



**ADULT LESSON GUIDE
SUMMER 2024**

**JESUS TEACHES
US TO PRAY**

After this manner
therefore pray ye

JOHN – I AM SAYINGS

See Jesus as the I AM

**THE SPIRIT
IN OUR LIVES**

The fruit and gifts
of the Spirit

**GOD'S
WORD**
FOR LIFE

GOD'S WORD



FOR LIFE

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GOD'S WORD



FOR LIFE

**ADULT LESSON GUIDE
SUMMER 2024**

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LESSON GUIDE

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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

GETTING STARTED

The first page of each lesson gives pertinent information that will be foundational for teaching the lesson. Here you will find the Lesson Title, the Truth about God, the Truth for My Life, and both the Focus Verses and Lesson Text. In addition, a callout box will either give an overview of the series (the first lesson of each series contains this information) or will connect students with their daily devotional activity from the previous week.

JUNE 2, 2024
SERIES 1: JESUS TEACHES US TO PRAY

1.1

THE LORD'S PRAYER

FOCUS VERSE
Matthew 6:8
Do not be like those who pray like unto them: for your father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

LESSON TEXT
Matthew 6:9-18

TRUTH ABOUT GOD
 God invites us to pray.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE
 I will follow Jesus' pattern for prayer.



Series Overview:
 Jesus invites us to pray, and He even shares a prayer request of His own pray for laborers. In His compassion, He invites those laborers to come unto Him and pray, and ultimately pray for all of us—even with our personality differences—to be one.

LESSON 1.1

TEACHING OUTLINE

Icebreaker: What first comes to your mind when you think of Christianity?

Lesson Connection: Share the Lesson Connection.

I. IN THE BEGINNING

- A. The Logos **(I)**
- B. Creator and Giver of Life
 - » In what ways do Jesus' words bring life besides physical healing?
- C. The Light
- D. I Will Use My Words to Speak Life
 - » Who has spoken life to you? How can you speak life to others?

II. WE BEHELD HIS GLORY **(II)**

- » How is God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ in your life?
- A. The World Received Him Not
 - » Have you ever faced rejection for the sake of the gospel? How did you respond?
- B. Power to Become the Sons of God
- C. The Word Made Flesh Brought Grace and Truth
- D. I Will Show Others Grace as I Have Received Grace
 - » How can you show God's grace in your present circumstances?

Internalizing the Message

Prayer Focus

- Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:
- To speak life to others
 - To show grace to others

TEACHING OUTLINE

The SG (Small Group) Teaching Outline is the lesson content in outline form. Each lesson main point is listed along with suggested discussion questions. Although the outline can be used to teach the lesson in a large group setting, the "SG" indicates the content is also designed to be used in a Small Group. Because of this, an icebreaker question has been provided to help jump-start interaction in the Small Group meeting.

SPRING LESSON 1.1

LESSON CONNECTION

Symbols can convey powerful truths. Sometimes an individual's words and actions can become so intertwined with a symbol that the individual represents the idea or action as much or more than the original symbol. In the twentieth century, perhaps no one illustrated this better than Adolf Hitler.

The German Nazi Party came into existence in 1920 and chose the swastika as their symbol. The swastika had been used across an array of religions and cultures to convey a range of ideas for thousands of years prior to the 1920s. The Nazis used the swastika to represent what they saw as the racial purity of the German people. It became a symbol of national and cultural pride. Soon German soldiers were goose-stepping past swastika-embazoned banners while ordinary citizens chanted their allegiance to German Fuhrer and Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler.

To the rest of the world, however, the swastika became a symbol of hatred and state-sponsored genocide, especially following the defeat of Germany in World War II and the uncovering of the atrocities the Nazis wreaked on the world. Most citizens in the West recoil at the sight of a swastika, and its display is banned in present-day Germany (encyclopedia.uhhm.uni). "The History of the Swastika," Hitler himself has come to serve as a stand-in for the swastika and the evils of Nazi Germany. Even the swastika's name now serves as a byword for evil and oppression. In the US, those who wish to disparage political opponents sometimes do so by labelling them "Hitler."

Distaste for Hitler even transformed American fashion. In the 1930s, many men, including the popular comedian Charlie Chaplin, sported what was commonly called a "toothbrush" mustache. Hitler also wore his facial hair in this style. Eventually the toothbrush mustache became so associated with the German leader that most American men shaved their upper lip clean. Today, many associate the toothbrush mustache with Hitler.

Symbols also play a role in Christianity. The most familiar symbol associated with Christianity is the cross, but even the term *Christian* is a symbol of sorts. The first recorded use of the term in Scripture is found in Acts 11:26, where Luke noted, "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Friends, neighbors, and associates saw striking similarities between the lifestyles of the first believers and Jesus Christ that society labeled them "Christians," or "Christ-like."

Modern Christians frequently display the cross in their homes or churches. But our witness is much more powerful and effective when we embody Jesus in our actions, attitude, and spirit. In this manner, we bear witness of Jesus and announce His coming Kingdom, just as John the Baptist did in the first century (John 1:15). We become living symbols of Jesus' power and authority. His light will shine through us into a dark world, and His glory will be revealed.

LESSON CONNECTION

Most often the Lesson Connection will be a story or illustration designed to give students a glimpse of the overall theme of the lesson. Since stories often appeal to the heart and emotions, this portion of the lesson seeks to engage the heart to receive the truth that will be taught. You are encouraged to personalize this section and include your own testimony to help students connect to the lesson.

BIBLE LESSON

The Bible Lesson is a manuscript of the entire lesson. The lessons are written by various Apostolic authors who not only skillfully explain the truths of Scripture but also share ways we can apply these truths to our lives. The lesson contains discussion questions to stimulate thought and media callouts (videos and images available in the Adult Resource Kit) to connect with students of all learning styles.

BIBLE LESSON

I. IN THE BEGINNING

The Bible opens with immortal words in its most memorable opening: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The apostle John, who would have been well acquainted with the opening line from Genesis, echoed its refrain when he began his Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). He then added, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

The writer of Hebrews expressed it this way in the opening of his letter:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power; when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Hebrews 1:1-3)

God who spoke the universe into existence at the beginning of time has shared with us His message of grace and truth through the person of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

A. The Logos

Much has been written about the concept of logos, a Greek term John used that most English translations render as "Word" in his book *The Oneness of God*. David K. Bernard noted, "In Greek usage, logos can mean the expression or plan as it exists in the mind of the proclaimer—as a play in the mind of a playwright—or it can mean the thought as uttered or otherwise physically expressed—as a play that is enacted on stage."

Before God created the world and everything in it—including humans—He knew we would eventually fall into sin and need a Savior. Consequently, God had a plan to redeem us through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Jesus lived out that plan by dying on a cross for our sins and rising from the dead, thereby securing our deliverance and salvation. This logos or plan was in the mind of God from the beginning (John 1:2). As John later wrote in Revelation 13:8, Jesus Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

B. Creator and Giver of Life

John made it clear that the logos was not separate from God, but "the Word was God" (John 1:1)—the same God Genesis credits with creating the Heaven and the Earth. "All things were

Teacher Option:
A supplemental image is available in the Resource Kit. 

INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

Some ideas and concepts cannot be fully grasped unless we see them acted out in the real world. Evil is an abstract idea until we witness the horrors humans perpetrate on each other every day. This lesson began with a summary of how Adolph Hitler became the embodiment of evil in the modern world. Recent history includes many accounts of tyrants whose names have become synonymous with brutality, genocide, and oppression—Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Pol Pot.

Thankfully, there also have been many individuals who embodied noble values. If you hear the words *equality, justice, or civil rights*, the image of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. may immediately come to mind. Leaders such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln illustrated the concepts of sacrifice, loyalty, devotion, and liberty to their countrymen. Lincoln's name became synonymous with emancipation thanks to his commitment to freeing enslaved people during the American Civil War. In more recent times, the Roman Catholic nun Mother Teresa became an international symbol of charity due to her selfless devotion to the poorest residents of Calcutta, India. We know what equality, liberty, freedom, and charity look like because we have seen these ideas lived out, albeit imperfectly, in others. Thankfully, most of us know someone personally who has shown us what love, kindness, compassion, faithfulness, and other virtues look like in daily life.

But when examined closely, all noteworthy personalities prove to be riddled with inconsistencies and flaws. Even biblical heroes such as Abraham, Moses, and David exhibited weaknesses and committed sins. God lives no human past or present could adequately represent His grace and truth, so He was manifested in flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). He alone lived a perfect life. Hebrews 4:15 says He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." When we look to Jesus, we see all the characteristics of God perfectly demonstrated in human form.

For this reason, John could write, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). When Philip said, "Lord, shew us the Father," Jesus responded, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9-10).

Even the best among us demonstrate inconsistencies and flaws. When we find ourselves disappointed by the failures of others, however, we can look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2, ESV). He will lift us when we fail, strengthen us when we are weak, and give us "power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12) through baptism in His name and the infilling and indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

Prayer Focus

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- To speak life to others
- To show grace to others

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INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

The end of each lesson will offer a final call to action to apply the lesson's content. The goal of each lesson is not just to share biblical information, but also to show what must be done with the information, challenging students to apply God's Word to their lives. You are encouraged to use the Prayer Focus to end the lesson with a time of consecration.

LEGEND

The following icons and boxes are used to aid leaders in navigating the content.

Contains a suggested discussion question

Gives direction regarding an available media callout



Signals the information can be used in a Small Group setting.



Shows a video component is available to help illustrate the lesson information.



Indicates an image is available to help illustrate the lesson information.

LEARNING AND LIVING OUT GOD'S WORD FOR LIFE



Join podcast host LJ Harry on the God's Word for Life companion podcast every week. Each episode complements the God's Word for Life Lesson Guide, Daily Devotional Guide, and the Small Group Guide as we think deeply about how God's Word impacts our lives. The podcast is a great tool for families and groups to listen to and discuss what we are learning from God's Word. The podcast shares stories and passages in Scripture with fresh insights to encourage followers of Jesus. Like the guides, each episode features discussion questions to help us apply what we are hearing and start conversations about God's Word.

Enjoy the God's Word for Life companion podcast as we learn and live out God's Word for Life.

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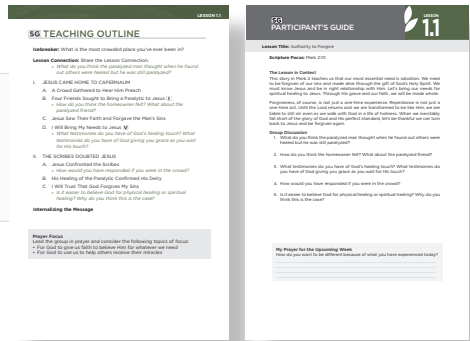
DIGITAL RESOURCE KIT

The Adult Resource Kit offers a wide array of materials to help expand the impact of each lesson. From videos that inspire discussion to social media tools to help encourage adults to join your group or class, this kit provides tools to help leaders grow their group and make teaching time more effective. Some resources include:



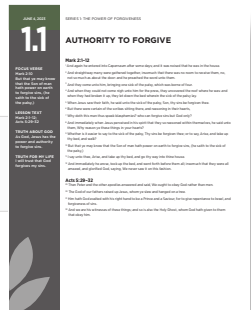
A Video to Accompany Each Lesson to Prompt Discussion or Further Thought

Small Group Teaching Outlines and Participant Guides



A Powerpoint to Accompany Each Lesson

Lesson Leaves and a Printable Version of the Scripture Text



Social Media Graphics, Tips, and Sample Posting Calendar

11

THE LORD'S PRAYER

FOCUS VERSE

Matthew 6:8

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

LESSON TEXT

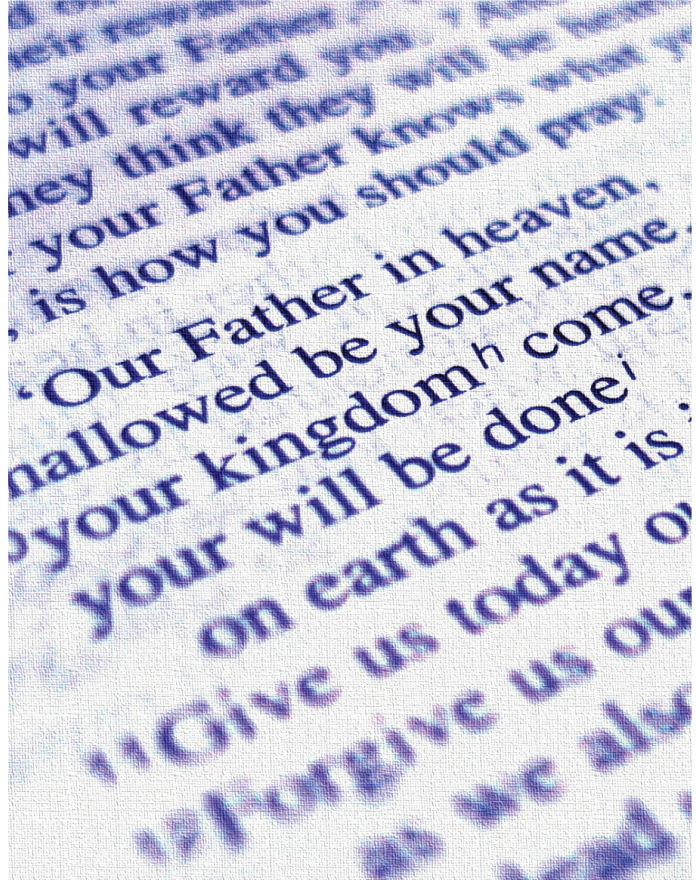
Matthew 6:5-18

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God invites us to pray.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will follow Jesus' pattern for prayer.



Series Overview:

Jesus invites us to pray, and He even shares a prayer request of His own: pray for laborers. In His compassion, He invites those laborers to come unto Him and rest, and ultimately prays for all of us—even with our personality differences—to be one.

SG TEACHING OUTLINE

Icebreaker: What was your first word? What about your children's first word?

Lesson Connection: Share the Lesson Connection.

I. THE POSTURE FOR PRAYER

- A. Prayer Is a Private Conversation, Not a Public Demonstration
 - » *Do you struggle to have a private conversation with God? If so, why do you think you struggle and how can you ask God to help you?*
- B. We Can Expect God to Answer Our Prayers
- C. I Will Pray with Expectation
 - » *Why do you think some people don't expect God to answer their prayer? How can a seemingly unanswered prayer be the right answer?*

II. THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER

- » *How do you use the Lord's Prayer in your daily devotion?*
- A. God Is a Loving Father Who Knows What Is Best for His Children
- B. God Will Answer If We Will Ask
- C. I Will Submit My Will, Plans, and Needs to God in Prayer **V**
 - » *What is the most bizarre prayer you have ever prayed? What is the most powerful prayer you have ever prayed?*

III. THE PURPOSE FOR PRAYER

- A. Thy Kingdom Come; Thy Will Be Done (Right Relationship with God) **I**
 - » *What would look different in your life if God set up His throne in your home?*
- B. We Must Forgive Others (Right Relationship with Others)
- C. I Will Forgive and Show Mercy to Others

Internalizing the Message

Prayer Focus

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- Thank God for His invitation to pray
- For God to help us to faithfully pray

LESSON CONNECTION

Leaving the church parking lot after a Sunday night service, Ray was driving, Niccole was in the passenger seat, and their young daughters were in the back seat. Their firstborn, Jael, was four years old and sprinting toward preschool. She could string sentences together into a story, but Kate was only a few months old. She had not yet said her first word, but her parents were ready and waiting.

Since it was late on a Sunday, Ray was thinking about what he wanted from Wendy's. As he stopped at the bright red light above them, he heard a sweet voice from the back seat. Kate softly said, "Dada." Dada nearly shoved the brake pedal through the floor. He quickly turned to Niccole, "Did you hear that? She said, 'Dada!'" His wife couldn't hide her smile. She heard their little girl too.

Up until that night, Niccole was winning the "first word war." About four years earlier, Jael's first word was "Mama." But on that sacred Sunday night, Kate tied the score at one apiece when she called her dad, "Dada." There is perhaps no sweeter name to a parent's ears than Mama or Dada. The girls could call their parents their provider, protector, tutor, homework helper, chauffeur, ATM, mortgage payer, clothes buyer, handyman, phone fixer, vacation planner, tough-to-open pickle-jar opener. But all those describe what the parents do for the children. When they say, "Dad," though, they describe who their father is to them.

We could search the Scriptures from now until New Year's, and we will find one title after another to call God when we call on Him. We could call Him provider, protector, healer, helper, shield, buckler (whatever that might be), redeemer, Savior, refuge, teacher. But Jesus said the one title He wants to hear when He hears us pray is Father. That makes sense to some, but to others, not so much. Jesus knew that. He knew His words would reach the eyes and ears of people in our day who did not have a strong relationship with their father.

If that is your story, you especially need the opening words of Jesus' lesson on prayer. Jesus will be to you what your father was not. He will do right what your father did wrong. When you pray, open up your prayer with the sweetest sound to His ears: call Jesus Father. If you think it sounds scandalous to you, think how it sounded to Jesus' first-century audience when they first heard it.

BIBLE LESSON

I. THE POSTURE FOR PRAYER

A. Prayer Is a Private Conversation, Not a Public Demonstration

All through the days of the Old Testament, God's people were scared of God. They saw Him as a ticket-tallying trooper following them around, waiting for them to forget to turn on their turn signal or drive one kilometer per hour over the posted speed limit. Then for four hundred years, God was eerily silent. The paper-thin page between the Old and New Testament covers four hundred years when God did not say a word.

During the silence, Rome had taken over the world and taxed Israel when and how much Rome wanted. God's people lived under the keen eye and iron fist of the Roman government. Then Jesus took a seat on the side of a mountain and told God's people that God was still listening when they prayed, and they could talk to Him. They could even call Him their Father because prayer is a private conversation between us and our Father. Prayer, especially private prayer, is just between you and God.

B. We Can Expect God to Answer Our Prayers

Our prayers don't just hit the chandelier and bounce back to us. God hears and answers our prayers. We see the goodness of God to hear and the greatness of God to answer collide in the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark. A leper who had lost his health and his humanity came to Jesus. For the last few months, maybe years, the man had been living with other lepers in a leper colony.

But one especially special day, he heard Jesus was walking through town, not far from where he was eking out his living. He ran from the shadows into the sunlight and everyone shrieked. Mothers hid their children. Rabbis even shooed him away, lest they or anyone else be made unclean. The scene was the same as every time before, but this time was different because this time Jesus was there. It is tragic we don't know the leper's name, so we only refer to him as a leper, as if his disease was his whole identity.

But he knelt in front of Jesus and prayed, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" (Mark 1:40). The NKJV reads, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Jesus was moved with compassion and moved toward the man and touched him. Everyone gasped. But Jesus showed him and us that He is not afraid of our sickness or our sin. Jesus gave this man something leprosy stole from him; Jesus gave him back his humanity. The man was no longer just a leper; he was "human" again. Jesus restored all of that with one answer to one prayer.

Do you struggle to have a private conversation with God? If so, why do you think you struggle and how can you ask God to help you?

C. I Will Pray with Expectation

When we pray, we can pray with expectation. God is good enough to hear and great enough to answer. Let's pray with expectation that God hears and answers. When He answers exactly as we pray, glory to God. When He answers differently than how we pray, glory to God. He knows what we don't and sees what we can't. The question Abraham asked in Genesis 18:25 rings as true for us now as for him then, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" We know God will because He is good and He is great.

Why do you think some people don't expect God to answer their prayer? How can a seemingly unanswered prayer be the right answer?

II. THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER

Sometimes people are overwhelmed by not knowing how to pray. Do I start with Father God? When do I give God my wish list? How long should I pray? In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us a pattern for our prayer, commonly called the Lord's Prayer. Jesus taught, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matthew 6:9-13). Some people simply repeat this prayer, but Jesus appeared to use it as a template, a pattern for us to know how to pray rather than words to repeat.

How do you use the Lord's Prayer in your daily devotion?

A. God Is a Loving Father Who Knows What Is Best for His Children

No doubt you have seen the scene play out at the store, usually around the checkout. Children walk with their parents toward the register, and suddenly they see bright orange and red and green and yellow candy wrappers, all at eye level. Children know Mom and Dad could buy them any candy bar they want because their parents have the money. Have you ever seen a parent tell a child no? Some children understand no means no, but some children hear no as the trigger to a tantrum.

Parents know too much sugar could cause diabetes and cavities. They are already thinking ahead to the dentist visit and their crying child as the dentist drills into the rotten tooth. When parents say no, it does not mean they don't love their children; it might mean they do love their children. God is our loving Father, and only He knows what is best for us because He knows more than we know and sees farther than we see.

B. God Will Answer If We Will Ask

Perhaps you have prayed before and God did not answer like you wanted Him to. Pray again. God will answer if we will ask. James wrote, "Yet ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2). We do not need to know how God will answer; just know He will. Scripture's two testaments are brimming with testimonies

of answered prayers. God parted water, rained down manna and quail, parted water again, felled fortified walls, held the sun still, rained down fire, directed a stone to fell a giant, and those are just a few answers from the first few books of the Bible. God blessed His people and fought for them because He loved them. He loves us the same as He loved them.

C. I Will Submit My Will, Plans, and Needs to God in Prayer

When we pray, we must submit our will, our plans, and our needs to God. We acknowledge what children acknowledge when they ask their parents for candy: You have the power; I don't. But You also have the wisdom; I don't. It is possible to pray for the wrong things. If we are praying for a five-thousand-square-foot house with a five-thousand-dollar-a-month mortgage for two people working at Subway, neither a lender nor the Lord would smile on that prayer.

Teacher Option:
A supplemental video is available in the Resource Kit. **V**

It is also possible to pray for the right things for the wrong reasons. Take a close look at motives. If I pray for someone to be healed so people will praise me, not God, I am praying for the right thing for the wrong reason. Jesus answered the question of questionable motives by teaching us to pray, "Thy will be done." If we pray that prayer for everyone every time, we will be praying for the right things for the right reasons: the will and glory of God.

*What is the most bizarre prayer you have ever prayed?
What is the most powerful prayer you have ever prayed?*

III. THE PURPOSE FOR PRAYER

A. Thy Kingdom Come; Thy Will Be Done (Right Relationship with God)

Right between Milwaukee and Chicago is a small city called Zion, Illinois. Zion was founded in 1900 by John Dowie, who was known to pray, and God healed people of their diseases. Some medical students set off stink bombs during one of his sermons; he wasn't making a lot of friends with the doctors of his day. Dowie envisioned a utopian city where God's kingdom would come on Earth, so he set out to build a city on Earth that looked a lot like Heaven, absent the jasper wall and golden streets.

Teacher Option:
A supplemental image is available in the Resource Kit. **I**

Dowie founded the city of Zion, Illinois, but it never grew to Heaven on Earth like he hoped. He died from a stroke while fighting lawsuits and financial collapse. Dowie had the right motive but the wrong method. We do not have to sell everything and move to Zion, Illinois; just pray for the kingdom of God to come where we are. Pray for the kingdom of God to come in your home.

How would we live if God's throne sat right next to the couch in our living room? Would we be more Christian in our searching and scrolling if God's throne sat in view of the laptop? What would our services look like if God's throne sat right in front of our pulpit?

What would look different in your life if God set up His throne in your home?

B. We Must Forgive Others (Right Relationship with Others)

Our relationship with God is only half of the Lord's Prayer; our relationship with each other is the other half. First John 4 reads, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:20-21).

In Matthew 6:13, as soon as Jesus said "Amen" in this prayer, He circled back to the hard work of forgiveness and taught, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). People will hurt you deeply. Some fathers will abandon, abuse, or neglect their own children. Some spouses will cheat after vowing never to cheat; some will abuse. Some children will rebel. Some bosses will empty your pockets by filling theirs. Friends will lie. Brothers and sisters in the church will hurt each other. Even ministry may disappoint you. In it all, through it all, we are called to forgive.

C. I Will Forgive and Show Mercy to Others

Jesus understood that forgiveness is rarely easy, but forgiveness is always right. Forgiveness does not justify or condone what others have done. It does not make their wrongs right, but it does heal us. Bitterness is a poison, deadly to the heart, and the only way to be healed is by asking God to forgive us as we forgive others. One of the most difficult yet most powerful prayers you will pray is: "God, I forgive them."

INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

Much of the world was hearing the gospel, but no one seemed to go as far west in America as Alaska. But in the mid-1880s, the Moravian missionaries ventured into the cold Alaskan territories to share the gospel with people who had not yet heard it. As they began to share the story of Jesus and how He died so we could live, they tried to communicate the concept of forgiveness. How do you talk about forgiveness to people who have no word for forgiveness? The gospel is powerful, it is beautiful, and it centers around God forgiving us of our sins and us being able to forgive others for their sins against us.

The missionaries worked with the Alaskan people, and they compounded and coined a word, *issumagijoujungnainermik*. It is hard to pronounce, even harder to spell, but it means “not able to think about it anymore.” Forgiveness was so real to them that they chose to forgive and—by the grace of God—even forget. When God forgives our sins, Hebrews 8:12 teaches us He will remember our sins no more. May we forgive as freely and fully as God has forgiven us, not harboring bitterness and grudges against others or dwelling on the hurt we have felt. Let's give it all to God and pray for our Father to give us the grace not to think about it anymore.

Forgiveness heals us before it ever heals those we have forgiven. Forgiveness frees us to live free again rather than wait in a prison of our own making as we hope they hurt like we hurt. Unforgiveness is a cruel warden who keeps us in prison while the person who hurt us goes free. Strangely enough, unforgiveness is the only prison that leaves the key on the bench beside us and the lock on the inside of the cell. To go free, we just need to pick up the key, carefully and prayerfully place it in the lock, and turn. The door will open, and we will be free.

Prayer Focus

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- Thank God for His invitation to pray
- For God to help us to faithfully pray