



KINGDOM PRAYERS

Forty Daily Devotions on Prayer
from Various Books of the Bible
(Based on the NKJV)

Introduction

As far as I can see, there are only two recorded instances where the disciples demanded something from the Lord and both of those accounts are recorded in the gospel of Luke. After being told that they should be willing to forgive a sinning brother “seven times in a day,” the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith” (Luke 17:4-5)! The other time the disciples seemed to demand something from Jesus is recorded earlier in Luke’s gospel. In Luke 11:1 we are told that, after hearing Jesus pray, His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray!” In all the gospel records we nowhere find the disciples asking Jesus to teach them to heal, preach, teach, or minister in any other way. Perhaps the disciples understood that the secret to the life that Jesus was living before them was His divine connection to His Heavenly Father! It was a connection they strongly desired to have in their own lives. It is one that should be desired by all Christians today. Kingdom Prayers traces teachings on prayer throughout the Old and New Testaments and offers insight into ways that our personal prayer life can be more like that of Jesus, and therefore, more of what God desires it to be!

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Genesis 26:12-25	2/10/26
2	Exodus 34:8-35	2/11/26
3	Numbers 11:1-15	2/12/26
4	Deuteronomy 26:1-15	2/13/26
5	Joshua 10:1-15	2/14/26
6	Judges 6:11-24	2/15/26
7	1 Samuel 1:1-18	2/16/26
8	2 Samuel 21:1-14	2/17/26
9	1 Kings 3:1-15	2/18/26
10	2 Kings 20:1-11	2/19/26
11	1 Chronicles 29:10-28	2/20/26
12	2 Chronicles 14:1-15	2/21/26
13	Job 1:1-22	2/22/26
14	Psalms 51:1-13	2/23/26
15	Isaiah 6:1-13	2/24/26
16	Jeremiah 33:1-18	2/25/26
17	Ezekiel 11:1-16	2/26/26
18	Daniel 9:1-19	2/27/26
19	Jonah 2:1-10	2/28/26
20	Habakkuk 3:1-19	3/01/26

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Matthew 6:1-15	3/02/26
22	Matthew 26:26-46	3/03/26
23	Mark 1:21-35	3/04/26
24	Luke 9:23-36	3/05/26
25	John 17:1-26	3/06/26
26	Acts 4:13-31	3/07/26
27	Romans 1:1-16	3/08/26
28	2 Corinthians 12:1-13	3/09/26
29	Ephesians 6:1-20	3/10/26
30	Philippians 4:1-13	3/11/26
31	Colossians 4:2-15	3/12/26
32	2 Thessalonians 1:1-12	3/13/26
33	2 Timothy 4:1-18	3/14/26
34	Hebrews 4:1-16	3/15/26
35	James 4:1-15	3/16/26
36	James 5:1-18	3/17/26
37	1 Peter 3:1-12	3/18/26
38	1 John 5:1-14	3/19/26
39	Jude 1:1-23	3/20/26
40	Revelation 22:1-20	3/21/26

Day 1: Genesis 26:12-25

“So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac’s servants dug a well.” (Genesis 26:25)

Early in my Christian life I encountered the phrase, *“Prayer changes things!”* It was emblazoned on a poster that hung in our Youth Sunday School Classroom. It was often seen on church signs and on bumper stickers on automobiles. My pastor frequently quoted that phrase and sometimes preached sermons bearing that title. It would be virtually impossible for us to recall all the ways that prayer has changed things in our lives. Today’s Scripture verses tell a story from the life of Isaac. It is a story about *problems*. Isaac prospered at the hand of God, and he had many flocks and herds. But he had no water for his animals because “the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father” (v. 15). After Isaac restored some of the wells, his enemies were angered and claimed the water in the restored wells as their own. Because of this, our story also becomes a story about *patience*. Rather than quarrel with his enemies, Isaac simply “moved from there and dug another well” (v. 22). Eventually he moved on to Beersheba, and “the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, ‘I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham’s sake’” (v. 24). That promise from God added another dimension to our story by making it a story about *prayer*. Isaac “built an altar there” and “dug a well” (v. 25). The building of the altar and the digging of the well indicated that Isaac intended to stay and spend some time in that place where he had spent time with God in prayer.

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Prayers provide the answers to all of life’s challenges and provide a sense of permanence in our lives. **Establish** your own prayer altar and then stay with it! **Refuse** to allow your schedule to become too busy for private time with God!

Day 2: Exodus 34:8-35

“Then he said, ‘If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we are a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance.’” (Exodus 34:9)

The prayer of Moses recorded in Exodus 34:9 is marked by three divine characteristics. First, he prayed for God’s *presence* when he prayed, “Let my Lord, I pray, go among us.” Then Moses prayed for God’s *pardon*. He asked God to “pardon our iniquity and our sin.” In his previous comments to the Lord, he confessed to God that they were “a stiff-necked people.” The third characteristic of this humble man’s prayer was found in his request for *posterity*. He asked God to take him and his people as His own “inheritance.” Moses knew that the survival of his nation was totally dependent on the grace and goodness of God. God answered Moses’ prayer and promised to “make a covenant” with them and to “do marvels such as (had) not been done in all the earth” (v. 10). God further promised that His power would be obvious to “all the people among whom you are” and that they would “see the work of the LORD” (v. 10). The children of Israel clearly saw the glory of God on Moses as he returned from his prayer meeting with God as a transformed man whose face literally glowed with the presence of God!

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that it will be evident to those around us when we spend time in **Kingdom Prayer**. **Remember** that God has called us to be “lights” to the world around us and nothing can better fuel our light and our lives than spending time with God in prayer. **Ask** God to make you a shining light for Him every day and in every way! The world desperately needs to see God in us!

Day 3: Numbers 11:1-15

“I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me.” (Numbers 11:14)

We find two records of Moses praying in today’s Scripture reading. The first prayer finds Moses praying for the people after God’s anger was aroused by their complaining and “the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some” of them (v. 1). In anguish, “the people cried out to Moses” for relief (v. 2). How inspiring it is to read that, “when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was quenched” (v. 2). The second prayer recorded in these verses is much longer, more personal, and recorded in greater detail. After seeking relief for the people, Moses sought some personal relief from his own problems. As we read the Bible, it is not uncommon for us to read about spiritual leaders who became discouraged due to difficult circumstances. Some of the greatest servants of the Lord suffered from times of great despair, sometimes even to the point of desperation. Job begged God to take his life (Job 6:8-9). Elijah once “prayed that he might die, and said, ‘It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life’” (1 Kings 19:4). Jonah prayed, “O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live” (Jonah 4:3). Life’s burdens can sometimes seem too heavy for us to bear. We may find ourselves crying out to God in desperation when we have gone as far as we think that we can go. God did not turn a deaf ear to Moses, and He will not do so with us. Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Prayers are sometimes born from necessity. **Look** to God for relief when life’s difficulties are overwhelming you. **Realize** that you are never alone. **Learn** to **trust** God to keep His promises and to strengthen His people in their times of need.

Day 4: Deuteronomy 26:1-15

“Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression.” (Deuteronomy 26:7)

I grew up hearing about the “three R’s” of education. They stood for “reading, writing, and arithmetic.” What many people may not know is that in the colonial days, there were actually “four R’s” in the public school system. They based their curriculum on “reading, writing, arithmetic, and *religion!*” We have come a long way since those times! Today’s Scriptures brought the idea of what could be called the “three R’s” of prayer and worship to my mind. In our verses, we first find our praying spiritual ancestors *remembering*. They remembered how the LORD had brought them “out of Egypt with a mighty hand” and the many “signs and wonders” He had so faithfully performed for them (v. 8). They remembered that He had “given” them “a land flowing with milk and honey” (v. 9). Second, we find these praying people *rejoicing*. Verse 11 states, “So you shall *rejoice* in every good thing which the LORD your God has given to you and your house.” Note that we are told to rejoice “in *every* good thing.” How much more would we enjoy our time spent in prayer and personal worship if we would but obey that command and follow that example? Finally, their prayer and worship time included a time of *returning*. Their prayers were accompanied by their tithes and their gifts to help care for “the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow” (v. 12).

Prayer Emphasis: Pray often! **Include** some time for the “three R’s” in your private conversations with God. **Praise Him** for the wonderful things He brings into your life every day. **Honor** God for what He gives to you by giving back to Him!

Day 5: Joshua 10:1-15

“Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: ‘Sun, stand still over Gibeon; and the moon in the Valley of Aijalon.’” (Joshua 10:12)

While in a fierce battle, Joshua went to his Divine Captain and asked for a miracle! This was no time for glittering generalities or pretty praying. This was a time to express a need and to clearly state what God was being asked to do. Few of us ever pray with any specificity. We ask God to help the poor but seldom name a poor person or their need. We ask God to heal the sick but seldom pray for specific healing for a specific person. We ask God to save the lost but do not bring any names of the lost before His throne. Joshua boldly asked God to cause the sun and the moon to “stand still” so that the battle could go on and Israel’s enemies could be defeated. And notice that Joshua did not hide away secretly and whisper his prayer to God. When the Bible states that he prayed “in the sight of Israel” it indicates that the people *saw* their leader pray and that they possibly *heard* his prayer. While some opponents of the Bible and our faith use this story to point out the Bible’s ignorance of science (due to the fact that we now know that the sun does not move around the earth but that the earth moves around the sun) they, themselves, still use terms like “sunrise” and “sunset” and often speak of the sun “coming up” and “going down.” It may very well be that Joshua did not clearly understand as much about our solar system as we do today, but it is evident that he knew some things about God and that God clearly heard and understood Joshua’s prayer!

Prayer Emphasis: **Dare** to ask God for bold things! **Believe** that God desires to hear and answer your prayers. **Remember** that anything that lies within God’s will lies within the believer’s reach! **Be bold** in your prayers and make your heart’s desire fully known to God.

Day 6: Judges 6:11-24

“So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it Jehovah Shalom (The LORD is Peace). To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.” (Judges 6:24)

There are many benefits to spending time with God in prayer. Today’s Bible story finds a man named Gideon experiencing some of those divine benefits. It is important that we see that this story about prayer took place in desperate times. When the Angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon and declared that God was with him, Gideon’s heart was filled with doubts and questions. In verse 13 Gideon asked, “If the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about...?” Because of the oppression of an enemy, Gideon concluded that “the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites” (v. 13). As a result of this conversation with God, the fearful Gideon experienced three things. First, he *saw God’s power*. At God’s instruction, Gideon placed meat and bread upon a rock and, after God’s touch, “fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread” (v. 21). It was then that Gideon fully *sensed God’s presence*. He “perceived” that his visitor was the Angel of the LORD and he cried out, “I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face” (v. 22)! Finally, through prayer, Gideon *shared God’s peace*. Gideon named his altar “Jehovah Shalom” which means “The LORD is Peace” (v. 24).

Prayer Emphasis: It may be that Gideon’s altar no longer stands today, but we can rest assured that God’s peace is still there for us. **Claim** God’s peace in even the most desperate situations. **Trust** God in all things!

Day 7: 1 Samuel 1:1-18

“And it happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.” (1 Samuel 1:12-13a)

Although we know Hannah was most likely not the first woman to ever pray, our Scripture reading includes the Bible’s first *recorded* instance of a woman praying! When we consider all the godly women we have read about in the chapters and verses that precede 1 Samuel, we might be surprised to learn that Hannah was the first to have her prayer recorded in the Bible. Hannah began her prayer audibly. Verse 11 states that “she made a vow and *said*, ‘O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me...give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life’ (v. 11). Obviously, she kept praying, but what she had to say to God after that has been kept from us. Eli saw her “praying before the LORD,” and as he “watched her mouth...her lips moved, but her voice was not heard” (vs. 12-13). The exciting truth to this story is that “her voice was not heard” by the high priest Eli, but it *was* heard by the High Priest of Heaven! The concluding phrase in this story helps us to see the urgency with which Hannah prayed. We are told that she “poured out (her) soul before the LORD” (v. 15). The repetition of the word “maidservant” allows us to see this woman’s *humility* while the words “poured out” allow us to see her *hunger* for an answer from God.

Prayer Emphasis: Like Hannah, **come** before God not only *humbly* but also *hungrily*. **Pour** your own needs out before Him and **reveal** to Him the deepest longings of your heart. **Believe** that your Heavenly Father desires to have an intimate relationship with you. Also, **pray** for the women of our church today.

Day 8: 2 Samuel 21:1-14

“Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered...” (2 Samuel 21:1)

Such as is often the case, a problem drove King David to prayer. There was a famine that lasted three long, consecutive years. The literal meaning of the Hebrew words that are translated “inquired of the LORD” is “sought the face of the LORD.” You might say that the times had become so desperate that David sensed a need for some “one-on-one” or “face-to-face” time with God. What David learned from God was that while Saul was Israel’s king, he led his people in an assault against the Gibeonites and many of their people had been killed. How sad it is to see that all the people suffered so severely because of the mistakes of one misguided leader! More than 400 years before Saul’s time, Joshua had “made a covenant” with the Gibeonites and had pledged “to let them live” (Joshua 9:15). The leaders of God’s congregation said, “We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them” (Joshua 9:19). They went on to say, “We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them” (Joshua 9:20). King Saul, because of his obvious ignorance of God’s Word, put Israel in a bad place. Perhaps if Saul had “inquired of the LORD” such a terrible mistake might never have been made, and many of God’s people might have been spared from the drastic consequences that they experienced.

Prayer Emphasis: **Search** your own heart and life when trouble comes your way. **Request** a “face-to-face” meeting with God and see if there is any sin in your life that needs to be confessed and forgiven. **Remember**, a clean *heart* leads to clean *hands*!

Day 9: 1 Kings 3:1-15

“Behold, I have done according to your words...” (1 Kings 3:12)

We read today where God, in a dream, basically gave young King Solomon a “blank check” when, in verse five of today’s reading, He said to him, “Ask! What shall I give you?” How refreshing it is to see Solomon asking God for one thing only, “an understanding heart” (v. 9). The word translated “understanding” in that verse is a word that literally means “hearing.” It is obvious that Solomon’s desire was to “hear” from God and receive divine wisdom and guidance so that he could fulfill his responsibilities as king over God’s people. We might often wish that God would make such a magnificent offer to us. Well, He has! Jesus told us to “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). He also promised that “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7). Near the end of his life, and in one of his final written communications to us, John said, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14). God’s promises to us are as real and powerful as His promise to Solomon. Wonderful, spiritual riches are available to us, but it might be that we “do not have because (we) do not ask” (James 4:2). When we feel as though we are not receiving anything from the Lord, it might be that He could say to us, “Behold, I have done according to your words.” If we examine our prayer life, we may see that the problem is not that God is not *answering* our prayers, but that we are not *asking* with specificity when we do pray!

Prayer Emphasis: Ask yourself, “What have I truly asked God for lately?” **Evaluate** your spiritual needs and don’t waste one single prayer on the frivolous things that benefit only your physical person. **Refuse** to one day stand before God and learn that you never got around to asking Him for anything.

Day 10: 2 Kings 20:1-11

“Then he (Hezekiah) turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD...” (2 Kings 20:2)

There are several notable facts about King Hezekiah. First, he was a godly king and *a great spiritual leader*. One of his first acts as king was to repair and reopen the Temple which had been abandoned during the days of his father, Ahaz. After ridding the land of idols, he reinstated the celebration of the Passover and summoned all of Judah and Israel to attend. But Hezekiah was also *a mighty warrior*. He launched an attack against the Philistines and retook the cities that they had conquered during his father’s reign. Besides recapturing Judah’s own cities, he marched into the territory of the Philistines and captured most of their cities! Hezekiah was also *a mighty builder*. He built a tunnel and reservoir to provide a fresh water supply to the people of the city (2 Kings 20:20). But even the mightiest and bravest of men are meek when they come face to face with death. We are told that when he was advised by Isaiah to “set your house in order, for you shall die” (v. 1), this great spiritual leader, mighty warrior, and great builder “wept bitterly” (v. 3). Not all prayers are answered as quickly as we might desire. Some of the greatest Christians whose lives are recorded in the Bible waited prolonged periods before seeing their prayers answered. Such was not the case with King Hezekiah. He had an answer from God even before Isaiah left the palace complex.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for personal healing – not only for yourself, but for others. Be *bold enough to ask* God for miracles but *brave enough to wait* for God to answer in His own time. **Take** your every need – big or small – before the throne of God.

Day 11: 1 Chronicles 29:10-28

“Then David said to all the assembly, ‘Now bless the LORD your God.’ So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.” (1 Chronicles 29:20)

David was a true leader. The first verse of today’s Scripture reading tells us that “David blessed the LORD before all the assembly.” Looking back at 1 Chronicles 28:1, we see that the assembly referenced here included “the leaders of Israel: the officers of the tribes and the captains of the divisions who served the king, the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, and the stewards...the officials, the valiant men, and all the mighty men of valor.” There was nothing timid or bashful about David when it came to his prayer life. He was a man with *faults* and *flaws*, but he was also a man of great *faith*, and he expressed it unashamedly before his subjects. If he was going to ask his people to “bless the LORD” then they needed to see in him a willingness to do the same. When “all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers” they did it not just in obedience to an *exhortation* but in honor of a godly *example*. No one was exempt from this admonition to pray. David’s call to prayer went out to “all the assembly.” The words “your God” indicate that it was his desire that this would be a very personal time in which the people would bow and prostrate themselves before their God.

Prayer Emphasis: How long has it been since you actually bowed before God and prostrated yourself before His throne? **Spend** some time on your knees before God today. **Worship** Him for who He is and **praise** Him for all that He has done for you.

Day 12: 2 Chronicles 14:1-15

“And Asa cried out... ‘help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You...’” (2 Chronicles 14:11)

Asa was noted for his support of the worship of God and his opposition to idols. His spiritual battle against idolatry was so fierce that he once destroyed an idol that had been erected by his own grandmother (1 Kings 15:13). He wisely built an army of over a half-million “mighty men of valor” (v. 8). When his land was attacked by an army of one million Ethiopians, God helped Asa’s army defeat their attackers and chase them away, even though they were outnumbered two-to-one. It is obvious though, that Asa’s confidence was not in his mighty army. His prayer to God contained this confession, “We rest on You.” The word translated “rest” in that verse is often translated “lean” in other places in the Bible. For instance, it is the word that is translated “lean” in Proverbs 3:5 where we read “*Lean* not on your own understanding.” In 2 Chronicles 13:18 this same word is used to report that “the children of Israel...*relied* on the LORD God of their fathers.” This same word is found again in 2 Chronicles 16:8 where Asa was told that the Ethiopians had been defeated because he had “*relied* on the LORD.” There is an important lesson to be learned from this praying king. We should *plan* and *prepare* as if everything depended upon us but *pray* as if everything depended upon God. Asa was wise to build an army. God used that army to bring about a great victory and to protect His people. However, Asa was wise enough to know that he should not rely on an *army* but on the *Almighty!*

Prayer Emphasis: **Plan** and **prepare** for life’s battles but **lean** strongly on the LORD for your victories. **Praise** God for some victory He has brought into your life and **share** a testimony about it with someone today.

Day 13: Job 1:1-22

“Then Job arose, tore his robe...and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.’” (Job 1:20-21)

Here are a few points to briefly consider about the story of Job. He was a man who endured his great trial, no doubt, in a profound sense of *mystery*. Although we have the story of God’s conversation with Satan that is contained in verses six through twelve of our Bible reading, there is no indication that God ever explained any of that to Job. Job was left to suffer without any knowledge as to why so many tragic events had transpired or why so many tragic calamities had come upon him. But not only was there a profound sense of mystery in Job’s life, the trials that came upon him brought with them a profound sense of *misery*. In what must have been a very short time, Job lost all his possessions, including his children. Not long after that, God allowed Satan to smite Job “with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (2:7). However, when we read the rest of Job’s story, we see that Job handled his sorrowful trials *masterfully*. In all his trials, Job “did not sin nor charge God with wrong” (v. 22). In verses 20 and 21, we see both a great *prayer* and a great *pray-er*. For many of us it might have been said that we fell to the ground – and *wept* or that we fell to the ground, pounded our fists, and *kicked our feet*. But for Job it was said that he “*fell to the ground and worshiped*.”

Prayer Emphasis: **Trust** God’s promise that He “will never leave you or forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5). **Note** that the story does not stop at “Job fell to the ground” but continues by saying that Job “fell to the ground and *worshiped*.” **Ask** God to give you the kind of faith that does not allow your trials and tribulations to keep you from worshiping God in your daily prayer.

Day 14: Psalm 51:1-13

“For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.” (Psalm 51:3)

Psalm 51 serves as a wonderful example for those who desire to confess their sin(s) and receive forgiveness. There are several important points to be made from today’s reading. First, David’s prayer expressed *responsibility*. Notice that David prayed saying, “*my* transgressions” and “*my* sin.” Take a moment and look back through the 13 verses you read and note the number of times that you see the words, “I,” “me,” or “my.” Depending on which translation you are reading, you should be able to circle about 24 of those personal pronouns! Second, David’s prayer clearly expressed *regret*. He said that his sin was “always before” him. Even though he had been *forgiven*, David had never *forgotten* that he had failed God in some terrible ways. Third, David’s prayer expressed *repentance*. He asked God to “purge” him and to “wash” him so that he could be “clean” (v. 7). Fourth, David’s prayer expressed a desire for *restoration*. While sin could never rob him of his salvation, it certainly could rob him of many of the blessings that should have accompanied it. He earnestly prayed that God would “restore to (him) the joy of...salvation” (v. 12). Finally, David’s prayer expressed a desire to *reach* out to others with the story of redemption. He said that “then” (after his sin had been confessed and he had been spiritually cleansed) “I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You” (v. 13).

Prayer Emphasis: **Be** honest with yourself and with God! **Refuse** to allow sin to create a separation between you and God. Be faithful to **confess** your sins and **seek** God’s gracious forgiveness and restoration.

Day 15: Isaiah 6:1-13

“So I said, ‘Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips...’” (Isaiah 6:5)

We can rest assured that the “I” in our focus verse stands for “Isaiah!” When you review the chapters that precede Isaiah six, you see that Isaiah was quite gifted at pronouncing “woes” upon those that he considered to be sinful people! In 3:9 he pronounced a “woe” upon people that sinned openly before God. In 3:11 he pronounced a “woe” upon “the wicked.” Then, in 5:8 he pronounced a “woe” upon the greedy people who desired to own all the land for themselves. But his series of issued “woes” did not stop there! In 5:11 he is found pronouncing yet another “woe.” This time it was upon those who followed “intoxicating drink.” If you take a careful look at Isaiah 5:18-23 you will see yet five more “woes” coming from the lips of God’s preacher. That makes for nine “woes” that are found in Isaiah chapters three through five! How interesting that is, when we stop to consider that nine is a number closely associated with “judgment” throughout the Bible. Obviously, Isaiah was a preacher of judgment! But, in today’s reading we find a tenth “woe.” This time it not only comes *from* Isaiah, but it is also *about* Isaiah. The first verse of this chapter tells us this “woe” came from Isaiah after he “saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up.” When Isaiah clearly saw “the Lord” he was finally able to see beyond others and clearly see himself. We gather that what he saw about himself had something to do with the way he had been speaking about others because he confessed that he was “a man of unclean lips” (v. 5).

Prayer Emphasis: **Avoid** the temptation to notice “the speck in your brother’s eye” without taking time to “consider the plank in your own eye” (Matthew 7:3). **Repent** of the sin of gossip and **refrain** from joining in with those who do it. When gossip starts, respond with a “Whoa!”

Day 16: Jeremiah 33:1-18

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”
(Jeremiah 33:3)

The first verse of chapter 33 of Jeremiah finds the prophet “shut up in the court of the prison,” and the first few verses of chapter 32 tell us why he was there. During the siege of Jerusalem, just before Nebuchadnezzar conquered the city and took the people into the Babylonian captivity, King Zedekiah had Jeremiah imprisoned because he prophesied that these events would take place (Jeremiah 32:1-5). So, it was that the great call to prayer, and the great promise of being shown “great and mighty things, which you do not know,” came to the prophet while his beloved city was under siege and while he was in prison. The word translated “call” in our focus verse means to “call out” or “cry out.” It is the same word used in Genesis 3:9 where we are told that, after Adam and Eve sinned, “the LORD God *called* to Adam.” God “called” to Adam because He wanted Adam to hear Him and now, He is commanding Jeremiah to “call” to Him because He wants to hear from His suffering prophet. The term “great and mighty” refers to things that are beyond the ability of the human mind to conceive – much less to achieve. The Hebrew word that is translated “things” in this verse is the same word that was used by the spies to describe the fortified cities of the people who inhabited the Promised Land. God eventually convinced them that He could bring down those walls and He wants us to know that He can, and will, do the same kind of things for us today.

Prayer Emphasis: **Dare** to ask God for “great and mighty things.” **Believe** that God can hear us even in the most difficult situations and circumstances. **Repeat** and **claim** God’s promise: “I will answer you.”

Day 17: Ezekiel 11:1-16

“...Then I fell on my face and cried with a loud voice, and said, ‘Ah, Lord GOD! Will You make a complete end of the remnant of Israel?’” (Ezekiel 11:13)

Ezekiel preached to God’s people during their captivity in Babylon. He was part of the second group of 10,000 that was taken from Jerusalem to captivity in Babylon (2 Kings 24:12-15). While in exile, Ezekiel lived “by the River Chebar” in Babylon, and it was there “that the heavens were opened” and he “saw visions of God” (Ezekiel 1:1). His own testimony was that, “I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the LORD had shown me” (11:25). Many of the leaders of the people came to him for counsel. In 8:1, we read that “the elders of Judah” visited him and were “sitting before” him. In that verse Ezekiel said that they came to “my house.” Although we do not know much about Ezekiel’s personal life, we know that he was married, because he wrote about the day that his “wife died” in Ezekiel 24:18. It is obvious that this great prophet of God experienced some things very similar to Job. In his times of anguish, he turned to the Lord in prayer. His prayer was nothing like the typical praying that we do today. He said, “I fell on my face and cried with a loud voice.” It is not difficult to see the desperation and urgency with which Ezekiel prayed. Even though he knew that the Babylonian captivity was going to be limited to 70 years, he feared that God had taken His hand off His people altogether.

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that there are people all around you who are in times of great discouragement and despair. **Reach out** to someone who is hurting today and tell them that you are praying for them. If possible, **pray** with them, asking God to encourage and comfort their heart.

Day 18: Daniel 9:1-19

“Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.” (Daniel 9:3)

Daniel was included in the first group that was taken from Jerusalem into Babylonian captivity. Even while in captivity, he remained faithful to God in prayer. As we look at the important lessons that can be learned from this section of Scripture, we notice some very important things about Daniel’s prayer life. First, his prayers were based on his knowledge of the *Scriptures*. Because he “understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD” (v. 2), he knew that the time was coming that he would be restored to his home in the Promised Land. Second, we see that Daniel prayed with *steadfastness*. He “set” his “face toward the Lord God.” This phrase means much the same thing that it meant when we are told that Jesus “steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). Daniel was determined to pray and nothing, or no one, was going to stop him from doing so. Third, we see that Daniel prayed with *supplications*. This simply means that Daniel came to God with specific requests. Fourth, we see that Daniel prayed with *sacrifice*. He prayed “with fasting.” If any believer is going to be faithful in prayer, they will have to make some personal sacrifices in order to do so. Finally, Daniel prayed with *symbolism*. “Sackcloth and ashes” represented his grief over Israel’s present situation. If we are unhappy with the way things are in our current situations, then we, too, must show God that we are serious about this business of prayer.

Prayer Emphasis: Make time for prayer and then **be faithful** to it. **Be specific** in your requests and **ask** God for something! **Look** for things that you can **sacrifice** or do without so that you will have time to spend and meet God daily in prayer.

Day 19: Jonah 2:1-10

“Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish’s belly.” (Jonah 2:1)

Whenever we encounter the word “then” in the Bible we would do well to ask ourselves, “When?” *When* did Jonah turn to the LORD in prayer? It was only after he had learned some difficult lessons about putting God’s will first in his life that Jonah “prayed to God.” Today’s Scripture reading emphasizes one of the blessings that might accompany our “afflictions.” Jonah said, “I cried out to the LORD *because of my affliction*” (v. 2). And how did God respond to this willfully disobedient prophet? Did Jonah say, “And He *admonished* me?” No! Jonah said, “And He *answered* me” (v. 2). It is important to note that turning to God in prayer did not immediately remedy all of Jonah’s problems because that same verse goes on to explain that God answered Jonah “out of the belly” of the fish. Jonah knew that it was because of his own disobedience and lack of respect for God’s commands that he was in his desperate situation. He also knew that it was God’s own hand that had brought him to where he was. He stated, “For *You* cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas” (v. 3). Yet, even from there, prayer allowed this repentant prophet to “look again toward (God’s) holy temple” (v. 4). He said, “When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; and my prayer went up to (Him) into (His) holy temple” (v. 7). There is no place from which God cannot or does not hear the prayers of His saints! Whatever your situation, cry out to God and seek His face for comfort and relief.

Prayer Emphasis: **Pray** despite your circumstances or situation. **Realize** that some of the most effective prayers recorded in the Bible were uttered in times of absolute desperation. **Reach up** to God from wherever you are and **believe** that God hears you.

Day 20: Habakkuk 3:1-19

“A prayer of Habakkuk...O LORD, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O LORD revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known...” (Habakkuk 3:1-2)

While little is known of the circumstances of Habakkuk’s life, we can know that he was a “prophet” (v. 1) and that he was somehow associated with the music ministry in the Jewish temple worship. The inscription found at the close of his book states that he was writing “to the Chief Musician.” If he was qualified to take part in the temple singing, he had to be a Levite, the family of priests that was charged with the responsibility of caring for the temple and leading the temple worship. The first two chapters of Habakkuk include a “question and answer” session that this man had with God. Here in the third chapter, we find him asking God to “revive (His) work in the midst of the years” (v. 2). He was not asking God to change “the years” but to “revive (His) work” in their “midst.” He knew that, even though the hearts of God’s people had changed toward Him, God’s heart had not changed and whatever He had done in the past He could readily do again! Note that Habakkuk did not say, “Revive *my* work” but “revive *Your* work.” We often pray only for our own needs and for our own ministries or circumstances. Habakkuk was praying for a revival of God’s work! How different our world would be if we could all look past our denominational borders and see the bigger picture!

Prayer Emphasis: **Pray** for God’s hand to be present upon all Christians and churches. **Look** beyond your own ministry needs and **pray** globally. **Pray** for the many ministries around the world today.

Day 21: Matthew 6:1-15

“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” (Matthew 6:5)

“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” (Matthew 6:9)

From our two focus verses we see prayer *expected* and prayer *explained*. It is obvious that the Lord expects us to pray because He said, “*When* you pray” and not “*if* you pray.” It is also obvious that the Lord thinks little of prayers that are said to be “seen by men.” What we have come to know as “The Lord’s Prayer” is recorded in Matthew and Luke. In Luke’s account, he includes the fact that this great model prayer was given after one of the Lord’s disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). Although it is good to memorize and recite any portion of Scripture, it is clear that the Lord intended this to be a model for prayer and not a prayer to be memorized and just simply recited. It is also obvious that this was not a prayer that Jesus actually prayed to the Father. Some of the aspects of this model prayer would not have been applicable to the Lord. For instance, He certainly would not have needed to pray for the forgiveness of His sins. The Lord’s Prayer is a good outline by which we can pray. My first pastor taught me to pray according to ACTS. By that he meant, while in prayer, some time should be spent in Adoration – “Hallowed be Your name.” Some time should be spent in Confession – “And forgive us our debts.” Also, when we pray, time should be allowed for Thanksgiving and Supplication – “Give us this day our daily bread.”

Prayer Emphasis: Pray to be heard of God and not to be seen of men. **Include** time for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication in every prayer. When prayer is true *worship*, it ceases to feel like *work*.

Day 22: Matthew 26:26-46

“So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.” (Matthew 26:44)

There are two great lessons in prayer that can be learned from this example found in the prayer life of Christ. First, we learn something about the *privacy* of prayer. After stationing His disciples at a certain place and directing them to pray, Jesus “left them” and “went away” from them in order to be alone with God. He had taught His followers to pray to their Father “in secret” (Matthew 6:6), and now He practiced what He had preached. In this same verse, we also learn something about *persistence* in prayer. We are told that Jesus “prayed the third time” and that, when He did, He repeated “the same words.” This example should teach us that it is not unspiritual to ask God for the same thing several times. Some would lead us to believe that asking God for the same thing more than once is evidence of little or weak faith. We know that could not have been the case with Jesus! Jesus, by example, teaches us that repeated prayers can come from people with a steadfast faith in God. We must never forget that He is the One who taught us about the man who came at midnight begging for bread from his neighbor – the man who kept knocking – and “because of his persistence,” was finally rewarded with some bread.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray **faithfully**. And if so led, pray **repeatedly**. If Jesus approached His Heavenly Father with the same request “three times” then we should not be ashamed or afraid to do the same. **Strive** to be *consistent* and *persistent* in your personal prayer life.

Day 23: Mark 1:21-35

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” (Mark 1:35)

When we read the verses that precede our focus verse, we see that the morning spoken of in our focus verse came after a very busy day. Yet Jesus rose early in the morning “and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” The phrase “there He prayed” provides a great outline for a short lesson on prayer. “There” represents a *place*. It is evident from the Scriptures that Jesus had several places to which He often went to pray. It would serve us all well to have certain places that are set aside for prayer and communion with God. I know of people who have special rooms in their homes where they spend time in family devotion and private prayer. The word “He” brings to mind the *Person* who we see praying here. If Jesus Christ found great benefit in spending time alone with God in prayer, how much more should we be devoted to the same task? The word “prayed” speaks of our Lord’s *practice*. If anyone was too busy to pray, it would have been Jesus. Before and after the busiest days of His life we see Him spending private time with God. If we are too busy to pray, then we are simply too busy! We make time to do the things that we want to do. If only we wanted to pray! If only it was the desire of our hearts to be alone with God! We are seldom told *what* Jesus prayed, but we are often told *that* He prayed.

Prayer Emphasis: **Pray** regularly and faithfully. **Make** prayer a priority by setting aside time for it. Whenever possible, **begin** your day in prayer. **Refuse** to be a Christian that only comes before God’s throne and speaks to Him in times of great personal need.

Day 24: Luke 9:23-36

“...He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening.” (Luke 9:28-29)

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the story of the transfiguration of Christ, but only Luke discloses that Jesus went up the mountain with His inner circle “to pray.” And only Luke mentions the fact that it was “as He prayed” that “the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening.” The word that is translated “appearance” in this verse is a word that means an actual, outward, and physical change that could be seen by the human eye. Prayer can make a literal, visible difference in our lives. The word that is translated “altered” suggests the idea of “different.” If spending time in prayer with God brought about a literal, visible, noticeable difference in *Jesus*, then we can only imagine what a difference prayer could make in *our* lives. It is obvious that what the three men who climbed that mountain with Jesus saw was similar to what John would later see while exiled on the Isle of Patmos. These men were privileged to have a glimpse of Christ in all His glory. There is coming a day when we will all see Him in His glorified state. In the meantime, we should spend time in prayer believing that He will reveal much to us about His true character and nature as we spend private time with Him. There are only two places in the New Testament where God spoke audibly from Heaven about His Son Jesus. One was at His baptism (Luke 3:21-22) and the other was here as Jesus prayed on this mountain. On both occasions, God referred to Jesus as His “beloved Son.”

Prayer Emphasis: **Ask** God to transform your life through prayer. **Seek** the kind of prayer life that causes God to refer to you as His “beloved.” **Believe** that people will see a difference in you if you pray!

Day 25: John 17:1-26

“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said...” (John 17:1)

There are some great prayers recorded in the Bible. We have the prayer of Abraham in Genesis 18, the prayer of Moses in Exodus 32, and the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8. But what you have read today is an actual prayer of Jesus as it was recorded by John, the apostle. In his great work on prayer, Herbert Lockyer refers to this prayer as “The Prayer of All Prayers” and to John 17 as “The Holy of Holies of the New Testament.” The language causes us to see that Jesus “spoke” audibly to His Father while looking up “to heaven.” This chapter records the longest recorded prayer of Christ. It was prayed on the night of our Lord’s betrayal and just hours before His trial and ultimate death on the cross. As you read this prayer you can see that Jesus spoke to God in a deep and sensitive way while employing the simplest of words and phrases. It is obvious that this prayer was not spoken to impress anyone who might have overheard it. It was not even spoken in a way that might impress God. It was spoken from the heart of a loving Savior who cared deeply for those who followed Him. This prayer was offered for those who walked with the Lord then and for those of us who walk with Him today. In verse 20 Jesus said, “I do not pray for these alone (those who were with Him then), but also for those who will believe in Me through their word.” That, my friend, includes all of us who have come to a saving faith in Christ through believing His Word and the testimonies of those who came before us.

Prayer Emphasis: **Imitate** Jesus by praying for others. **Be extremely specific** in your prayer time today and **ask** God to meet the needs of someone that you know. **Speak** the *names* and their *needs* audibly to God while lifting your eyes to heaven.

Day 26: Acts 4:13-31

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:31)

There is no better antidote for fear than prayer. Not only does prayer calm our fears, but it fans the flames of our faith and instills in us a great boldness for sharing the gospel. This “boldness” with which these early believers spoke represented more than mere courage because it represented a willingness to advance the gospel at any cost – even the cost of their own lives. There are three great benefits of prayer mentioned in today’s Bible reading. First, we see that prayer promotes a *bond of unity* among believers. Notice that these praying believers, “raised their voice to God with one accord” (v. 24) and that they “were of one heart and one soul” (v. 32). Did you notice that the words “voice,” “heart,” and “soul” in those verses are all in the singular? Second, prayer instilled within these Christians a *boldness of utterance*. Underscore these words in your Bible: “And when they had prayed...they spoke the word of God with boldness” (v. 31). The third benefit to be noted here is *beauty of character*. The last part of verse 33 states, “And great grace was upon them all.” Here was a case where the *lives* and the *lips* of God’s people were consistent in their witness for Christ.

Prayer Emphasis: **Ask** God to give you boldness in your witness for Him. **Spend time** in prayer asking God to prepare the hearts of those you might encounter today. **Be alert** to opportunities to plant a seed by providing a brief word of witness.

Day 27: Romans 1:1-16

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all...without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.” (Romans 1:8-9)

Three things came to mind as I carefully examined these focus verses. The first thing that caught my attention was *Paul’s priority*. He said the “first” thing that he did was to thank God for the believers in Rome. The word that is translated “first” here is a word that means, “first in time, rank, and order.” Although it is not translated in some Bibles, that word is preceded by a Greek word that means “truly or indeed.” Praying for others should become a priority in the life of every believer. Paul wanted to assure the believers in Rome that his praying for them was “indeed” a priority in his life. Second, I noticed *Paul’s possession*. He said, “I thank *my* God.” It is obvious that Paul believed he had a close, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He did not have to say, “I thank God...for you all” but was able to say, “I thank *my* God...for you all.” The third thing that I noticed in this verse was *Paul’s promise*. He promised these believers that he made “mention of (them) always in (his) prayers.” It is apparent that Paul was in the habit of mentioning many people in his prayer time. He made this same promise to the Christians at Ephesus (Ephesians 1:16), the church at Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:2), and to Philemon (Philemon 1:4).

Prayer Emphasis: **Pray** unselfishly. **Remember** the needs of others when you come before the Lord. **Pray** for the needs of someone today and **let them know** that you have prayed for them.

Day 28: 2 Corinthians 12:1-13

“...A thorn in the flesh was given to me...lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)

Although you will find many places in the Bible where you read about Paul’s praying for others, this is one of the few times that he mentions praying for his own needs. There are two major points to consider here. First, we have Paul’s *plea*. Whatever Paul’s thorn was, it was obviously troubling enough that he “pleaded with the Lord three times” that he might be cured of it. The word that is translated “pleaded” in our focus verse comes from a Greek word that means “to beg or beseech.” This word is translated “begged,” “implored,” “besought,” “asked,” or “pleaded” in other translations of the Bible. The words “in the flesh” lead us to believe that this “thorn” represented some kind of physical problem. Although this thorn was obviously not deadly, it probably served as a great distraction and possibly even brought great discomfort to God’s messenger. Why did Paul pray about this issue three times? I have often wondered if he did so in following the example of Jesus in Gethsemane. There, our Lord prayed three times asking God to allow His bitter cup to pass from Him and then came to a place of surrender after the third prayer. Second, we have the Lord’s *promise*. Although Paul was not granted relief from his physical condition, he was provided with the promise that God’s grace would be “sufficient” to see him through it.

Prayer Emphasis: **Remember** that we are not violating any scriptural rule when we ask God for the same thing more than once. However, there comes a time when we must reconcile ourselves to accept God’s desires and plans over our own. **Accept** God’s answers of “No” or “Wait” with grace.

Day 29: Ephesians 6:1-20

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints – and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel.” (Ephesians 6:18-19)

How easy it is for us to forget to pray! We often make all kinds of plans and arrangements without ever seeking the Lord’s guidance and blessing. After describing the Christian’s armor in Ephesians 6, Paul added another dimension to it by telling the people they needed to be praying. There is much that could be discussed in these focus verses, but we will have to limit what it said due to space. First, we are told to be “praying always.” Some translations say, “at all times” or “on all occasions.” Second, we are to be praying “with all prayer and supplication.” Supplication simply means “specific requests.” We often pray in such general terms that it seems we have not really asked God for anything. Such “no risk” praying may seem “safe” to us, but it is actually quite dangerous. Third, we are told to pray “in the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit comes to our aid in prayer. He helps us know how we are to pray and for what we might be allowed to ask. Fourth, we are told to pray with alertness. The words “being watchful” indicate just that. Fifth, we are told to pray “with all perseverance.” This simply means we are not to give up on our prayers and that we should not be afraid to ask for God’s help in a matter more than once. Sixth, we are told to pray “for all the saints.” This would include our Christian brothers and sisters around the world! Last, Paul added “and for me.” Pray for Christian leaders and specifically for those in your own church.

Prayer Emphasis: Invite the Holy Spirit to meet you at your personal altar or in your prayer closet. **Pray** with specificity and do not be afraid to **ask** God for some definite answers. **Pray** for other Christians and spiritual leaders everywhere.

Day 30: Philippians 4:1-13

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

Paul’s exhortation here is not to say that we should not “care” how life’s situations and circumstances are turning out for us but that we should not be “full of care” or “anxious” about them. It is not inappropriate for us to “care” or have genuine concern about such matters, but it is inappropriate for us to “worry” about them. In 2 Corinthians 11:28 Paul spoke of his “deep concern for all the churches” and earlier in this letter he told the Philippian believers that he and Timothy “sincerely” cared for (their) “state” (2:20). Paul encouraged these believers to invest time in praying rather than worrying. Four words are used in our focus verses to describe prayer. The word “prayer” describes our personally approaching God with our needs and concerns. The word “supplication” speaks of specific needs or requests. The word “thanksgiving” describes the heart attitude with which we should come before God. And the word “requests” speaks of actions that we desire that God take to meet personal and specific needs for us or others. When we learn to pray thusly, we should fully expect “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” to “guard (our) hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Prayer Emphasis: Remain faithful to your daily Bible reading schedule and to prayer. **Make** your time with God and His Word a priority in your life. **Share** something that you have prayed about with another believer today.

Day 31: Colossians 4:2-15

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word...” (Colossians 4:2-3)

Paul had much to say to the Colossian believers about prayer. In his letter to them he used two basic tools to motivate these people to pray. In our focus verses we see that one of those tools was *exhortation*. He exhorted them to “continue earnestly in prayer” and to be “vigilant in it.” He also exhorted them to pray “with thanksgiving.” The second teaching tool used by Paul was *example*. There are many great Christians of the past that are mentioned briefly in the pages of the New Testament about whom we know truly little. Epaphras is one of those people. While we know little about him, we read in Colossians 1:7 that Paul considered this man to be a “fellow servant” and “a faithful minister of Christ.” Then, in Colossians 4:12 Paul told the Colossian believers that Epaphras, a person of their own city, was “a bondservant of Christ” who was “always laboring fervently for (them) in prayers.” Note that the word “prayers” there is in the plural form. Jewish tradition (history) teaches that Epaphras was one of the first pastors in New Testament times and that he served the church at Colossae. History reports that this man was one of the early church martyrs who died for their faith in Christ.

Prayer Emphasis: **Strive** to be a good example to others in your prayer life. **Pray** with and for your family and friends on a regular basis. **Pray** publicly whenever an opportunity arises. **Pray** earnestly and with great fervency and vigilance. If you haven’t caught on yet, the purpose of this devotion is to motivate you to pray, pray, pray!

Day 32: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

“Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power...” (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

In the first few verses of this letter, Paul commended this group of believers for their “patience and faith in all” the “persecutions and tribulations” they had endured (v. 4). Again, we have to notice that both words Paul used to describe their trials were in plural form. The word “all” is further evidence that this church was suffering greatly simply because its people had chosen to place their faith in Christ. He reported to these weary believers that he, and others, (see the “we” in verse 4) would “boast of (them) among the churches of God.” In today’s focus verse, Paul has two specific prayer requests that he is asking of God for the suffering believers at Thessalonica. First, he asked that “God would count (them) worthy of this calling.” This may refer to their calling to *salvation* and to the *service* of Christ that should follow our profession of faith in Him. But it might also refer to their call to *suffering*. We should be constantly reminded that we do not strive to be “worthy” in order to *be* saved but because *we are* saved! Paul’s second prayer request for this church and its people was that God would “fulfill,” or bring to fruition, “all the good pleasure of His goodness.” A life that has *experienced* the goodness of God should become an *example* of that goodness to others.

Prayer Emphasis: **Remind** yourself daily that there are people all around the world who are dying simply because they believe in the same Jesus that you so safely serve today. **Pray** for suffering Christians everywhere. **Ask** God to give you the kind of faith that would stand up under persecution.

Day 33: 2 Timothy 4:1-18

“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”
(2 Timothy 4:5)

This last chapter of the second letter to Timothy contains, as far as we can be certain, the last words written by the great apostle Paul. Not very long after the completion of this final letter, Paul was martyred for his faith in, and his stand for, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is clear that these final words to young Timothy were written with great urgency and intensity. In some of his last words, we find Paul encouraging his young preacher friend to “endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist” and to “fulfill (his) ministry.” The word that is translated “fulfill” in this verse is one that means “to accomplish the purpose” for which one has been called. Paul was close to fulfilling his personal mission and ministry, but this younger preacher had many years left to invest into the cause of Christ. It is important to note that Paul considered the wisdom to “be watchful in all things” the key to accomplishing all the other things that he mentioned thereafter. The word that is translated “watchful” in our focus verse is a word that exhorts us to be both “calm” and “collected” under even the most difficult circumstances. This would require the “peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” that is only found when we learn to “be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication” we “let (our) requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6-7).

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to give you the wisdom, faith, and diligence to fulfill your own ministry. If you are not currently serving in some capacity at church, seek a place wherein you can serve. It is vitally important that we all find a place of service in the church and then faithfully fill it.

Day 34: Hebrews 4:1-16

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)

We might better accept an exhortation to come *humbly* before God’s “throne of grace” than this command to approach it *boldly*. The benefits of approaching God’s throne are that we can “obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” While we seldom struggle with the idea of the *benefits* that accompany approaching God’s throne, we often struggle with how we can approach it with *boldness*. The word “throne” in our text is a reference to the mercy seat of God that is described in Exodus 25:17-22. The holiest place in the tabernacle or the temple was the place where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. The lid of that ark served as the golden mercy seat and was considered to be God’s throne. The Jews believed it was from this place that God ruled all Israel. The Old Testament mercy seat was definitely not a throne of grace. John reminded us that “the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). As New Testament believers, we come to a “throne of grace” and not a throne of judgment. Since we come expecting “to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” we cannot help but come with immense joy, anticipation, and boldness.

Prayer Emphasis: Come *boldly* and *regularly* to God’s throne of grace. **Expect** to find “grace to help” you in your own times of need. **Believe** that God cares for you and that He desires to spend personal time with you. **Anticipate** great blessings from the time that you spend in prayer.

Day 35: James 4:1-15

“You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” (James 4:2-3)

It is worth our while to glance back at the closing verse of James 3 and see that “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (3:18). When we compare that to the opening verse of James 4, we see that there were some to whom James was writing that were doing just the opposite! James spoke to these saints of the “wars and fights” that “come from among you” (4:1). James boldly addressed this issue by disclosing that such wrong attitudes and actions can become a hindrance to our prayer lives. Obviously, some of his readers, then and now, were allowing their personal grudges to keep them from praying. He spoke first to those who simply “do not ask.” It is hard to come before God when our hearts are not right with our fellow Christians! Jesus taught us that, “If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you...first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:23-24). If that holds true for giving, then it must surely also hold true for our praying. James also warned against praying that is based on personal gratification and selfishness. To “ask amiss” means to ask according to your own motives without considering what is best for the body of Christ as a whole. To do this is to “spend” our prayer time on our own “pleasures” (v. 3). The word that is translated “spend” in our focus verses could also be translated “squander” or “waste.” The great privilege of prayer should not be “squandered” on our own selfish desires.

Prayer Emphasis: Be a Christian who desires to “make” peace and **seek** to be unselfish in your prayer time. **Avoid** a “me only” mentality when you pray by asking God to do what is best for the whole body.

Day 36: James 5:1-18

“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.” (James 5:17-18)

In James 5 we see first an *exhortation* to pray. If we are “suffering” we are to “pray” (v. 13). Those who are “sick” are exhorted to “call for the elders of the church and let them pray over them” (v. 14). Verse 16 commands us to “pray for one another.” In James 5:15 we also see the *expectation* of prayer. We are told to believe that “the prayer of faith *will* save the sick, and the Lord *will* raise him up.” The last part of that verse teaches us to expect prayer to reach beyond just our *physical* needs and meet our *spiritual* needs as well. The expectation also applies to those who have “committed sins” and desire to “be forgiven.” James then concludes this section on prayer by including an *example* in prayer by stating that “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours,” but “he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months” (5:17). The point that God wants to make with us is that men like Elijah did not get their prayers answered because they were better than us but because they prayed better than we do! Elijah then “prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit” (v. 18). We learn more about Elijah and his prayer life in other places in the Bible, but for now we simply need to understand that a man *just like us* was able to offer “effective, fervent prayer” (v. 16) that resulted in great blessings upon others.

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that effective prayer is based on God’s grace and *mercy* and not on our *merit*. Elijah simply asked God to do what He had earlier promised He would do! (See 1 Kings 17:1 and 18:1.)

Day 37: 1 Peter 3:1-12

“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7)

Is it possible that our private lives at home can affect our personal prayer lives and our ability to effectively communicate with God? Peter certainly seemed to think so! The word that is translated “with understanding” in the NKJV is sometimes translated “be considerate” in other translations. Some of the things that men are to “understand” or “consider” about their wives is that they deserve our “honor.” This simply means that we should be careful to put their needs before our own. To “honor” someone means to put them first or allow them to be first. Our relationship to our spouse is second only to our relationship with God. Hence, it demands our dedication and full attention. The term “weaker vessel” refers to physical strength and not intellectual or spiritual inferiority. The term “heirs together” puts our wives, and all women, on equal footing with men before God. Many prayers are “hindered” because of a lack of consideration and sympathy on the part of one spouse toward another. It is impossible to be in harmony with *heaven* when we refuse to pursue harmony within our own *homes*.

Prayer Emphasis: **Acknowledge** that the Bible is the greatest marriage manual ever written. **Ask** God to teach you how to apply its principles in all your life and especially your home life. **Pray** for your spouse and family today.

Day 38: 1 John 5:1-14

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” (1 John 5:14)

Based on his own words we would have to say that it is obvious that John believed Christians can pray with great *assurance*. However, many Christians often misquote this verse by saying, “If we ask anything...He will hear us” and omit the part that teaches that our “anything” must be “according to His will.” So, then, the prayer that is offered with great *assurance* must also be offered in *accordance* with God’s will. The only way to truly determine God’s *will* with any certainty is through God’s *Word*. God’s holy *will* is never going to contradict His holy *Word*. There is no excuse for any believer to be in doubt of God’s will because His Word reveals His will to us. When we think about it, we must realize that nothing that is outside of God’s will could possibly be good for us and is certainly not worth praying about. When Paul prayed for the Christians who made up the Colossian church, he said, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with *the knowledge of His will* in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Colossians 1:9). We know that Paul believed this “knowledge of His will” was vital to their spiritual success in all things because he added, “that you may walk worthy of the Lord, *fully* pleasing Him, being fruitful in *every* good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10). We often hear the last part of John 8:32 quoted. There it says, “The truth shall make you free.” However, the first part of that verse states that, “And you shall *know* the truth,” and then adds, “and the truth shall make you free.” It is *known* truth that sets us free and *known* truth that teaches us how to pray in full assurance and in full accordance with God’s will.

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that many of the answers that you desire from God have already been provided for you in His Word. **Remember** that Elijah prayed in full *confidence* because his prayers were in full *compliance* with what God had already promised.

Day 39: Jude 1:1-23

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” (Jude 1:20-21)

Prior to providing what may be the most helpful teaching on prayer in all of the New Testament, Jude reminded us that there would be “grumblers” and “complainers” that would be “walking according to their own lusts” (v. 16) and that we have been told “before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ...that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts” (vs. 17-18). For that reason, Jude was inspired to teach us to be “praying in the Holy Spirit.” There are at least three things that we can expect if we will learn to pray “in the Holy Spirit.” First, we can expect *personal edification*. We are told that praying in the Holy Spirit will teach us how to be “building (ourselves) up on (our) most holy faith” (v. 20). There is no greater foundation upon which believers can build their lives. Second, when we learn to pray in the Holy Spirit we will learn about *personal protection*. The Holy Spirit will teach us how to “keep (ourselves) in the love of God” (v. 21) and not stray from it. To “keep yourself” in the love of God is to be constantly reminding yourself that you are loved by God and that He desires to give you all things necessary to live in accordance with His will. Third, praying in the Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray with *patience*. The word that is translated “looking” in our focus verses is a word that means to be “looking expectantly,” and it is translated “wait for” several times in other places in the Bible.

Prayer Emphasis: **Refuse** to abandon your prayers because the answers do not come quickly. **Understand** that “praying in the Holy Spirit” means to pray from a heart and soul that is *indwelt* and *illuminated* by the Holy Spirit of God.

Day 40: Revelation 22:1-20

“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22:17)

Revelation 22:17 is unique in that it contains the only recorded prayer of the Holy Spirit in the entire Bible! Several prayers of Jesus are recorded, but it is only on this last page that we have a prayer from the Spirit. How appropriate it is that this prayer of “the Spirit and the bride” (the church) is the *last prayer* in the Bible. The idea is that this is the prayer “of” the Holy Spirit and that He desires to offer it “through” the church. But the last chapter of the Bible does not contain only the last *prayer* of the Bible. It also contains the *last promise* of the Bible. Revelation 22:20 quotes the Lord Himself as saying, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Also, that same verse records the *last plea* of the Bible when it tells us that John responded to the Lord’s promise of His soon return by saying, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” This should be the prayer of every believer. Such praying will cause us to live with great anticipation, expectation, and excitement. How different our daily walk might be if we lived in the full expectation that Christ could return at any moment. Then, this last chapter records the *last provision* mentioned in the Bible. Those who obey God’s command to “Come” will be allowed to “take the water of life freely.” This concluding chapter of the Bible also records the *last praise* of the Bible. In verses 20 and 21, John twice shouts “Amen!”

Prayer Emphasis: **Thank God** for allowing us to be involved in **Kingdom Praying!** May our efforts in prayer be ever inspired by the Spirit of God that lives within us! **Contact us** at 850-562-8069 or gary@seminolebc.com if we can pray for you or minister to you and your family in any way.