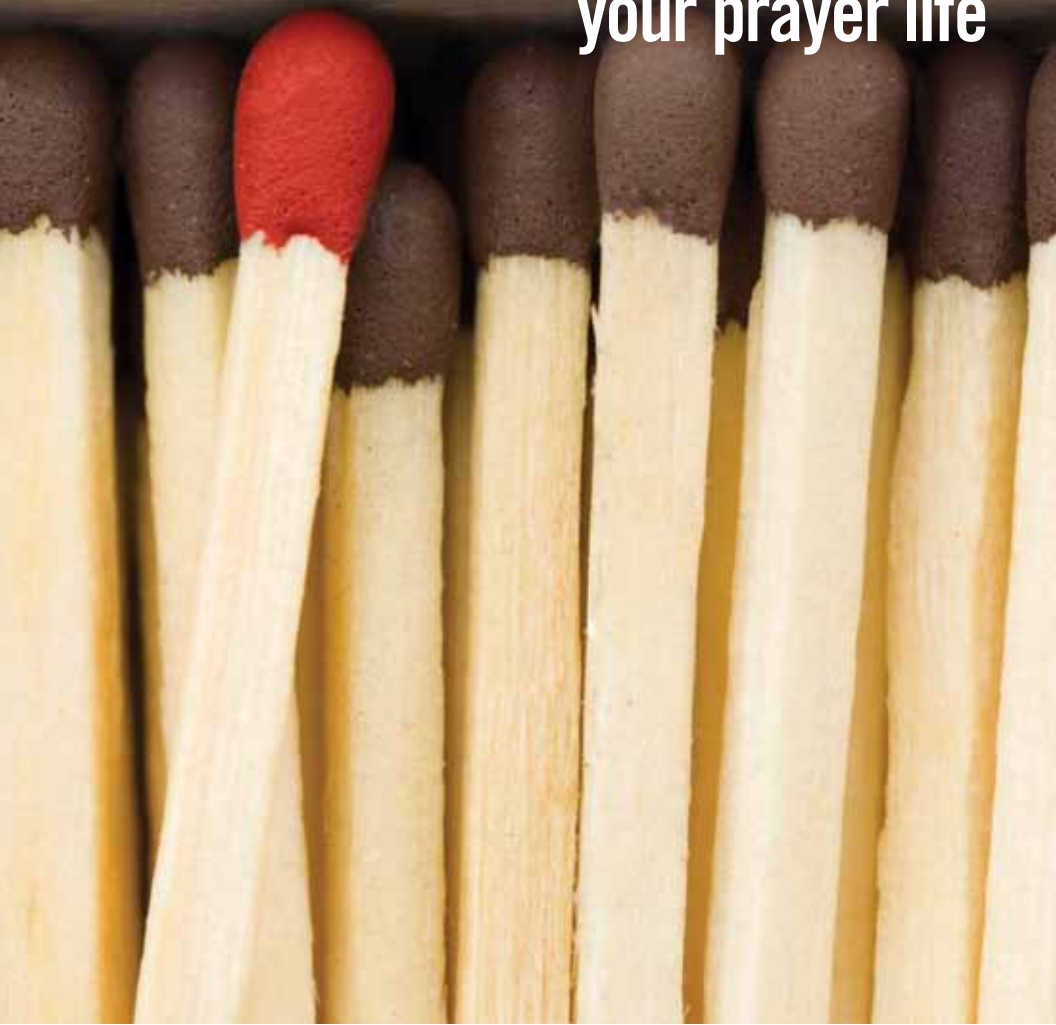




# IGNITE

your prayer life



A PERSONAL PRAYER JOURNAL BY JIM AND KAYE JOHNS

# IGNITE

**your prayer life**

PERSONAL PRAYER JOURNAL  
**draw closer to God : grow stronger in prayer**

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A PUBLICATION OF e3 PRAYER  
DIRECTORS, JIM AND KAYE JOHNS

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# e3 and you:

**in Partnership for  
the glory of God  
and the advancement  
of His kingdom!**

**You are now a vital part of a world-wide ministry...  
equipping God's people to  
evangelize His world and  
establish His church**

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## **We welcome you!**

*This journal can supply the spark to ignite your prayer life and enrich your fellowship with Jesus Christ.*

At e3, we feel it is essential that we all keep our relationship with the Lord strong, so that we work in God's strength and not our own. This requires focus and awareness, a willingness to learn and apply the principles of prayer that Jesus laid out for His disciples to follow.

These principles are the heart of this journal. May they prove to bless your life and deepen your walk with the Lord.

# IGNITE YOUR PRAYER LIFE!

**draw closer to God : grow stronger in prayer**

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## As You Begin

A special feature of this journal will help you remember and apply what you learn. Use your hand to remind you how to pray as Jesus taught us. These points and Scriptures represent the first and most important principles Jesus taught about prayer. These principles, used daily, will ignite your prayer life with a growing personal relationship with God—the same deep, intimate relationship Jesus demonstrated.

These simple hand illustrations enable people of every language and culture to grasp and remember the key principles Jesus taught about prayer—a lifetime tool we can use personally and share with others.



As the palm is the foundation for fingers and thumb, time alone with God is the foundation for our personal relationship with Him (Matthew 6:6). We acknowledge the relationship —“Our Father” (Matthew 6:9).



Our thumb reminds us that we must worship God before we ask for anything. We “hallow His name” (Matthew 6:9).



Next we surrender our lives —“Your kingdom come, Your will be done” (Matthew 6:10).



Then we ask God to meet our needs —“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).



Now we confess our sins —“Forgive us as we forgive others” (Matthew 6:12).



Then we seek protection —“Deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13).



... and return to worship —“for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (Matthew 6:13).

## How to Use This Journal

This prayer journal can help you sharpen your ability to hear God’s voice and apply what you hear.

This journaling method is effective and efficient, ideal for busy people with limited time. The format encourages you to write only a few words, and the questions help ensure that what you write will be more focused. Your brief entries will be easy to scan and review — especially helpful when you are seeking God’s will and direction. (See page 35 for ways to continue this journaling method on your own.)

Begin each devotional message with a quick prayer — “Father, help me hear what You have for me today.” You’ll discover how clearly He will speak when you listen with your heart and desire to respond.

## Sample Journal Page

Date: (Today's Date)

**Scripture or quote:** *This journal has Scriptures printed on each page as the heart of each devotional message. Later you will copy verses that provide special meaning from your personal Bible reading (see page 35):*

“...the sheep listen to his [the shepherd’s] voice. ... his sheep follow him because they know his voice.”  
(John 10:3b, 4b, ESV)

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me?**

He is my Shepherd, and He wants me to hear and recognize His voice.

**My prayer response**

Please help me to know when my thoughts and impressions are from You.

**My impression of what God wants me to do**

Trust Him to help me know when He is speaking to my heart, especially as I read the Bible.

## Ignite Your Prayer Life through Intimacy with God

### Living in intimacy with God—open to us all

We are strongest in prayer and ministry when we are living in a close, personal relationship with God. This relationship is the heart of our Christian walk from which we develop a meaningful and effective prayer life.

Every Christian is meant to have the same personal closeness with God that John and the other apostles experienced.

...that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed *our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.* (1 John 1:3-4, italics added)

The word “fellowship” that John used refers to spiritual intimacy, to a close personal walk with the Lord.

### The blessing of relationship—*knowing God personally*

Throughout His ministry, Jesus (whom we are to imitate) demonstrated with His daily life the kind of relationship we’re to have with the Father. He knew the Father. He prayed to the Father. He was dependent upon the Father. That’s how we are to live as well:

“And this is eternal life, that they *know* you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3, italics added)

The Amplified Bible gives us the full meaning of this word “know”:

[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [*that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him....*] (Philippians 3:10, italics added)...

How amazing that we can know God this way! This is much more than just understanding facts about Him. It is knowing God Himself—from the day we receive Christ and throughout eternity. This is essential if we want to ignite our prayer lives to set us ablaze for Him as we minister, serve and live day by day.

This is the same personal relationship Jesus declared He will have with us:

“I am the good shepherd. I *know* my sheep and my sheep *know* me [they will progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Me]....” (John 10:14, emphasis and definition of know added)

### Prayer is how we live in this relationship—and *walk with God*

When we spend time alone with God in prayer, He welcomes us into a personal relationship of growing spiritual intimacy. In this relationship we not only sense His presence and speak to Him as we move through our days, but also learn to hear His voice:

...the sheep follow [the shepherd], for they *know* his voice.  
(John 10:4-5, italics added)

Daily consistency is the important thing. It does not have to be a long period of time, but *it is not an option if we want to know God in a personal way.* God will honor even a few minutes a day if we devote them to Him, reading His Word and praying as Jesus taught.

Beginning and continuing—*igniting*—such a relationship is the focus of this week’s devotionals. As we begin, let us recognize that *active service for God* is not the same thing as spiritual intimacy. Empowered service that bears fruit is the *result* of an intimate walk with God, not the cause.

Service can be effective and bear fruit, but without the relationship we may not experience the fullness of God’s will. We may be out of step with His timing or working in our own strength instead of His. Without the relationship, we may succeed in our own plans but not fully succeed in His, settling for the good and missing the best.

### Where do we begin?—*let Jesus teach us*

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus laid out fundamental principles of prayer that will help us ignite and maintain personal fellowship with God and develop a meaningful and effective prayer life.

Jesus taught that we must spend time alone with God every day (Matthew 6:6). *Everything else He taught about prayer and spiritual intimacy rests on this requirement.* Jesus followed this revelation with principles for effective daily prayer, which we refer to as the “Lord’s Prayer” or the “Our Father” (Matthew 6:9-13).

This week, we begin applying these fundamental prayer principles. We’ll see why these principles help us ignite our prayer lives that we may grow deeper in our relationship with God and more effective in prayer.

Pause now to ask God to help you to apply these principles of prayer....

# Time with God



“But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:6)

Jesus didn't mean that we must go into a room and shut the door. He did not do that when He prayed. But He did find ways to be alone with God, and that's what He is telling us to do today. To know God personally, we must spend time alone with Him every day, time that is devoted to Him and free of distractions.

Jesus said *when* we pray, not *if*. And we know He meant *every day* because in the model prayer that follows, we're told to ask “this day” for our “daily” bread. In this model prayer He provides a pattern for our daily prayer lives.

*Time alone with God is essential for everything else Jesus taught about prayer.* It all rests on this principle. Fortunately, Jesus did not say we have to spend a long time every day, just consistent time. It is amazing what God can and will do if we'll devote a few minutes to Him every morning.

*Why do you think it would be important to spend at least a few minutes alone with God every day?... Perhaps you should ask Him what He thinks....*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Relationship with Our Father



“Our Father in heaven....” (Matthew 6:9a)

This is the beginning of Jesus' teaching for our daily prayer lives. Many of us don't immediately grasp the importance of the simple salutation, “Our Father.” But it was revolutionary to those Jesus was teaching. In the Old Testament, God was rarely addressed as Father and then it referred to His being the Father of His people.

“Father” is a family term, a word indicating the relationship we are privileged to have as God's children—for eternity!—if we believe and receive Jesus (John 1:12). This relationship can never be broken. No one can separate us from His love (Romans 8:35-39). Because we have been made alive through Christ (Ephesians 2:5) and saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8), we are confident that we have been adopted into His family (Romans 8:15). (If you have questions about this, turn to the inside back cover of this journal, “Are You a Child of God?”) What a great privilege is ours, to be children of God (1 John 3:1)!

*Now pause to thank God that You can call Him Father... Take a moment to reflect on what an amazing truth this is....Pause and ask Him what He thinks of you as His child....*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Worship



“...hallowed be your name.” (Matthew 6:9b)

Jesus teaches us to begin our prayers with worship. After coming to God like a child to a loving Father, we worship Him for who He is. We are to “hallow” Him, to set Him apart in our heart and mind as holy.

We are to spend a few moments in personal worship before we ask Him to meet our needs. Jesus teaches us to worship Him by name because His names reveal who He is. He is our Creator, our Savior, our Shepherd and King (Psalm 139:13; Jude 25; Hebrews 13:20b; 1 Timothy 1:17) and more!

When we begin each day by honoring God with our personal worship, our minds turn from our problems and concerns to focus on Him, the One who can help. We need this encouragement to strengthen us for the day.

*How do you think worshiping God might help build our faith?*

*Are there ways in which you could make your daily time of personal worship more meaningful for you and for God?*

*Ask God what He thinks....*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me?**

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**My prayer response—**

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**My impression of what God wants me to do—**

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# Surrender



“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)

In this model prayer, Jesus speaks in the plural (our Father). Yet it is still very personal and individual in its focus. We each have a personal relationship with our Father, and we worship Him from hearts filled with a growing personal love for Him as our close relationship with Him develops.

This then becomes our personal prayer of surrender: “May Your kingdom come in me today; may Your will be done in my life right now.” When we give God our lives, we ask Him to take control and to work His will in and through us for His kingdom purpose and glory every day. The kingdom is wherever the King resides (“the kingdom of God is within you” Luke 17:21) and where He resides, He must reign.

*Is this the desire of your heart?*

*Is your life a demonstration of this truth?*

*Ask God if there is anything in your life that you have not fully surrendered....*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me?**

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**My prayer response—**

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**My impression of what God wants me to do—**

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# Ask



“Give us this day our daily bread.” (Matthew 6:11)

With this simple instruction, Jesus teaches several key points about prayer. First, we are to pray every day.

Second, we should pray early in the day—it doesn’t make much sense to ask for *this day’s* bread at the end of the day. We must always think in terms of giving God the first and best of what we have. And time is our most precious commodity.

Third and most important: when Jesus taught the steps of prayer, He didn’t put asking first. Yet asking typically makes up the biggest share of our daily prayers. Perhaps that is why Jesus made such a point to teach us His pattern for prayer, making clear that we’re to begin our prayers with at least a few moments of personal worship and surrender. Such worship is our way of expressing our love and appreciation to our heavenly Father who is so willing and able to give. Only then do we ask.

*Think about your prayers of the last few days. What has the pattern of your prayer life been?*

*If you find it difficult to pray every day, or early in the day, ask God to help you....*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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### My prayer response—

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### My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Practical Application

## Be encouraged—*God will help you*

It’s not the length of time we spend in prayer that honors God, but what we do with the time. We can ignite our prayer life and honor God by building our relationship of intimacy with Him, even if we spend only 10 minutes a day. That’s a starting point that God will use in remarkable ways, if we are consistent and keep our focus on Him.

God will use our steps of faithful obedience to help ignite our prayer lives for the first time, or to re-ignite a prayer life that has somehow grown cold. He can use a new level of commitment and consistency in prayer to fan the flame we may have started years ago. He can set our prayer lives ablaze in ways we never dreamed we would experience.

## Begin where you are—to *ignite, restart or add fuel to your existing prayer life*

### Our Father—*relationship*

Briefly pause to consider what it means to you to be a child of God. Think about the sacrifice Jesus made for you on the cross, and thank Him for it. Thank God for the basic things—giving you life, drawing you to Himself. Bask in His fatherly love.

### Hallow Your name—*worship*

Reflect on some of God’s names, characteristics and attributes. You might pray along these lines—

*Father, I love you because... (You are faithful, kind and compassionate....)*

*Father, I worship you because... (You are holy, You are Almighty God, my Lord and my King, my Savior....)*

### Your kingdom come—*surrender*

Take one minute to give God your life. Name some of the ways you want to yield your mind, heart, will, attitudes, dreams and goals.

### Give us this day our daily bread—*ask*

Keep in mind that we are to pray without ceasing—we don’t have to do all our asking at one time. You may find it helpful to ask for just a few essentials in your morning prayer and then continue asking for your personal needs and the needs of others as you move through your day.



## WEEK TWO OVERVIEW

# Fan the Flame of Your Prayer Life by Committing to Go Deeper

### David, our example—*A man after God's heart*

What an encouragement David is to us! As both shepherd boy and king, he lived in a special, deep intimacy with the Lord. And despite his sins, he will always be known as a man after God's heart (Acts 13:22).

That truth brings us much hope: *we don't have to live perfect lives to have an intimate relationship with God.* But we do have to confess our sins, so we are able to draw near to Him with clean hands and a pure heart (James 4:8). Let's look briefly at David's relationship with the Lord, the pain his sin caused him, what he did about it and how God forgave him:

David's love for God was obvious—

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life.... (Psalm 27:4a)

David's sin separated him from God—

For my iniquities have gone over my head.... I go about mourning.... My heart throbs; my strength fails.... (Psalm 38:4a, 6b, 10a)

David's confession—

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin! (Psalm 51:1-2)

God's mercy restored their fellowship—

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ...I acknowledged my sin to you and I did not cover my iniquity; ...and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. ...You surround me with songs of deliverance. (Psalm 32:1, 5, 7, NIV)

### Lesson for us today—*Though David's intimate closeness with God was restored, for a time it was hindered by unconfessed sin.*

That's a startling thought for most of us. Yet what was true for David is equally true for us today:

...but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. (Psalm 66:18)

These verses speak of *iniquity* or *unconfessed sin*, which is an act or omission that we know to be sin but choose not to confess, repent of and turn from. It is a sin that is so much a part of our lives that it has become a way of thinking and reacting to people, things or circumstances.

We see in David's life that unconfessed sin can prevent God from even listening to, much less answering, our prayers! This is why Jesus emphasized daily confession of sins.

Other verses refer to hindrances to answered prayer as well. Jesus warned, for example, against praying to impress others:

...you must not be like the hypocrites...they love to stand and pray...that they may be seen by others. Truly...they have received their reward. (Matthew 6:5b)

Unbiblical relationships between husbands and wives (and, by extension, with children and siblings) also can interfere with prayer:

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel...so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

### Loss of fellowship—*Not loss of salvation*

These Scriptures *do not*, however, mean that we can lose our salvation. Salvation is accomplished once and for all through Christ, our faith in Him and in His finished work on our behalf. It is bad enough that unconfessed sin *keeps us from personal closeness and intimate fellowship with God.*

### We need never live apart from intimacy with God—*He is ready to forgive*

The remedy is to confess our sins to God everyday. In your morning quiet time, pray: "Lord, please search my heart and show me anything that might hinder my living in intimacy with You today—so that I may confess and be forgiven, according to Your promise." (1 John 1:9)

*This is something Jesus clearly teaches that we should do, and we'll consider it this week. Pause now to ask God to guide you....*

# Jesus Teaches Daily Confession



“...and forgive us our sins....” (Matthew 6:12a, TLB)

Some Bibles say forgive us our “debts” or “transgressions” or “trespasses,” all of which mean sins. When Jesus gave us the pattern for our daily prayers, He clearly said that we should confess our sins.

Note that Jesus didn’t say “sin” but “sins.” We should confess our sins individually, specifically. We are not informing God. He already knows. This is for us. God wants us to identify our own actions—or inactions—and to confess each one (agreeing with Him that it is sin) to receive His mercy and cleansing (1 John 1:9). He wants our fellowship with Him to be unimpaired.

By confessing our sins daily, we will be able to enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with God. Each morning as we begin our prayers, we acknowledge our relationship with God, our Father; we worship Him, we surrender to Him and ask—

- Is there any sin in my life that I've not recognized as sin?*
- Anything I am excusing or overlooking?... Or not wanting to face?*
- Search my heart and show me my sins from Your point of view...*



## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# David’s Sensitivity



“For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight....” (Psalm 51:3-4)

Again, we look to David as our example. David was sensitive to sin in his life, though he tried to ignore it. When he sinned with Bathsheba and had her husband killed (2 Samuel 11:2-24), he did not immediately confess. Psalms 32 and 38 describe his utter misery. When God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David, his response to God was simply, *I have sinned against You and You only* (Psalm 51:4). He made no excuse but asked God to forgive him and restore him to fellowship. (Psalm 51:1-2, 7, 10-12)

That’s why David, such a sinner, is still known today as the man after God’s own heart. He wasn’t perfect, but he loved the Lord. He was broken over his sins and willing to seek God’s forgiveness.

- What have you learned from David today?*
- Ask now, as we all should: Father, break my heart over sin in my life.*
- Help me to see it as an offense against You and to be willing to confess...*



## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Need to Forgive



“...forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us.”  
(Matthew 6:12, TLB)

We are to ask God to forgive us *as we forgive others*.

We’re to forgive others—not only because we feel like it or the other person apologizes first, but because Jesus says we must. Forgiveness does not require us to accept or excuse an offense or to remain in a hurtful relationship. It means we cancel their debt. It is a matter of will and obedience, not emotion (Ephesians 4:32).

Unforgiveness is an acid that destroys its own container. If we refuse to forgive others, we hurt ourselves, building up resentment and bitterness that will affect our fellowship with God and with others. We forgive them not for their sake, but for ours.

And God will help us, if we ask Him.

*Does anyone come to mind? Do you have anger, resentments or grudges?  
If not, thank God that you have no issues with unforgiveness....*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Temptation



“Lead us not into temptation...” (Matthew 6:13a, NIV)

Satan is our tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5). He is not obvious (2 Corinthians 11:3). Rather, he subtly places choices before us that seem good (and are not essentially “bad”), but that distract us from God’s purposes for our lives. We are often tempted to settle for second best, to make a choice that is less than all God wants for us.

The more subtle temptations are those we may not recognize—such as being too busy for prayer, pride that prevents our full surrender or worry that interrupts our peace. Jesus teaches us to ask for His help to deliver us from Satan’s temptations, to protect us from our enemy’s tricks and deceptions.

*What is our best defense against Satan’s lies and deceptions?  
Ask God to help you to always be able to tell the real from the counterfeit....*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Seek Protection



“...but deliver us from the evil one.” (Matthew 6:13b)

As we consider this point in Jesus’ model prayer, it’s comforting to remember that, “We know that those who have become part of God’s family do not make a practice of sinning, for God’s Son holds them securely and the evil one cannot get his hands on them.” (1 John 5:18, NLT)

Yet Satan can still influence and exert control over us, if we allow it:

“Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.” (Ephesians 4:26b-27, NLT)

Paul warns that unconfessed and unrepented of sin gives Satan a legal place of control in our lives. We put ourselves at risk. As we pray for protection, remember that our lifestyle could be an invitation to Satan to gain an influence over part of our lives.

*Ask God for His protection, but first ask if there are issues in your life that put you at risk and must deal with....*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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\_\_\_\_\_

### My prayer response—

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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### My impression of what God wants me to do—

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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# Practical Application

## Taking sin seriously—

One of our greatest temptations may be to fail to take sin as seriously as we should. We focus on the obvious sins and overlook those that are more subtle, failing to confess them and repent of them and wondering why we still cannot experience the intimacy with God that we desire.

## One way to guard against such sins—

Many passages of Scripture clearly identify sins—such as the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17), the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) or Paul’s description of living as children of light (Ephesians 4:17-6:9). Consider these passages prayerfully, perhaps taking just one verse a day before the Lord. The moment He exposes a sin in our lives, we can confess and gain victory over it.

## What might that look like in our prayers?

Let’s consider how we might prayerfully approach the “children of light” passage (beginning with Ephesians 4:1, 17-25, NIV)—

“Father, am I walking worthy of my calling?

“Does my character and do my relationships reflect—  
a willingness to humble myself?  
gentleness?  
longsuffering, patience?  
bearing with others in love?  
working to keep unity with others?  
living in unity and peace with others?

“Is there in my life any—  
lack of purity, even in thought?  
failure to care about right and wrong?  
giving in to immorality on any level?  
greed or materialism?

“Am I constantly putting off my old nature and any sinful habits?

“Am I letting You renew my mind?

“Am I consciously putting on my new nature, seeking righteousness?

“Do I ever lie? Exaggerate? Shade the truth?”

*Reflect upon these questions, perhaps one per day, and look for other passages to prayerfully consider in this regard.*

## Fan the Flame of Your Prayer Life by Building on the Fundamentals

### **The model prayer is all we need for personal intimacy with God and an effective prayer life—**

Jesus taught the model prayer in His first public sermon, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). He was telling His followers that this is the way they are to live and pray (Matthew 6:9-13). Again, remember that while these verses can be, and frequently are, prayed just as they are written, they are meant to be used as a pattern or outline for our daily prayer lives. They do not all need to be included in every prayer we pray, but all the elements of prayer that Jesus taught should be included in our prayers at some point each day.

### **We do not graduate from or grow beyond this pattern for prayer. It is the way Jesus taught us to pray.**

Praying as Jesus taught makes *all* our prayers more effective, even our hurried extemporaneous prayers. This is because following the pattern of the model prayer begins our day with a focus on God, rather than on ourselves or our problems and concerns. It assures that we honor God through worship, submit to Him as Lord and King and confess our sins to prevent anything from hindering our prayers. We connect with Him and His power—and that ignites our prayer lives.

If we begin our day with a few minutes of worship, surrender and confession, we clear the way for a day of praying *effectively*, without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The prophet, Nehemiah, lived out these principles of prayer centuries before Jesus taught them.

### **Nehemiah, our example: a man of prayer—**

The wall around Jerusalem had broken down (Nehemiah 1:4-11). Nehemiah's response to this heart-breaking news was to spend several days fasting and mourning before the Lord. Then he prayed a prayer that in many ways reflects what Jesus would teach. Nehemiah *worshipped* the Lord, indicated his *surrender* by identifying himself as a servant of the Lord and *confessed* his personal sins as well as the corporate sins of God's people. Only then did he ask God for something—favor with the king (Nehemiah 1:11b).

As a result, God commissioned Nehemiah to rebuild the wall (2:12). The prophet obeyed, but he didn't rush to try to do it—a lesson for us all!

Nehemiah waited and when the Lord gave him the opportunity to ask the king for what he needed, he offered up a quick prayer and presented his request. The king not only gave Nehemiah everything he asked for (time off and timber to rebuild the wall), but also an armed guard to go with him. Nehemiah's private prayer life (Nehemiah 1:4-11) had prepared him for his quick, urgent prayer in the middle of a busy day (Nehemiah 2:4b). So it is in our lives as well.

### **Nehemiah calls the people to prayer—as they work**

Once Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, the people joined him in rebuilding the wall—an “impossible” task that they completed in only 52 days! The reason is obvious. When they were threatened by the enemy, they prayed and trusted God to fight their battles. Then they did what they could to be prepared and ready for what was needed.

At one point Nehemiah instructed them to work with one hand and hold a weapon in the other (they kept a sword at their sides). Does that remind you of what Paul said about prayer?

Take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word [spoken word] of God.  
...With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.  
(Ephesians 6:17b-18, NIV)

So too, we need to enter each day with powerful prayer—the sword of the Spirit, the spoken Word of God. The more familiar we are with God's Word, the more naturally we will do this. We hear this in the prayers of mature believers, who are so familiar with the Bible that God's thoughts have become their own.

Every time we pray a verse of Scripture, even softly to ourselves, it becomes the spoken Word, the sword of the Spirit, adding a new dimension to our prayers. It's easy to understand why:

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything *according to his will*, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.  
(1 John 5:14-15, NIV, italics added)

Anyone, even the newest believer, can learn to pray effectively for God's will by praying His Word. This week we will see how to add Scripture verses to the prayer pattern Jesus established.

*Pause to ask God to help you to see easy ways to add Scripture to your prayers as we move through this week's devotionals...*

# Add God's Word to Worship



"I love you, O LORD, my strength....my rock and my fortress and my deliverer...." (Psalm 18:1-2a)

Let's look again at the elements of daily prayer that Jesus taught in Matthew 6, strengthening our prayers with God's Word.

We begin with worship. One way to keep our worship fresh and meaningful is to incorporate God's names and attributes (character traits). The more often we use them in prayer, the better we'll remember them. You may want to begin a list of them somewhere in your Bible for quick reference.

Praying your way through the Psalms can enrich your personal worship as well. Many of the Psalms are or include prayers of worship. In Psalm 18, for example, you might pray, "Father, I love You, for You are the LORD, my strength. I worship You as David did, for You are my rock, my fortress and my deliverer."

*What other ways of using Scripture for worship come to mind?*

*Ask God to show you ways to expand your prayers of worship.*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Prayer God's Word in Surrender



"...put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life...and... put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:22-24)

It's certainly appropriate to give ourselves to God each day with a simple prayer, "Lord, I give You my life." But as we begin to increase the length of our prayer time, it's worthwhile to expand our prayer of surrender with the Word. We might pause before we surrender to ask, "What must I let go of—what part of my 'old self' should I put off and what should I put on in prayer to replace it?"

For example, if we struggle with worry, we replace it with peace (Philippians 4:6-7). We replace pride with a humble spirit (Proverbs 29:23) or materialism with contentment (Philippians 4:12). We learn to put off the old and put on the new by reading God's Word every day.

*In what way might this strengthen your prayer life?*

*Ask God: What is left of my old self that I need to put off...? What should I put on instead?*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Ask According to God’s Word



“Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth.”  
(John 17:17, NLT)

Though Jesus taught beginners to pray for “daily bread” (physical and material needs), He prayed for spiritual needs as well. The longer prayers of the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 1:16-19; 3:14-19; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12) show the same thing. Out of the 24 specific requests in their prayers, there was only one for “daily bread.” Every other request was for spiritual needs such as spiritual growth, maturity, protection and unity.

As we grow and mature in our prayer lives, we should pray for the things that were important to Jesus and Paul. An easy way to follow their example is to pray the Scriptures. For example if we pray, “Father, help us to seek Your kingdom and righteousness as the priority of our lives” (Matthew 6:33), we can be assured that our “daily bread” needs will be provided as well (Matthew 6:25-32).

*Ask God to show you how your prayers can be strengthened by including Scripture verses....*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Seek Forgiveness with the Word



“Rejoice always....” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Earlier we discussed using Scriptures that identify specific sins as a basis for our prayers of confession, perhaps reviewing a verse a day.

Another way is to read our Bible devotionally each morning. Whenever we find something that we clearly should or shouldn’t do, pause to ask God about it. As we read the verse above, for example, we might pray, “Father, are there times that I’m not rejoicing as I should?”

When He brings something to mind, agree with Him: “You are right. Forgive me. I wasn’t rejoicing in that situation, but I want to. Help me to be the kind of person You can count on to always rejoice in the knowledge that You love me, You are faithful. You hold my life in Your hands, no matter what the circumstances may be.”

This prayer includes the willingness to turn away from sin in God’s strength.

*Ask God to help you to read His Word slowly enough to give Him time to apply His truths to your life....*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Pray the Word for Protection



“...take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Ephesians 6:17b-18a, NLT)

In this passage, Paul identifies the spoken Word of God (the Greek word is *rhema*) as our weapon against the powers of darkness. That is how Jesus defeated Satan in the wilderness. Three times as He was tempted, Jesus simply said, “It is written....” and quoted Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11).

We can do the same. We can simply declare, “It is written—the blood of Christ protects me from the evil one” (Revelation 12:11) or “It is written—Jesus will bring me through any temptation.” (1 Corinthians 10:13) We can also incorporate these truths into our prayers: “Father, thank You that it is written—the Spirit within me is greater than any evil spirit in the world” (1 John 4:4), or “Father, thank You that, although Satan is the father of lies, it is written that I have within me the Spirit of truth” (John 8:44; 14:16-17).

Praying through the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17) is another strong prayer, when we understand that the armor isn’t just a word picture, but a description of the life we are to live in Christ (Ephesians 1:1-6:9).

*Ask God in what ways your armor is complete—or incomplete....*

## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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### My prayer response—

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### My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Practical Application

## The power of God’s Word—*strengthens our prayers*

Let’s be encouraged to continue to add Scripture to our prayers knowing that there is power in God’s Word to change lives:

- God’s Word is living and active, exposing thoughts and attitudes. (Hebrews 4:12)
- God’s Word will accomplish His purpose. (Isaiah 55:11)
- God’s Word is like a hammer breaking rocks [Perhaps hard hearts?!] (Jeremiah 23:29)
- God’s Word is a lamp for our feet, a light to our path. (Psalm 119:105)

## Praying for more people with fewer words—*His words*

Jesus’ mother, at the wedding feast in Cana, provides an interesting insight about expressing concerns for others. The host had run out of wine. Jesus’ mother didn’t come to Him with a lot of details or explanations. She did not suggest ways He might help. She didn’t mention that He might consider turning water into wine. She simply presented the need, “They have no wine” (John 2:3) and left it in His hands.

Is that how we typically pray? Most of us tend to give God far too many details. Wouldn’t it be better to give God fewer details, so that we can pray for more people and about more things?

## Praying over a list of requests—*effectively*

Often we have lists of people or prayer requests to pray over, yet limited time. One way to pray more effectively is to use Scripture verses as “blanket prayers,” prayers that cover everyone on the list. Who would not benefit from being “born again” if he isn’t saved (John 3:3, 5) or from “learning to imitate Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:6) if he is?

We can pray verses of Scripture over a list of people—family and friends, church groups, e3 staff and those going on mission trips—and then quickly pray through the list, mentioning individuals by name. If we are aware of specific “daily bread” needs for some on our list, we simply bring them to Christ as His mother did at the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1). “They have no more wine” (or for us: Michael is facing surgery, Sharon needs provision, give Sam guidance, grant Amy peace). God knows the details and extent of the need far better than we do.

*Pause and ask God to help you expand your understanding of how to add Scripture verses to your personal prayers....*



## Fan the Flame of Your Prayer Life by Praying the Promises

### First, the minimum essentials of prayer—the “Our Father”

So far, we have considered the first and most fundamental principles of prayer that Jesus taught. These principles (from Matthew 6:6, 9-13) provide the spark that ignites our prayer lives through an evolving personal relationship with God that grows in intimacy. Our prayers become stronger and more effective. As we spend time with our Father every day, praying as Jesus taught through the “Our Father” pattern...

honoring our *relationship* with our heavenly Father,  
hallowing His name with *worship*,  
*surrendering* our lives,  
*asking* for daily needs,  
*confessing* our sins,  
seeking *protection* from the evil one  
return to *worship*—

...we can rely on God to help us find the discipline and consistency to mature and grow.

### Next steps in prayer—*persistence and boldness*

The next level of prayer includes the principles of *persistence* and *boldness*. This teaching came in the form of two familiar parables: “The Friend at Midnight” (persistence in praying for others, Luke 11:5-8) and “The Widow and the Unjust Judge” (boldness in praying for ourselves, Luke 18:2-5). These parables came after His disciples had been with Him a year and a half, toward the midpoint of His ministry, once they had grown beyond the basics of prayer.

Jesus’ earliest followers were not ready to understand and apply these principles of persistence and boldness, nor are beginners today. His disciples were just learning to come to God personally to ask for their daily needs to be met. We must all grow in our understanding of the faithfulness of God to find the persistence and boldness to continue in prayer—sometimes for years—without giving up.

Jesus said we must not give up (Luke 18:1). Have you known some who have prayed for many years for something that God has not yet done? Have you prayed a long time, perhaps for someone’s salvation? The only thing that can sustain such prayer is living and maturing faith.

### Finally, prayer promises for the mature and committed—to receive whatever we ask!

The key to understanding the prayer promises of Jesus is to understand to whom they were given and with what conditions. The familiar “ask, seek and knock...everyone who asks will receive...” (Matthew 7:7-9), is given in the context of the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus lays out the principles by which we are to live. The promise is conditioned upon our living that life.

Other amazing prayer promises were given only in the last week of His life, all but one in the last night of His life. They were not given to casual followers, but to *the committed few* who had walked with Him for more than three years, those to whom He would entrust the building of His church.

Are these promises for us today? Absolutely—when we are as committed to Him as His trusted 11 disciples were. We will consider some of these key promises this week.

### Obedience—not perfection—is required

Any promise of the Bible must be considered both in the context of the entire passage and the whole truth of the Bible. The Apostle John makes it clear that we cannot separate the life we live from the prayers we pray and expect God to give us whatever we ask. God honors obedience—

...if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, *because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.* (1 John 3:21-22, NIV, italics added)

This does not mean we have to live perfect lives, but obedient lives—confessing our sins so that our prayers are not hindered. How we live and what we pray *have a direct impact on the effectiveness of our prayers.* God can answer any prayer He chooses to answer and does. But we must consider that His answers at least in part depend upon the life we live.

...The prayer of a *righteous* man is powerful and effective (James 5:16b, NIV, italics added).

This not only means the righteousness of Christ, but the practical righteousness of our lives—our decision to live according to the Word of God and to obediently confess and repent when we fail.

*Pause and ask God to help you live in such a way that He will be pleased to honor His promises when you pray (in His way, according to His will).*

# Prayer Promise: the power of agreement



“Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 18:19)

What a promise. But it’s not what it may seem at first glance. Jesus had been talking about church discipline. He was establishing a principle, that when we come on church business—kingdom business—and we ask in agreement with His will (1 John 5:14-15), we can have what we ask.

This puts an incredible value on corporate prayer (praying with another person or prayer group). If our prayers are focused on advancing God’s kingdom and we’re asking for things that we know are His will, our prayers have power we can’t fully understand.

Are you comfortable praying with others? Many are not and it’s okay to pray silently along with others who are. But if you always pray silently, how can others agree with you?

*If praying aloud with others is difficult for you, ask God to help...*

*If you are comfortable in corporate prayer, ask Him to make you sensitive to those who are not....*



## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Prayer Promise: in Jesus’ name



“If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.” (John 14:14)

This promise was given by Jesus to the 11 disciples through whom He would build His church. They had lived with Him, learned from Him and were committed to Him. When we have that kind of devoted relationship with Him, these promises are for us as well. But we need to consider them in context.

This promise means that to pray in His name is to pray in His authority—the authority that’s given to us to manage His kingdom affairs. It means we pray according to His nature and character, from His perspective and point of view, asking for what He would ask if He were praying. Then—we can ask for anything and He will do it. When we pray for such things as spiritual needs according to His expressed will, we can ask in His name—because it is His kingdom business.

*Ask God to give you His kingdom perspective on your prayers...*

*Ask God’s help to more fully understand how to pray in Jesus’ name....*



## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Prayer Promise: move mountains



“Have faith in God. ...whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes...it will be done for him.” (Mark 11:22-23)

Sometimes we feel like we’re facing mountains. In the Bible, mountains are often symbolic of obstacles to doing what God has given us to do. We’re often tempted to try to accomplish His plan with our own ingenuity and resources. This is as true for us personally as it is for us corporately in the body of Christ and as we serve together with e3 Partners.

Moving ahead of God reveals doubt that He will come through. If the mountain needs to be moved to accomplish God’s will, in His timing and in His way, He will move it. Our job is to pray in faith and wait. Waiting doesn’t mean “doing nothing.” It means continuing to do the last thing God told us to do, until He gives us something else.

*In what part of your life do you feel your faith is strong?  
Where is it weak? Ask Him to increase your faith... (Luke 17:5).*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Prayer Promise: abiding in the Vine



“If you abide in me and my words [the things He taught] abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit...” (John 15:7-8a)

In this passage Jesus is comparing the relationship we are to have with Him as being like the relationship between a branch and its vine. We’re to live that close to Him, to have an inseparable and totally dependent relationship with Him. His words, His teachings, are to become part of us, and when they are, they will transform our minds (Romans 12:1-2) and bring our prayers into alignment with His will.

This is why Jesus could give us such an open-ended promise. As we live in such a relationship with Him, we’ll pray for the things on His heart, according to His will. And we’ll receive what we ask because such prayers will bear fruit for His kingdom and for the Father’s glory. What a blessing to be such a vital part of His kingdom work through prayer.

*What impact do you think it will have on the life and outreach of our ministry if we all begin praying for each other, our families and the people we serve—that we will be those who abide in Christ?*

*Ask God what He thinks...*

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## Journal to Remember

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What does my heart sense God is saying to me?

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My prayer response—

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My impression of what God wants me to do—

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# Has God become More Real to You?



“And I am sure that God, who began a good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.” (Philippians 1:6, NLT)

As you have taken this journal to heart, has God become more real to you? Have you developed a clearer sense of knowing Him in a personal way, hearing His voice, seeing Him answer your prayers for His purpose and glory? Have you understood that He desires to spend time with you? That He wants to live His life through you? And that the degree to which you experience this life is up to you and the choices you make? If so, our prayers for you and the impact of this journal in your life have been answered.

Now prayerfully consider: what will you do with what you have heard from God, with what you’ve recorded on these journal pages? Will it make a difference in your life--a week from now? A month? Five years down the road?

*Ask God what He considers most important...*

*Ask Him to help it make a lasting difference in your life...*

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**Journal to Remember**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me?**

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**My prayer response—**

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**My impression of what God wants me to do—**

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# Keep the Fire Burning!

Once you have completed the *Ignite Your Prayer Life* prayer journal, our prayer is that you will want to continue journaling with this format or something similar—whatever works well for you.

You can conveniently follow this format in any kind of notebook or journal. Keep in mind that you do not have to journal every day to keep an effective record of things God has revealed to you. You may find yourself journaling several days in a row and then perhaps only once or twice a week for a period of time. The important thing is not to give it up.

Journaling will help you develop your sensitivity to God’s “still, small voice” (1 Kings 19:12) and to track your own spiritual journey.

Date: Today's Date

**Scripture, or a quote from your daily devotional, or prayer**  
(Record the Bible verse or something from your devotional reading or prayer that you sense God has impressed upon you.)

It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. Ps. 83.

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**What does my heart sense God is saying to me?**

God knows how weary I am this morning. He wants me to know I can count on Him to give me strength.

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**My prayer response—**

Help me to remember this promise, not just today, but every time I feel exhausted and used up, to turn to You.

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**My impression of what God wants me to do—**

Trust Him to always be there for me.

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# Names and Attributes of God

## The Word tells us Jesus is:

Our Comforter (2 Corinthians 1:4)  
Our Defender (Proverbs 23:11, NIV)  
Our Deliverer (Psalm 144:2)  
Our Fortress (Psalm 18:2)  
Our Guide (Psalm 48:14, NIV)  
Our Healer (Exodus 15:26)  
Our Hope (Romans 15:13)  
Our King (Psalm 10:16)  
Our Peace (Ephesians 2:14)  
Our Protector (Psalm 32:7)  
Our Provider (Genesis 22:14)  
Our Redeemer (Isaiah 47:4)  
Our Refuge (Psalm 46:1)  
Our Rock (Psalm 28:1)  
Our Shield (Psalm 18:2)  
Our Strong Tower (Psalm 61:3)  
Our Sure Foundation (Isaiah 28:16)

## God's character and attributes show that Jesus is:

abounding in love (Psalm 103:8, NIV)  
all-knowing (Psalm 94:11)  
all-powerful (Jeremiah 32:17)  
ever present (Psalm 139:7-10)  
faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9)  
forgiving (1 John 1:9)  
good (Psalm 86:5, NIV)  
great (Psalm 76:1)  
holy (Isaiah 6:3)  
kind (Psalm 18:50, NIV)  
majestic (Psalm 145:5, NIV)  
patient (2 Peter 3:9)  
rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4, NIV)  
righteous (Psalm 145:17)  
slow to anger (Psalm 103:8)  
trustworthy (Psalm 9:10)

# Surrender

## We put off the old and put on the new:

Consider the parts of your “old nature” that keep getting in the way of your living the life you desire to live. Put them off as Paul instructs (Ephesians 4:22-24), but don't stop there. Ask God to help you put on those opposite positive character traits. For example:

Help me to put off pride (Proverbs 16:5)  
and put on humility (James 4:6).

Help me to put off my critical nature (Galatians 5:15)  
and put on kindness (Colossians 3:12).

Help me to put off lack of love (John 4:7, 8, 20)  
and put on unconditional love (John 15:12).

Help me to put off worry (John 14:1a)  
and put on faith and trust in God (John 14:1b).

Help me to put off impatience (James 1:2-4)  
and put on patience (Hebrews 10:36).

Help me to put off unforgiveness (Mark 11:26)  
and put on forgiveness (Colossians 3:13).

Help me to put off my temper (Proverbs 25:28)  
and put on self-control (Proverbs 16:23).

Help me put off unbelief (Hebrews 3:12)  
and put on faith (Hebrews 11:1, 6).

Help me put off neglecting study of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:14-17)  
and put on regular Bible study (Psalm 1:2).

Help me put off lack of burden for the lost (Matthew 9:36-38)  
and put on compassion, witnessing (Acts 1:8).

Help me put off lies and exaggerations (Ephesians 3:25)  
and put on speaking the truth (Zechariah 8:16).

Help me put off prayerlessness (1 Samuel 12:23)  
and put on praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Help me put off procrastination (Proverbs 10:5)  
and put on diligence (Proverbs 27:1).

Help me put off gluttony (Proverbs 23:21)  
and put on discipline (1 Corinthians 9:27).

*(You'll want to make your own list.)*

## Let Your Hand Remind You —

Now that you have completed this four-week journal, our prayer is that you will be encouraged to use your hand as a reminder for your daily prayers. We hope you will have opportunities to share this simple tool with others, not only on your trip, but throughout your life. You will find this an appropriate outline for praying with small groups, in prayer-walking and in any opportunity you have to teach or encourage others in their personal prayer lives and walk with the Lord.



As the palm is the foundation for fingers and thumb, time alone with God is the foundation for our personal relationship with Him (Matthew 6:6). We acknowledge the relationship —“Our Father” (Matthew 6:9).



Our thumb reminds us that we must worship God before we ask for anything. We “hallow His name” (Matthew 6:9).



Next we surrender our lives —“Your kingdom come, Your will be done” (Matthew 6:10).



Then we ask God to meet our needs —“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).



Now we confess our sins —“Forgive us as we forgive others” (Matthew 6:12).



Then we seek protection —“Deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13).



... and return to worship —“for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (Matthew 6:13).

## Are You a Child of God?

This is a question that can be easy to answer — however, if you aren't sure — consider several Scriptures which reveal the offer and the evidence of being God's child:

- Have you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting Him alone, relying on Him as Savior from your sins? Have you received Jesus Christ into your life? (John 1:12)
- Have you “believed in your heart” that God raised Jesus from the dead and “spoken with your mouth” that Jesus is Lord? (Romans 10:9)
- Do you sense that you are a “new creation” in Christ evidenced by a desire to spend time in God's Word? (2 Corinthians 5:17 & 1 Peter 2:1-2)
- Are you experiencing God's call to live as “children of light,” including the conviction and power to turn away from sin? (Ephesians 5:8-9 & Luke 13:3, 5)
- Is the “fruit of the Holy Spirit” influencing your life and relationships in increasing measure? (Galatians 5:22-23)

If these things don't seem real in your life, but you truly desire them to be so, speak to a pastor or godly friend — or pray a prayer like this:

“God, I believe Jesus is Your Son! I now receive Him as the Lord, who is the Savior of my life. I believe that Jesus died for my sins, that He was buried and raised again from the dead.

“I confess that I have sinned against You and I am sorry. Thank you for forgiving me! Thank you for the gift of salvation! God, please strengthen me to love you, to serve you and to turn away from the temptations and sins of this world. Thank you God, for the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal and forever Savior! I pray in His name, amen.”

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