

A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracted World

Week 2: March 27 – April 2

Chapters 14-15



“Prayer is a moment of incarnation – God with us.”

“My prayers come before the throne of God as the prayers of Jesus. ‘Asking in Jesus’ name’ isn’t another thing I have to get right so my prayers are perfect. It is one more gift of God because my prayers are so imperfect.”

“The praying life is the abiding life.”

When you really begin to consider the question, what do I want God to do for me, it sometimes changes your motives in prayer. Here are a few things I’ve discovered over the years as I’ve truly contemplated the question, “what do I want God to do for me?”

First, do you remember last year, if you were with us on the prayer network in 2021, you might remember Mark Batterson’s, *Draw the Circle* book. On day 31, we were asked to SPELL IT OUT! Matthew 20:32 says to the two blind men outside of Jericho, “What do you want me to do for you?” Our omniscient God, the one and only who knows everything, knows what we want from Him. But are we able to spell out the promises, miracles, and dreams God has put in our hearts? Mark Batterson makes the point of saying in chapter 31 of his book, most of us have no idea what we want God to do for us and then we wonder why it seems like God isn’t doing anything for us. He’s still asking you and I that same question today that he asked the two blind men outside of Jericho. What do you want God to do for you? What do I want God to do for me? We need to identify our answer to that question. And then go to Him with our ask.

On another note, there have been times in my life when I wanted to change a situation or circumstance because I thought it seemed much harder than I could bare. But when I began to pray about the situation, I realized that what I wanted God to do was completely selfish and wasn’t about God or Kingdom purposes. As I began to pray, God revealed the places in my life that weren’t totally belonging to Him. As I prayed more about the situation my heart changed more and I began to pray for HIS WILL BE DONE and not my own. God reminded me in those seasons that years ago when I asked Jesus to be the Lord of my life, I died to myself. Dying to self to live completely for God isn’t just a one-time thing, it’s a daily commitment. As we

journey this narrow road of life with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ we discover things in our life we still need to die to. Such was especially true for me in 2017 when my husband said, “Susan, I feel God asking us to sell everything and go on the road full time.” I said, “WHAT????? Are you crazy???” He later explained God was calling us to be trumpets, to sound the alarm, to help ALERT, ALIGN and ACTIVATE the Body of Christ in America. At the time, we had no idea what that meant. At that time, we had no idea how that was going to happen or how God would orchestrate the details and fulfill this call. And, at the time, I had NO desire to sell everything, go on the road, leave behind our home, friends, church, my job, his pastoral position at our church, etc. etc. etc. Scared, perplexed, no willing, you name it, I was not about Kingdom Purposes, I was about Susan comforts. I told God every which way He could make this call happen that would have allowed me to continue working as a school counselor (which I absolutely loved!), keep our house, keep Jeff’s position at the church, same comforts of life with a few added elements. In the midst of a 7-month long battle with God through prayer, He changed my heart of prayer for my comforts and my plans to include, HIS heart. I discovered that what I really wanted, at the very core of my heart, was for God to do HIS will and not mine. Five years later, I can testify that God’s way is better, so much better than mine. This call resulted in the being a part of the birth of Equip America – a ministry of Evangelism Explosion that you are a part of praying for every day. God is doing a great thing and you are a part of that through prayer.

Lysa Terkeurst, President of Proverbs 31 ministry prays, “I’m Trading My Will for God’s Will because I know He will.” That’s why the “abide” piece is so important. We can’t get to the “wanting His will more than our own will” if we don’t abide. Jesus bids us to abide with Him, walk daily with Him, pray without ceasing, talk to Him like we would our friends, then we can experience that life of incarnation – God with us! I would have never gotten to see God so miraculously at work if I hadn’t continued to abide. I would have missed out on some huge blessings if I had never traded my will for His will. I still don’t have it all figured out perfectly, but I’m still abiding, I’m still walking with Him, I’m still growing and I don’t ever want to stop. I don’t know about you but I want that abundant- God with us life. Let’s seek Him, search for what we want God to do for us, and begin to ask.

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

- Sunday, March 27: As you begin this week’s chapters from *A Praying Life*, Paul Miller writes, “Prayer is a moment of incarnation – God with us! Through prayer we gain a friendship with God, a quiet heart, the living work of God in the hearts of those we love, the ability to roll back the tide of evil. Essentially, we lose our kingdom but gain His. We move from being an independent player to a dependent lover. We move from being an orphan to a child of God.” God wants to be fully involved in every detail of our lives. Think about the times that you have seen God involved in the details of your own life. What was that like?

- Monday – Friday, March 28 – April 2: [Chapter 14](#) - Read Matthew 7:7-11. How is Jesus' worldview different from the worldviews of Neoplatonism, the Enlightenment and Buddhism? Why do we not like to ask (p. 109)? Paul writes, "If you are going to enter this divine dance we call prayer, you have to surrender your desire to be in control....You've got to let God take the lead." (p. 112). What about your life do you want to control and not give to God? How do you think he's going to mess it up? Take some time today to talk with God honestly about what you think he's going to mess up and what you want to control and don't want to give to God. [Chapter 15](#) –Read Jesus' promises in John 14:13-14, John 15:7, 16 and John 16: 23-24. What about these promises makes you nervous? Have you ever asked God for anything and it didn't happen? How did that affect you? Why does Jesus tell us over and over to ask (p.117-118)? What is he concerned about? What things do we tend not to ask God about? Make a list. Reread John 14:13-14. What qualification is given to the promise, "Ask anything and I will do it"? What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name (p. 119)? What is correct about what the scholars say about Jesus' extravagant promises? What do they miss? Read James 4:2-3, where James comes to the rescue. Then look at the chart on page 116. The first danger is the cliff of "not asking." The second danger is the cliff of "asking selfishly." What does James say about either cliff? Do either of these cliffs describe your tendency in prayer? How so? Read Mark 14:36. What two antidotes does Jesus offer to both these dangers in prayer? How does he avoid the "not asking" cliff? How does he avoid the "asking selfishly" cliff? Reread John 15:7 and pages 122-123. What is one of the best ways to learn to abide? How does the fine print "if you abide in me, and my words abide in you" affect our asking?
- Saturday, April 2: What has God taught you about prayer this week? What do you want God to do for you? Talk with him about what you write down. Remember, abiding can't begin to happen until the real you meets the real God.

Daily reflections are adapted from Paul E Miller's *A Praying Life Discussion Guide*.



WEEKLY PRAYER REQUESTS FOR MARCH 27– APRIL 2

ADORATION: praising God for who He is and what He has done.

O God, we rejoice in You. Praise, glory, and honor flow from us, because of Your great love. Our soul longs after You, Your name and Your memory are our soul's desire. (Is. 26:8). We are truly blessed by You, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of Your son's abundant mercy we now have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. God, You are merciful and forgiving even when we rebel against You. Often times we plan our own course, but in Your great mercy You establish our steps for us, knowing what is best for our good and for Your glory. We praise You that we can trust in the plans You establish for us, confident in You, our trustworthy God. We praise You, God, that we serve a risen Savior. Because of Christ conquering sin on the cross and death through His resurrection,

we now have this unmistakable hope in Him for all eternity. Glory to Your great name. Your blood has been applied to our heart when we were wondrously saved from our sin. Thank you for abiding so sweetly within us. We glorify You, God.

Pause to express your thoughts of praise and worship.

CONFESSION: stating our sins and asking forgiveness!

Woe to me, for I am undone!

Because I have unclean lips,

And I live among a people of unclean lips,

And my eyes have seen You, the King, the Lord of hosts. (Is. 6:5)

God, help me to examine all things in my life and abstain from every form of evil. I confess that the heart is deceitful above all things. And incurably sick. Search my heart, O God, test my mind, see if there is any offensive way within me. Forgive my transgression and my evil ways and lead me in Your ways forever.

Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer. How long will humanity turn your glory into shame? How long will your people love delusions and seek false gods? In my anger I have sinned; though you continue to search my heart for love. Forgive me, O Lord, and help me to follow your teaching and live a life that is pleasing to you, so that your face may once again shine upon me.

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 that He has done.

Lord, we thank you that we can always run back to you to rend our hearts with fasting and weeping and mourning. Thank you for being a gracious and compassionate God who is always slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. Thank you for relenting from sending calamity and always pursuing and rescuing us from our sin.

EE praises You, O God, for You are faithful to us:

- On March 5, Manuel Gonzalez completed a SYFW in Brandon, FL with 58 people completing the training. We praise God for 4 new pastors, 5 different new churches that attended.
- On March 19, Shibu Oommen completed a SYFW in Harlysville, PA with 28 people completing the training. We praise God for this church and the 3 pastors that attended.
- On March 5, Don Porter completed a SYFW in Hutto, TX with 19 people completing the training. We praise God for 2 pastors and 4 churches that attended. During OJT, 2 people heard the gospel
- First quarter for EE Oklahoma where Lester and Janie Vogler serve, God allowed Lester to participate in the OK Baptist Advance Conference, Equip America in Stillwater, promotion of a new Women's Transition-Discipleship House in conjunction with OK Prison Ministry, Hispanic Ministry start up, participation in EE USA Coach Training development, and many other connections with pastors, leaders and training events. To God Be the Glory!

- On March 23, Equip America in FL, OK, CO, TX and AL saw great results. 41 teams from 27 churches went out on OJT (On-the-Job training). 139 people were approached. 77 Gospel conversations. 16 Professions of Faith. 88 people were trained. God, You are good!
- USA Prison Ministry on able to distribute Easter baskets to inmates' children this year for the first time in two years. Each basket contains not only goodies but the Gospel message.
- EE Ukraine staff have seen God's provision and protection.

Pause to offer your own expressions of thanksgiving.

SUPPLICATION: asking God for our needs and our wants.

Our soul waits silently for You alone, O God, for our hope comes from You.

You alone are our rock and our salvation; You are our fortress, we will not be shaken.

In You are salvation and glory;

Our rock of strength, our refuge is in You.

O, that others, too, will trust in You at all times and pour out their hearts before You;

You are our refuge in whom we can call to.

- Pray for continued blessings on Hutto Bible Church's Evangelism Ministry, Hutto Community Church's new evangelism ministry and Don Porter's EE ministry in Hutto, TX and surrounding areas.
- Pray for continued blessings on EE Oklahoma, Lester and Janie Vogler and all the team members and ministries.
- Pray for Easter basket sponsors for prison inmate's children this Easter. Pray that every child that is designated to receive a basket will be sponsored and that the message of Jesus Christ will be heard and received by inmate's families.
- Pray for the continued blessings on Manuel Gonzalez and the EE Hispanic Ministry.
- Pray for the continued blessings on Shibu Oommen and the EE ministry in PA.
- Pray for EE Ukraine: that church members in Ukraine West and South who've helped millions with housing and food will remain strong and for God's provision. Pray that they have opportunity to share the Gospel with all the people they are helping. Pray for Ukrainians to repent of sin and turn to God. Pray that war will stop ASAP! Pray for family members to get the medical attention they need and the food and shelter they need.
- Pray for our next Equip America on April 23 in the following locations:
 1. Pueblo, CO
 2. Tallahassee, FL (Spanish and English)
 3. Las Vegas, NV
 4. North Providence, RI (Spanish Version)
- **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.
- For plans and preparations for Congress Of Nations in 2023
- For the vacant job positions that need to be filled at EE headquarters. Pray for God to send the next USA director to help lead our US team forward in ministry.

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

SYFW	4/2	First Baptist Church	Streetsboro, OH
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SYFW	4/9	CrossPointe Church, CPA	Media, PA
SYFW	4/30	Rio Life Community Church. English & Spanish	Mercedes, TX
SYFW	4/30	Broadway Baptist Church	Maryville, TN
SYFW	4/30	Grace Baptist Church	Salem, OR
SYFW	5/7	One Life Church	Dalles, OR
SYFW	5/14	The Redeemed Christian Church	Erie, PA
SYFW	5/14	Callahan Baptist Church	Callahan, FL
EV2 Launch	4/7 - 4/8	First Baptist Rogers	Rogers, AR
EV2 Launch	4/21 – 4/23	Eficaz a Iglesia Un Nuevo Comienzo	El Paso, TX
EV2 Launch	8/4 – 8/5	First Baptist Rogers	Rogers, AR

Some little extra ways to pray when you are stressed or anxious:

1. Just whisper His name and listen to His sweet echo throughout your day. God names the stars and He whispers your name.
2. Romans 8:34 says that Christ Jesus who died...is also interceding for us. When you don't have the words to say just rest knowing that He is praying for you.
3. Go for a prayer walk, listen to praise music and let the lyrics become your personal prayer, pray with a friend while having a cup of coffee.
4. Post prayers of affirmation all over your bedroom, bathroom, car, refrigerator. Saturate your living space with God's affirming words and say prayers of thanksgiving.