather than something resorted to only in emergencies.
- Explain the connection between prayer and spiritual warfare.
- Understand that facing spiritual opposition does not always mean you have failed spiritually.
- Describe the way in which prayer enhances discernment.
- Spot the enemy's deceptive tactics.
- Know the difference between fighting people and facing up to spiritual darkness.
- Explain how prayer helps believers remain steady when they are under intimidation and opposition.
- Explain why was it significant that Paul and Silas prayed and worshipped at midnight?

- Realize the way that one person's prayer life can have an impact on others.
- See prayer as a way by which God brings about deliverance, salvation, transformation, healing and victory.
- See persistence as an important quality in prayer.
- Make it your aim to establish a regular way of praying continuously.

Chapter Overview

The Power of Prayer answers the question: ***What happens when believers develop a lifestyle of prayer and walk in continual fellowship with God?*** Acts 16 gives us the answer. Paul and Silas were already on their way to prayer when opposition appeared. This matters. Prayer was not an emergency response. It was their lifestyle. Their relationship with God had been established before the crisis arrived. The chapter then reveals an important truth: *The anointing attracts opposition.* Commitment to Christ does not insulate believers from spiritual warfare. The enemy notices praying believers. He looks for opportunities. He uses deception. He uses intimidation. He may appear supportive before becoming openly hostile. But prayer develops discernment. It teaches us: When to speak. When to remain silent. When to confront. When to wait. When to move. When to stop. Paul and Silas eventually found themselves beaten, bound, and imprisoned. Yet midnight did not change who they were. They prayed. They praised. They worshiped. They turned a prison cell into a sanctuary. They turned a crucible into a war room. Then God moved. The prison shook. The chains fell. The doors opened. And their deliverance affected everyone around them. The jailer was saved. His household was transformed. The rulers' attitudes changed. Prayer reached beyond the people praying. That is the power of a praying life.

Theology Corner

Prayer and Spiritual Warfare: The Christian life is not lived in spiritually neutral territory. Scripture teaches: "*We wrestle not against flesh and blood*." This means our deepest battle is not ultimately against people. People may oppose us. People may hurt us. People may deceive us. People may reject us. But spiritual warfare requires spiritual discernment. Prayer helps believers recognize

what is happening beneath the surface. It helps us distinguish: People from principalities - Human weakness from spiritual deception - Personal offense from spiritual strategy. Prayer is therefore not merely preparation for spiritual warfare. *Prayer is spiritual warfare.* It brings the believer into conscious dependence upon God. It strengthens discernment. It increases spiritual awareness. It keeps the heart anchored when circumstances become unstable. And most importantly, prayer reminds us that victory does not come from our strength. It comes from God. The believer does not enter battle alone. He enters in the authority, presence, wisdom, and power of Almighty God.

Digging Inside Scripture

Acts 16:16 — "*As we went to prayer*"
What does this reveal about the prayer life of Paul and Silas?

Why is it important to build spiritual habits before crisis arrives?

---

1 Thessalonians 5:17
What does "*pray without ceasing*" mean in practical daily life?

How can prayer become more natural and continual for you?

---

1 Peter 5:8
What does Scripture teach about the activity of the enemy?

How does prayer protect against spiritual vulnerability?

Genesis 3
How did the serpent make deception seem to be of benefit?

What does this show you regarding false spirits?

Ephesians 6:12
Who is our real enemy?

What difference would it make to the way you deal with difficult people if you remembered this truth?

Acts 16:25
Why is it important that Paul and Silas prayed and sang even after being flogged and imprisoned?

What does it reveal about faith to worship during times of suffering?

Acts 16:26
Who experienced the effects of their prayer?

What does this teach you about the influence of a praying life?

Word Study

DISCERNMENT: Discernment is the Spirit-enabled ability to recognize the true nature of what is happening. Discernment sees beyond appearance. It asks: What is really happening here? What is the source? What is God doing? What is the enemy attempting? What should I accept? What should I reject? What should I confront? What should I ignore? Paul heard words that sounded supportive. But he recognized their source. *Not everything spiritual is from God. Not every open door is God's door. Not every encouraging voice is trustworthy.* Prayer develops discernment because prayer keeps us near the One who sees what we cannot. Ask: Where do I presently need greater spiritual discernment?

Leadership Insight

Not every difficulty means you missed God. Sometimes opposition appears precisely because you obeyed Him. Paul and Silas were not in prison because they had abandoned their calling. They were there because they had confronted darkness. Leaders must therefore avoid two mistakes. The first is assuming: “If

this is difficult, God must not be in it." The second is assuming: "If people applaud me, God must be pleased." Crowds are fickle. The same crowd can praise today and condemn tomorrow. Prayer anchors leaders in the approval of God. Leaders who live for applause become vulnerable to intimidation. Leaders who know God's approval can remain steady under criticism. A leader's prayer life must be strong enough to sustain them when public opinion changes.

Principle of the Kingdom

The prison cannot stop the purpose of God when the people of God continue to pray. Circumstances may restrict movement. They cannot restrict access to heaven. Chains may bind hands. They cannot bind prayer. Doors may close, but heaven remains open. Midnight may become dark, yet God remains present.

Walking it out

Identify one situation where you have felt spiritually opposed, discouraged, or intimidated. Write it here:

_____

Now answer: What has this situation caused me to believe?

_____

What does Scripture say instead?

_____

Have I been fighting people instead of recognizing the deeper spiritual battle?

_____

What would a prayer-centered response look like?

_____

Now choose one action: Praying before reacting. Worshipping versus complaining. Forgiving instead of retaliating. Discerning before deciding. Asking another believer to pray with you. Do not let public opinion determine who you are. Write your chosen action:

_____

Individual Reflection

1. Is prayer a habit or merely an emergency response in your life?

2. How have you experienced spiritual opposition because of your faith?

3. Have you ever mistaken a deceptive opportunity for God's will?

4. What midnight circumstance are you currently facing?

5. How has prayer changed your perspective during difficult seasons?

6. Who might be strengthened or set free because of your prayers?

7. In what area do you need to trust again that prayer changes everything?

8. Have you allowed people to become the enemy when the real battle was spiritual?

Spiritual Formation Exercise

Turning the Prison into a Sanctuary: Choose one difficult circumstance.
For seven days, refuse to begin your prayer time by complaining about it.
Instead:

Step One - Pray: Tell God honestly what you are experiencing.
Step Two - Praise: Name three truths about God that remain true despite the circumstance.
Step Three - Worship: Worship God for who He is before the situation changes.
Step Four - Listen: Ask: “Father, what are You teaching me in this prison?”
Step Five - Intercede: Pray for someone else affected by the same situation.

At the end of each day write: “Today my prison became a sanctuary when…”

Living the Principle

This week, practice turning your instinctive reaction from:

Panic to Prayer
Complaining to Worship
Fear to Faith
Retaliation to Discernment
Isolation to Community
Despair to Expectation

Whenever something unexpected happens, pause before reacting and say: "God is present here too." Then pray. The goal is not merely to pray more often. The goal is to become a person for whom prayer is the natural response to life.

Weekly Declaration

Repeat this every day this week: Prayer is an integral part of my nature. I won't wait until there is a crisis before I look for God. Instead, I will keep walking with Him. I won't be frightened by spiritual opposition. I will stay awake and alert. I will stay discerning. I will recall that people are not my enemies. I will use spiritual weapons in dealing with spiritual battles. At midnight I will pray. When I am in pain I will worship. When opposition arises, I will stay firmly rooted. When deception shows itself, I will ask for discernment. When chains appear, I will remember that heaven is still open. My situation does not affect God's faithfulness. My prison can turn into a sanctuary and my crucible can become a war room. And through prayer heaven still touches earth.

Guided Prayer

Thank You, Father, that I have never been powerless. I am grateful for the opportunity to pray. Teach me so that prayer may become a way of life. Do not allow me to become a believer who only turns to You in times of emergency. Rather, teach me to walk with You every day. Sharpen my ability to discern good from evil. Help me to spot deception. Tell me when to speak and when to stay

quiet. Show me when to face people and when to wait. Teach me when to act and when to halt. Remind me that people are not my enemies. Give me compassion for others, and the courage to face darkness. When opposition comes, keep me rooted in Your word. When intimidation comes against me, remind me where my approval really comes from. When it is midnight, teach me how to pray. When I am suffering, teach me how to praise. When I feel trapped, teach me to trust and depend upon You. Use my prayer life not only to strengthen myself but also to bring blessings upon others. Let the chains come down. Let hearts be changed. Let families be transformed. Let the lost be saved. Let Your Kingdom come. And let heaven touch earth through my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

My challenge to you is this: *Do not wait for midnight to become a praying person.* Paul and Silas prayed at midnight because they had already learned to pray in daylight. The prison did not create their prayer life. The prison revealed it. What will your next crisis reveal? Will it reveal panic? Fear? Complaining? Bitterness? Or will it reveal a life that already knows how to reach for God? Build the habit now. Pray when things are good. Pray when you are healthy. Pray when the bills are paid. Pray when the family is doing well. Pray before the battle. Then when midnight comes, you will not have to search for God. You will already be walking with Him.

From The Shepherd's Heart

I have learned that midnight does not have the authority to change who God is. God is still God in the prison. He is still God in the hospital. He is still God when people misunderstand you. He is still God when the door closes. He is still God when the answer is delayed. He is still God when the chains have not yet fallen. Paul and Silas did something powerful. They worshiped *before* the prison doors opened. That is faith. Anybody can praise after deliverance. But there is something different about a person who can worship while the chains are still attached. Do not wait until everything changes before you acknowledge that God is good. He is good now. He is faithful now. He is present now. And sometimes

the greatest victory begins when you turn your prison into a sanctuary before God ever turns your situation around.

Worship Response

Think about your present "midnight." Write it here:

_____

Now complete:
God, even here, You are…

_____

God, even now, You have been faithful by…

_____

God, I worship You before the answer because…

_____

God, I choose not to complain about…

_____

Instead, I praise You for…

_____

Now worship. Do not wait for the chains to fall. Praise Him while they are still attached.

Final

This is the final session in *When Heaven Touches Earth: The Seven Dimensions of Transformational Prayer.* We have walked through:

The Privilege of Prayer — God invited us.
The Plan of Prayer — Heaven touches earth.
The Pattern of Prayer — God's priorities become ours.
The Purpose of Prayer — We come to know Him.
The Posture of Prayer — We rightly position our hearts.
The Promise of Prayer — We learn to trust His response.
The Power of Prayer — We see God move in ways only He can.

But the end of this workbook must not become the end of your prayer journey.

The goal was never merely to complete seven sessions. The goal was to begin living in continual conversation with God. So, gaze forward. There are still prayers to pray. There are still people to intercede for. There are still battles to fight. There are still promises to trust. There are still deeper places in God to discover. *The conversation is not over. It has only begun.*

Journal

What has God taught me about prayer through this entire study?

Is prayer becoming a lifestyle for me?

What spiritual habits do I need to strengthen?

What opposition am I presently facing?

Where do I need greater discernment?

Have I been treating any person as the enemy?

What is my present "midnight" circumstance?

How can I turn that prison into a sanctuary?

Who might be impacted by my prayer life?

What chain am I believing God to break?

What have I learned about God through these seven sessions?

What commitment am I making concerning my future prayer life?

My final prayer:

What I never want to forget:

Appendix A: Collins Principles for Daily Living

The lessons in this workbook were never intended to remain on these pages. Prayer must be lived. The following principles are designed to help you carry the *seven dimensions of transformational prayer* into everyday life. Return to them often. Use them to examine your prayer life, strengthen your spiritual disciplines, and remind yourself of the privilege you have been given through Jesus Christ.

The workbook may be completed, but the conversation with God must continue.

1. Begin Every Day with the Awareness That You Have Been Invited
Prayer is not an interruption of your day. It is one of the greatest privileges of your day. You do not have to persuade God to receive you. Through Jesus Christ, the way has already been opened. Never neglect access that Jesus purchased with His blood.

2. Seek His Face Before You Seek His Hand
There is nothing wrong with bringing your needs to God. He invites you to do so. But do not allow what you need from God to become more important than your relationship with God. Desire the Giver more than His gifts, His presence more than His presents.

3. Practice Dependence Before Desperation
Do not wait for a crisis to discover how much you need God. Prayer begins where self-sufficiency ends. The strongest Christian is not the one who needs God the least, but the one who increasingly recognizes how desperately they need Him. Begin each day by saying, “Lord, I need You.”

4. Put God First in Your Prayers
Prayer reveals priorities. Jesus taught us to begin with the Father's name, the Father's Kingdom, and the Father's will. Before asking God to advance your agenda, surrender yourself to His.

5. Let Prayer Rearrange Your Priorities
Mature prayer moves us from: My kingdom to Thy Kingdom; My will to Thy will; My glory to Thy glory. Prayer is not primarily about getting God to agree with us. It teaches us to agree with God. Never ask only, "What do I want?" Ask, "Father, what do You want?"

6. Measure Prayer by Transformation, Not Merely Answers
Answered prayer is wonderful, but circumstances are not the only things God changes through prayer. He changes us. Fear becomes faith. Bitterness becomes forgiveness. Pride becomes humility. Anxiety becomes trust. Selfishness becomes compassion. Ask regularly, "What is God changing in me through prayer?"

7. Protect Your Secret Place
Public strength is developed through private fellowship. Never allow ministry, responsibility, work, family demands, or even service to God to eliminate your time alone with God. Never become so busy working for God that you stop spending time with God.

8. Come Humbly, But Come Boldly
Humility and confidence belong together. We bow because He is God. We come boldly because He is our Father. Our confidence is not in our righteousness, performance, or worthiness. Our confidence is in Jesus Christ. Approach God with reverence, but never with fear that Christ's sacrifice is insufficient.

9. Keep Short Accounts with God
When the Holy Spirit reveals sin, respond quickly. Confess it. Repent. Receive mercy. Return to fellowship. Do not allow yesterday's failure to keep you away from today's grace. When you fall, do not run from the throne of grace. Run to it.

10. Obey What God Has Already Shown You
Prayer and obedience cannot be separated. There is little value in continually asking God for new direction while refusing to follow the direction He has already given. Let today's obedience become preparation for tomorrow's revelation.

11. Examine Your Motives
God hears our requests, but He also sees the heart behind them. Before asking, consider: Will this glorify Christ? Will this advance His Kingdom? Will this help me fulfill His purposes? Why do I really want this? Do not merely examine what you are asking for. Examine *why* you are asking for it.

12. Pray With Faith Without Trying to Control God
Faith trusts. Presumption demands. Faith asks boldly but remains surrendered. The prayer of faith can say: "Father, this is what I desire, but Your will is greater than mine." Have enough faith to ask boldly and enough humility to surrender completely.

13. Trust God in the "Yes", the "Wait", and the "No"
Sometimes God answers "yes" immediately. Sometimes He makes us wait. Sometimes His answer is no. His answer may change, but His character does not. When you cannot trace God's hand, continue trusting His heart.

14. Do Not Interpret God Through Your Circumstances
A difficult season does not mean God has stopped being good. A closed door does not mean God has abandoned you. A delay does not mean He has forgotten you. Midnight does not remove God from His throne. Interpret your circumstances through what you know about God, not God through what you see in your circumstances.

15. Do Not Wait for Midnight to Become a Praying Person
Spiritual habits are not developed during storms. They are revealed during storms. Paul and Silas prayed at midnight because prayer was already part of who they were. The prison did not create their prayer life. The prison revealed it. Build your prayer life in daylight so that you will know what to do when midnight comes.

16. Turn Your Prison into a Sanctuary
You may not control what happens around you, but you can determine your response. Pray. Praise. Worship. Trust. Paul and Silas could not immediately change the prison, but they could change what happened inside the prison. Never allow your circumstances to determine whether God deserves your worship.

17. Remember That People Are Not the Enemy
People may disappoint you, oppose you, misunderstand you, or hurt you. But spiritual maturity refuses to make people the ultimate enemy. Prayer gives us the discernment to see beyond personalities and respond spiritually rather than merely emotionally. Pray before retaliating. Seek discernment before assigning motives. Fight spiritual battles with spiritual weapons.

18. Let Prayer Sharpen Your Discernment
Not every opportunity is your assignment. Not every open door is God's door. Not every spiritual-sounding voice comes from God. Time in God's presence teaches us to recognize His voice. Never become so anxious for an answer that you move before you have discerned God's direction.

19. Pray Beyond Yourself
Your prayer life was never intended to benefit only you. Someone else's freedom will be connected to your intercession. Someone else's faith will be strengthened by your prayers. Someone else's family will be touched because you refused to stop praying. When Paul and Silas prayed, other people's chains fell too. Always leave room in your prayer life for someone who cannot carry the burden alone.

20. Talk With God When Nothing Is Wrong
If we believe that prayer exists only for emergencies, we have misunderstood God's desired relationship with us. Do not make God the person you call only when life becomes impossible. Talk with Him in ordinary moments. Walk with Him. Listen. Worship. Give thanks. Enjoy His presence. Develop relationship before you need rescue.

21. Make Prayer Your First Response, Not Your Last Resort
Before panic - pray. Before retaliation - pray. Before major decisions - pray. Before surrendering to fear - pray. Before assuming you know what God is doing - pray. Train yourself to ask, "Have I prayed about this?"

22. Carry the Presence of God into Ordinary Life
Prayer does not end when you say, "Amen." Remain conscious of God's presence throughout your day. In your home. In your automobile. At work. In ministry. During conversations. While making decisions. In celebration. In disappointment. Do not merely have a prayer time. Develop a praying life.

23. Let Prayer Become Part of Who You Are

There comes a point in spiritual formation when prayer moves beyond something we are trying to remember to do. It becomes conversation. Communion. Dependence. Surrender. Worship. Listening. Relationship. The goal is not simply to become better at prayer. The goal is to become a person of prayer.

The Bishop's Blessing

You have reached the final pages of this workbook, but I pray you recognize that you have not reached the end of the journey. You have studied. You have reflected. You have examined your heart. You have searched the Scriptures. You have prayed. You have been challenged to surrender, obey, trust, worship, and grow. Now comes the most important part: *Live what you have learned.* My prayer for you is that these lessons will move from your workbook into your walk with God.

May you never again take for granted **the privilege of prayer**. May you remember that Jesus Christ purchased your access to the Father with His precious blood. May the torn veil remind you that the way has been opened, and may you approach the throne of grace with humility, gratitude, reverence, and confidence. May you always come.

May you understand **the plan of prayer** and live every day conscious of your dependence upon God. When you are weak, may you discover His strength. When you are confused, may you seek His wisdom. When you are afraid, may you rest in His peace. When you reach the limits of your ability, may you remember that you have not reached the limits of His. May your heart continually confess**:** "Lord, I need You."

May you follow **the pattern of prayer** until God's priorities increasingly become your priorities. May His Kingdom become greater than yours. May His will become more important than your preferences. May His glory become greater than your priorities. May your life continually say: Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done. Thy name be glorified.

May you discover **the purpose of prayer**. May you seek His face more than His hand. May you desire His presence more than His presents. May you never become satisfied merely knowing about God when Jesus Christ has made it possible for you to know Him. And as you spend time in His presence, may you become more like the One True Living God.

May you maintain **the posture of prayer**. May your heart remain tender. May your spirit remain humble. May your faith remain confident. May your prayer life

remain constant. May your secret place remain protected. May you remain connected to believers who will pray with you, strengthen you, encourage you, and help carry you when the burden becomes heavy.

May you stand firmly upon **the promise of prayer**. When God says yes, may you give Him glory. When He says wait, may you remain faithful. When He says no, may you trust His wisdom. When you understand His ways, worship Him. And when you cannot understand His ways, worship Him still. May you trust His heart when you cannot trace His hand. May you forever know that His way is what is best for you.

And may you experience **the power of prayer**. When midnight comes - pray. When the doors remain locked - pray. When the chains are still attached - pray. When opposition increases - pray. When fear whispers - pray. When you do not know what to do - pray. And while you are praying **- w**orship. May your prison become a sanctuary. May your crucible become a war room.

May your pain become a place of encounter. May your waiting become a place of formation. May your weakness become an opportunity for God's strength to be revealed. May your prayers reach beyond you. May your family be strengthened because you pray. May your marriage be strengthened because you pray. May your children and grandchildren be affected because you pray. May your church become stronger because you pray. May your leaders be sustained because you pray. May broken people find hope because you pray. May bound people discover freedom because you pray. May the lost encounter Jesus Christ because you pray. And may generations you will never meet experience the fruit of prayers you prayed faithfully when no one else knew you were praying.

But above all else, my prayer is that you will not simply leave this workbook knowing more about prayer. May you leave knowing God more deeply.
May prayer cease to be merely an appointment on your schedule and become part of the rhythm of your life. May you live with a continual awareness that you are never separated from His presence.

When you wake up in the morning - The conversation continues.
When you go about your responsibilities - The conversation continues.
When you face difficult decisions - The conversation continues.
When you experience extraordinary blessing - The conversation continues.
When midnight comes - The conversation continues.
And when you have no words at all, may your heart remain turned toward the One who already knows what you need.

There is always more of God to know. There is always greater intimacy to experience. There is always another person who needs intercession. There is always another generation that needs someone to stand in the gap. There is always another opportunity for heaven to touch earth.

So, keep coming into His presence to pray. The throne of grace remains occupied. Mercy still flows. Grace is still available. The Great High Priest still intercedes. The invitation remains open. Heaven still welcomes praying people.

Prayer is heaven touching earth and humanity becoming familiar with divinity.

Now take what you have learned and live it. And wherever God sends you, may heaven continue to touch earth through your surrendered, praying life.

The workbook is finished. *But the conversation is not over. It has only begun.*

May Almighty God bless you, keep you, strengthen you, guide you, and use you mightily for His Kingdom and His glory. May you love Christ deeply, walk with Him daily, and represent Him faithfully - all for His glory.

Ad Gloriam Christi — For the Glory of Christ
+ Bishop Dr. Anthony Collins

Author's Note

Thank you for reading the *When Heaven Touches Earth - Companion Workbook*. If this book encouraged, challenged, or strengthened your walk with Christ, would you consider leaving a brief review on our website TonyCollinsMinistries.com?

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Blessings,
Bishop Anthony Collins

All of our discipleship resources are available to the public at no charge through HOWICP.org. Our mission is to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ by equipping believers to obey the Great Commission through biblical discipleship, spiritual formation, and leadership development.

If these resources have encouraged your walk with Christ or strengthened your ministry, we invite you to partner with us. Your tax-deductible donation enables us to continue developing and distributing these materials free of charge to individuals, churches, and ministries worldwide.

Thank you for helping us make disciples who make disciples - for the glory of God.



In Matthew 28, our Lord Jesus Christ gave His Church its mission, its vision, and its process for reaching the world. We know it as the Great Commission.

Jesus commanded His followers to *go and make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and *teaching them to obey everything He had commanded*. This is not one ministry among many; it is the mission of the Church. It is the one assignment that every believer, every local church, and the Church universal has received directly from our risen King.

Sadly, much of the modern Church has neglected this divine responsibility.

Many who stand behind the sacred desk have never themselves experienced intentional biblical discipleship. Consequently, they have little vision or passion for discipling others. This stands in direct opposition to both the command and the example of Jesus Christ.

Disciple-making is rarely easy. It is often inconvenient, time-consuming, and personally demanding. It requires patience, commitment, and sacrifice. But the Kingdom of God has never been advanced through convenience. It has always been advanced through faithful men and women who were willing to invest their lives in others.

We cannot fully accomplish biblical discipleship from the pulpit alone. Preaching is essential, but it is only one part of the process. Neither can we effectively disciple someone through occasional meetings or brief conversations. Jesus did not simply teach crowds; He invested deeply in twelve men. He walked with them, answered their questions, corrected their misunderstandings, modeled obedience, and allowed them to observe His life day after day.

That remains the biblical pattern.

Discipleship is life shared together. It is walking alongside another believer, allowing them to see how we respond to life's victories, disappointments, temptations, and trials. It is opening God's Word together, praying together, encouraging one another, and holding each other accountable to grow in Christ.

For us, intentional discipleship means meeting regularly - ideally at least once each week - for meaningful conversation centered on Scripture, spiritual growth, and the practical challenges of living faithfully in a fallen world. It is helping believers develop the spiritual disciplines that deepen their intimacy with Jesus Christ and strengthen their walk with Him.

The goal is not simply to produce knowledgeable Christians. The goal is to develop mature disciples who, in turn, become disciple-makers themselves.

This is the multiplication strategy of the Kingdom.

At **Collins Discipleship Institute**, our passion is to equip individuals, churches, and Christian organizations with practical, biblically sound resources that cultivate mature, vibrant, and Spirit-empowered followers of Jesus Christ. Our desire is to strengthen believers in the essential areas of Christian life and ministry, so they can faithfully fulfill the Great Commission. We do not exist to produce better church members. We exist to produce mature disciples who make mature disciples.

We believe that the future strength of the Church will not be determined merely by the size of our congregations, but by the depth of our disciples. When disciples make disciples, churches become healthier, families become stronger, communities are transformed, and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ advances.

The Great Commission has never been rescinded. It remains the calling of every believer. May we not merely admire it, but may we obey it.

Contact us at info@HOWICP.org for more information. All electronic discipleship resources are free.