

The Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World

Week 4: Feb. 13 – Feb. 19

Chapters 7-8



- Check out the Prayer Challenge Schedule on the prayer guide tab for schedule details
- Check out the daily reflections for prayer growth
- Check out the prayer requests on the prayer guide. Prayers are posted at the end of this page or on the prayer requests only tab.

Paul Miller writes on p. 54 of the book *A Praying Life* that “We don’t need self-discipline to pray continuously; we just need to be poor in spirit.” My pastor, Jim Dykes, has been preaching a sermon series entitled “Blessed.” This series is based upon Matthew chapter #5 where Jesus delivers the now famous teaching known as the Sermon on the Mount. In this sermon, Jesus begins with 8 pronouncements of “blessing.” The first pronouncement being, “blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” What is “poor in spirit” anyway? Week 1 of the preaching series we learned that poor in spirit is simply: humility. Blessed are those that are humble for theirs is the kingdom of God. So.... the next question is, why? Why does the kingdom of heaven belong to those who are poor in spirit?

Pastor Jim says, “the kingdom of heaven is distinct from this world. The people in the kingdom are different/distinct from the people in the world. Not everyone is a part of the kingdom of heaven. The poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus is not talking about the celestial heaven in this passage, He’s talking about the kingdom of God on the earth. The kingdom of heaven has come to us. His future is here, it’s now! “Jesus did not come simply to take us from earth to heaven, He came to bring heaven down to earth.” Christianity is not just about pie in the sky in the sweet by and by; one glad morning when the trumpet sounds, I’ll fly away; when the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there. Jesus didn’t just come to take us to heaven. He came to bring heaven to earth. Within this kingdom we are to live a distinct life from those outside the kingdom. We (Christ’s followers in the kingdom) are the salt of the earth. Salt is not the same as what we put it on. That’s why we add it. Salt is added to food to change the taste. In the kingdom, we are to salt of the earth, we are to flavor the world wherever we go. Salt provokes thirst for those around you. Salt stops the spread of corruption. How do we carry this salt and light into our world? We carry the light by embracing the attitudes/the Beatitudes of the kingdom? How do we embrace the attitudes of the kingdom? Prayer!!!! Humbly seeking Abba continuously!

As distinct members of the kingdom we are children of the King. The King desires a personal relationship with His children. Maintaining that relationship means continuous communion. Continuous communion is only brought about through prayer. Jesus brought heaven to earth so that we could be in relationship. Read more about crying out to Abba continuously in chapter 7 this week.

To hear the entire sermon by Pastor Jim Dykes, go to www.brookstonechurch.org to the sermon tab: “Blessed” series week 1.

-----Daily Reflections-----

- **Sunday, Feb. 13:** As this week’s chapters are opened, begin to think on this Paul Miller statement: “A praying life isn’t simply a morning prayer time: it is about slipping into prayer at odd hours of the day, not because we are disciplined but because we are in touch with our own poverty of spirit, realizing that we can’t even walk through a mall or our neighborhood with the help of the Spirit of Jesus.

- **Monday – Friday, Feb. 14 – Feb. 18:** **Chapter 7:** Read Matthew 18:3-4. How are children poor in spirit? Why is it necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven like a child? Read Luke 18:9-17. What would make it easier for “sinners” to enter the kingdom of heaven than the “righteous”? Several different things keep us from being poor in spirit.
 - a. Read Matthew 19:23-24. For whom is it difficult to enter the kingdom of heaven? Why?
 - b. Read Matthew 23:4-14. How are the Pharisees the opposite of poor in spirit? How do they “shut the door of the kingdom of heaven” in people’s faces?
 Paul Miller writes, “Interrupting, selling and boasting are just a few of the things that draw me into continuous prayer, into continual childlike dependence on my Father. Each of us has our own list. We can let it drive us into a praying life” (p. 52). What is on your list? What sinful tendencies can drive you into continuous prayer?
Chapter 8: How is anxiety a warped, unused, broken prayer link? Why doesn’t it work. (pp. 58-59)? Read Psalm 131. What connection does the Psalmist make between pride and going after things that are too great, too marvelous (also translated “difficult” or “complex”)? In what ways can anxiety be a form of pride? How does the Psalmist call us back to sanity? If you are experiencing anxiety and your natural response is to do anything but run to the Father in prayer, read Matthew 10:29-31 and consider how it changes your outlook to know that your Father has *numbered* the hairs on your head?

- **Saturday, Feb. 19:** Ponder this statement from chapter 8, “Anxiety is unable to relax in the face of chaos; continuous prayer clings to the Father in the face of chaos” (p.58). Why can’t anxiety relax? What makes prayer a much better alternative?

-----Daily reflections adapted from *A Praying Life* Discussion Guide-----



Weekly Prayer Guide for Feb. 13 – Feb. 19

Adoration: praising God for what and who He is:

Not to us, O Lord, not to us,
 But to Your name be glory,
 Because of Your lovingkindness and truth. (Ps. 115:11)

We give praise to You, Lord!
For it is good to sing praises to You, our God,
Because praise is pleasant and beautiful. (Psalm 147:1)

We come, we worship and we bow down,
We kneel before You, the Lord our Maker. (Psalm 95:6)

Pause to express your thoughts of praise and worship.

Confession: stating our sins, and asking forgiveness:

How can I discern my errors?
Cleanse me from hidden faults.
Keep Your servant also from presumptuous sins;
Let them not rule over me.
Then will I be blameless,
And innocent of great transgression. (Psalm 19:12-13)

Ask the Spirit to search your heart and reveal any areas of unconfessed sin. Acknowledge these to the Lord and thank Him for His forgiveness.

Thanksgiving: thanking God for specific things He has done.

It is in You, Lord Jesus, that I have peace. In this world I will have tribulation, but I will be of good cheer, because You have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

I have been set apart for Your gospel, O God – I am among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:1,6)

We praise God for these answers to prayer:

- 72 people trained to share the Gospel on Jan. 29 at Equip America. 132 people that were approached that day. The 19 people that professed faith in Jesus on that day. The 7 people that received assurance of salvation that day. The 9 pastors that attended and the 19 churches that were represented.
- 22 pastors that participated in the EV2 launch at Bethel AME church in Columbia, SC on Feb. 12. The first of 500 churches commissioned by the Bishop of the 7th District to return to Indiana, Kentucky, and Illinois to continue the spread of sharing the Gospel.
- 17 pastors appreciated at a luncheon on Feb. 11 by Bill Tyler, EA Coordinator and Kevin Green, EE SW Coordinator in Grand Junction, CO. An answer to 3 years of prayer by the radio station for this kind of move of God to bring Equip America to the area.

Supplication: asking for things we want God to do, for others or for us.

Lord, you have taught us that love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy; loves does not boast, it is not arrogant, it does not behave rudely; it does not seek its own, it is not provoked, it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices with the truth; it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13: 4-8)

May my love abound more and more in full knowledge and depth of insight, so that I may be able to approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ – having been filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to Your glory and praise, O God. (Philippians 1:9-11)

Pause here to petition God for growth in your desire to know and please Jesus Christ. Pray for a greater love and commitment to Him, for the grace to practice His presence and for the grace to glorify Him in your life. Offer prayers regarding your activities for the week and any special concerns you may have.

- Pray for the US ministry of EE: it's vision for the future, God's person to fill the position of US director (Randall Woods (our director for 8 years will be leaving EE to pastor Midway Baptist Church), a smooth transition over the next few months
- Pray for additional ministry partnerships so that TOGETHER we can reach the world with the Gospel.
- For America to turn to God and our Nation to see the next Great Spiritual Awakening.
- For our leaders to be God-fearing and recognize that they are accountable to Him for each decision and act. (Prov. 9:10)
- For God to grant people in authority wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.
- Pray that the Church in America will open their eyes to see the hope to which we've been called.
- For prospective churches to host Equip America in future locations around the country.
- For plans and preparations for Congress Of Nations in 2023
- For Equip America on March 19 in Grand Junction, CO, Tampa, FL, Fort Payne, AL, Stillwater, OK, and El Paso, TX (Spanish).
- For God to expand the ministry of Hope For Kids in 2022. For expansion of the Explorers' Club ministry.
- Pray churches that have attended Everyday Evangelism Launches will begin implementing.
- For Pastors' in America to Stand UP! Stand Firm! Stand on God's Word with grace, power, and mercy!
- Pray for peace in our cities and unity in our churches and nation.
- **The 71st National Day of Prayer** will be celebrated on Thursday, May, 5, 2022. The theme this year is a call to praise in prayer. *'EXALT THE LORD, WHO HAS ESTABLISHED US'* based on *Colossians 2:6-7*.
- Lift prayers for our persecuted brothers and sisters: ask God to help them rest in the knowledge that Our Good Shepherd walks with them through every difficult situation. Ask God to provide Bibles and Christian literature that will reach the most remote and needy areas where they are in the shortest supply. Ask God to

continually bring comforting scripture to their mind giving them the strength to press on. Ask God to bring about justice in an unjust world.

- Pray for your pastor and church leadership.
- Pray for ministries in your church and ministry directors
- Pray for unbelieving family members that God would draw them to salvation.
- Pray for the grieving. There is much loss everywhere. Many lives that are struck by the loss of those they love dearly. Ask God to shower them with his tender mercy and cover them with His feathers and they would take refuge under His wings. That they would grasp His faithfulness to be their shield and rampart.
- Pray for Endre Norem, prayer strategist for EE as he travels throughout Montana, sharing the Gospel, equipping God’s children to pray and share the Gospel.
- Prayer for peace for all who struggle with anxiety and worry. Pray for the Lord to be the one they run to, to calm their spirit and take the areas of their life causing them stress and fear.

(Ministries of EE: Share Your Faith Workshop, Everyday Evangelism, Hope for Kids)

SYFW	2/9 -3/16	First Baptist Rogers	Rogers, AR
SYFW	2/19	Calvary Church	Everett, WA
SYFW	2/19	Shilo Baptist Church	Brandy Station, VA
SYFW	2/19	Whitehall Bible Fellowship	Whitehall, PA
SYFW	2/26	New Life in Christ	Fredericksburg, VA
SYFW	3/5	Hutto Bible Church	Hutto, TX
SYFW	3/12	Bethany EPC	Havertown, PA
SYFW	3/12	Pathway Community Church	Cincinnati, OH
SYFW	3/12-3/13	Village Baptist Church	Bella Vista, AR
SYFW	3/19	Covenant Presbyterian Church	Harleysville, PA
SYFW	3/26	First Baptist Church of Cole	Blanchard, OK
SYFW	4/30	Broadway Baptist Church	Maryville, TN
EV2 Launch	2/18-2/19	Eficaz a Filipino American Alliance (Espanol)	Arlington, TX
EV2 Launch	2/11 – 2/12	Bethel AME Church	Columbia, SC
EV2 Launch	2/18 – 2/19	Filipino American Alliance Church	Arlington, TX
EV2 Launch	3/17 – 3/18	Harmony Community Church	Peachland, NC
EV2 Launch	4/7 - 4/8	First Baptist Rogers	Rogers, AR
EV2 Launch	4/22	Eficaz a Iglesia Un Nuevo Comienzo	El Paso, TX
EV2 Launch	8/4 – 8/5	First Baptist Rogers	Rogers, AR
HFK Lab	3/25 - 3/26	Landmark Church of God	Statesville, NC