



*Lord,*

# AWAKEN

*your Church*

*a growth guide for prayer*

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# AWAKEN

Prayer is one of the most important practices for people following the Way of Jesus. We are taught to pray at a young age, told that we can pray to communicate with God, and encouraged often to engage in prayer for all of life's circumstances. But what is prayer? For many of us, it's a practice that shapes the way that we look at life. Yet, for many it's a mystery. How do I speak words to a God who is not physically in front of me and will He answer? Do my prayers mean something? Am I being heard? This guide is meant to help understand the practice of prayer in tangible ways that you can jump into immediately. Along the way, we will look at different types of prayers, how God answers prayers, and how prayer changes us. We hope this guide will be a rich well for you to drink from as you seek to spend more time with God during this series. We want to encourage you to engage with the material of this guide with a journal and pen in hand, prepared to write out prayers and reflections. Then share what the Lord is doing in your heart with others.

Let's dive in!

# Resources For This Growth Guide

As we engage with our interior and exterior life through prayer, our hope is to provide resources that will help you take what you're learning to a new level. Take advantage of RightNow Media, apps, websites, and books as you encounter God in new ways during this series.

## **RightNow Media**

The Prayer Course by Pete Greig

Unanswered Prayer by Pete Greig

Psalm 23 by Matt Chandler

Cornerstone Series 3 - The Power of Prayer by Dave Mann

Whisper by Mark Batterson

## **Apps and Websites**

YouVersion Bible App

ReadScripture App

Verses App

Blueletterbible

StepBible

## **Books**

How to Pray by Pete Greig

A Praying Life by Paul Miller

Prayer by Timothy Keller

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Pete Scazzero

Dangerous Prayers by Craig Groeschel

Find all of the resources at [gracespringchurch.org/awaken](https://gracespringchurch.org/awaken)

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# LORD TEACH US HOW TO PRAY.

*“Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”*

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## Protection

Jesus finishes the prayer by asking the Father for protection from evil. May we pray this prayer as we fight against sin, our flesh, and the enemy of our souls. God is eager to cover us with His presence and protect us from evil. May our hearts turn to Him.

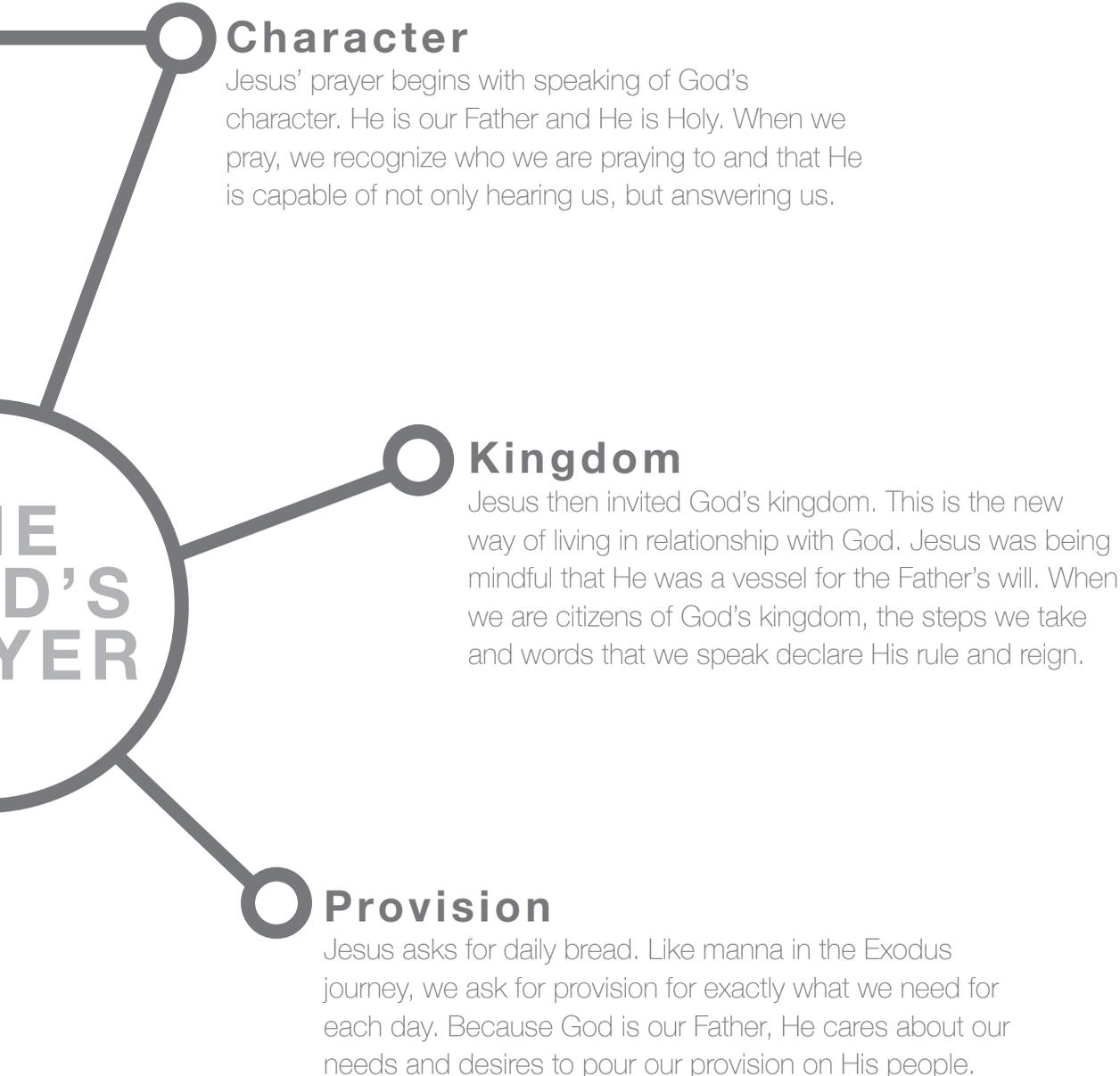
## Guidance

Jesus reminds us that God is our guide. A good guide will not lead us into temptation or danger, but onto solid paths. God wants to guide us on paths of righteousness. In praying for God's guidance, we remember that His will for our lives is better than our own.

## Forgiveness

Jesus models a prayer of forgiveness by pointing at our need for forgiveness, but also our need to forgive others. Confession is a powerful practice that steals the power of our sins and helps us to reflect on our role in our relationship with God. It also helps us to live a life of character as we receive His forgiveness and then pour out forgiveness to those who have wronged us.

THE  
LORD  
PRAY



## Character

Jesus' prayer begins with speaking of God's character. He is our Father and He is Holy. When we pray, we recognize who we are praying to and that He is capable of not only hearing us, but answering us.

## Kingdom

Jesus then invited God's kingdom. This is the new way of living in relationship with God. Jesus was being mindful that He was a vessel for the Father's will. When we are citizens of God's kingdom, the steps we take and words that we speak declare His rule and reign.

## Provision

Jesus asks for daily bread. Like manna in the Exodus journey, we ask for provision for exactly what we need for each day. Because God is our Father, He cares about our needs and desires to pour our provision on His people.

# Practice Makes Permanent

Before we dig into the weekly prayer guides, it's worth taking a few moments to reflect on spiritual practices that will help us to engage with God. We recognize that practices can't make God love us more or less. We also realize that through spiritual practices, we can't achieve salvation or work for God to give us favor. He's also not disappointed in us when our practices fall apart.

The need for spiritual practices in the church is rooted in the idea that when we take part in certain disciplines, it helps to train and position our hearts and minds to see God in new and powerful ways. Try this on for size: When we are riddled with selfish, sinful, or anxious thoughts, the practice of reading and studying scripture helps ground us in the truth of who God is and the truth of our identity in Him. We begin to see the world through His word instead of seeing the Bible as an add-on to our already busy lives. In the same way, prayer and fasting are vital practices to help us recenter our hearts and to hear and see God in new ways.

# Prayer

Prayer is often an extreme example of slowing down. Think about it. When we truly engage in prayer, we turn off the distractions around us, stop trying to achieve, and move into a position of communion with God. When we begin our days with prayer, we are giving God the first fruits of our day, saying that before we pick up our phone or begin to ponder the busyness of the day, we want to spend time with Him. When we pause before meals or stop to pray for someone who has a particular need, we are stopping in the current moment to engage with the heart of God and tell Him that His presence in this moment is more important than our normal scheduled routines.

We can often wonder if God answers our prayers. We can ask if our prayers are being heard. But what happens when we stop viewing prayer primarily as a means to receive something and start looking at it as the means to BE with someone. What if prayer isn't as much about reminding God about our desires or needs, but reminding our hearts that we need to be with Him. Prayer is a radical repositioning of our hearts to be in tune with the Father. When we pray, we recondition our hearts to fit into His rhythms, to long for His desires, and to align our hearts and minds with what He is doing in the world around us. We find that just like an earthly father, God delights in spending time with His children and pouring out His gifts, resources, and presence on us.

The practice of prayer is multi-dimensional. In the same way that we grow closer to the people we spend more time with - even picking up their mannerisms and quirks - we grow closer to God and look more like Him when we spend time with Him. Throughout this guide, we will offer specific prayer practices that will enrich your time with Him and open up new channels for you to see Him in powerful ways.

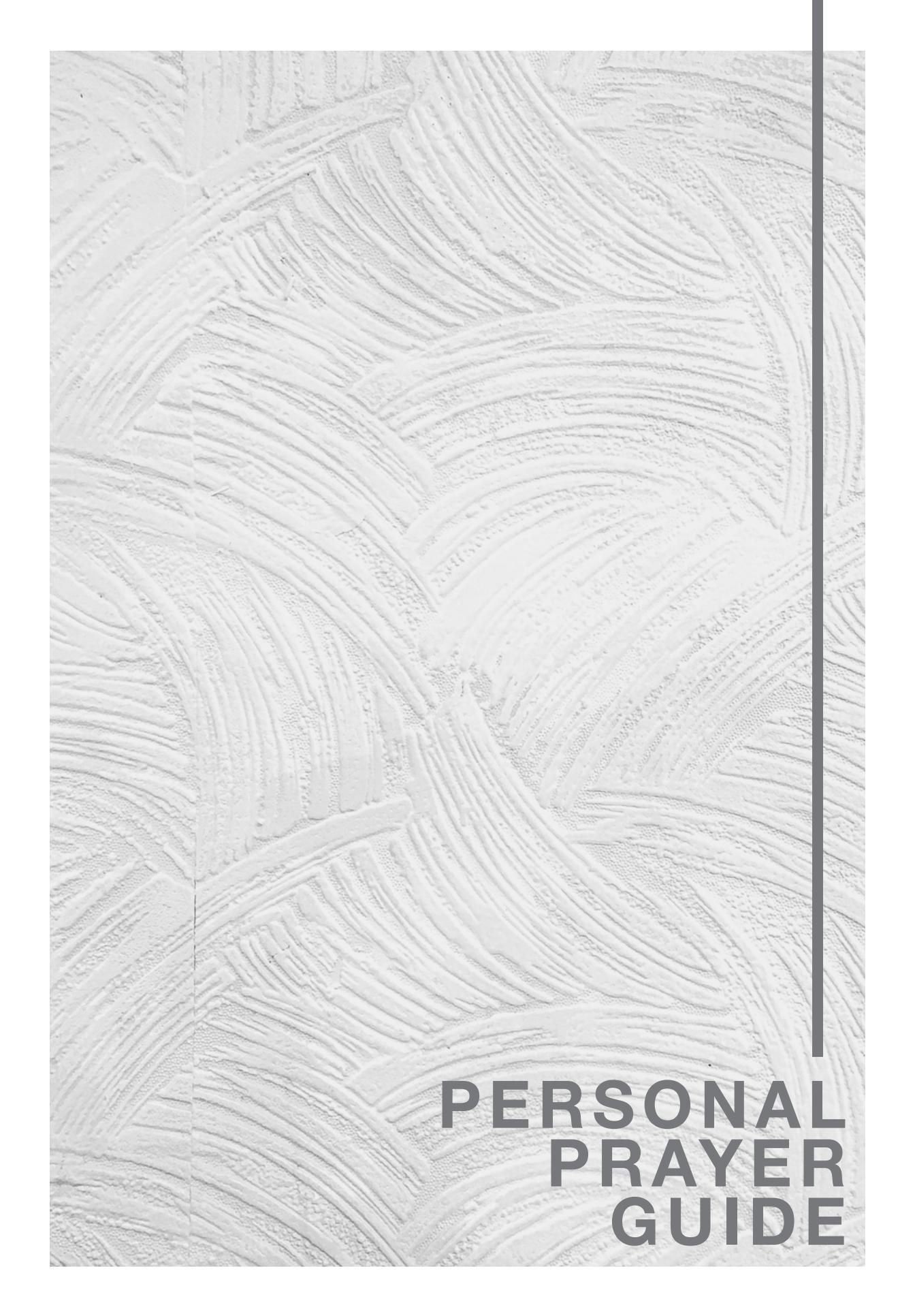
# Fasting & Sacrifice

Fasting is a practice that we might not hear about or engage in as often as prayer or scripture reading. Fasting, on the surface level, means to go for a set period of time without food for the purpose of growing closer to God. On a deeper level, fasting is withholding what our body wants so that we can acknowledge what our souls need. Fasting reveals the urges and desires that control us and is an extreme exercise in self-control and mindfulness. We live in a world of instant gratification, fast food, and limitless options. When we fast, we are acknowledging what we want deeply and surrendering those desires and the time we would have spent partaking to be with God instead. We replace the primal with the presence of God.

Sacrifice, in the same way, has the power to open up new areas of mindfulness. We simplify our lives by giving up something other than food - maybe social media, television, our phones, or other habits that tend to take up our time, in order to spend more time with God and become more aware of our deep dependence on secondary things.

Both of these practices are centered in finding joy and fulfillment in Christ alone. We learn joy in “suffering” through abandoning our desires to seek God's desires first. We teach our bodies that we don't always get what we want - and that's okay! When we fast and sacrifice, we are rewiring our brains to focus on the presence of God and joining Him on His mission for our lives. We, in turn, break the grip on the things that clamor for attention from our souls and focus our attention to be attentive to the only one who can give life to our souls - God.

There will be a period of time during this series where we will ask the entire body to evaluate where fasting and sacrifice might play a part in our lives. We hope you'll engage with these practices during that time, not only to reorder our lives, but to refocus on the presence of God in the midst of our lack. It will be worth it! Promise!



**PERSONAL  
PRAYER  
GUIDE**

# WEEK ONE

*Awaken us to Your Presence*

**“Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.”**

**Psalm 25:4-5**

# Inviting God's Presence Through Silence and Solitude

This week we are focusing on two words that are often foreign in our culture: Silence and Solitude. As we ask God to awaken us to His presence, we need to prepare a place for Him to speak to our hearts. In essence, silence is quieting the world around us and the world inside of us to be present with God. Solitude is removing obstacles, people, and distractions from our surroundings to allow space for God to speak. When we put these two together, we move to a place of quiet without music, cell phones, or other distractions, and at the same time quiet our interior thought life to simply receive from God. It is not a time of petition, but of presence. When we begin our times of prayer with silence and solitude, we turn off our prying minds and ask for God to speak to us rather than focus on all of the talking that we need to do with God. It might feel awkward at first, but here are some tips to start working silence and solitude into your prayer life:

Begin your prayer time with silence and solitude.

Focus on breathing deeply.

Ground your feet and open your hands.

Begin your time by simply asking God, "What do you want to speak to me now?" and then quiet your mind.

Try using an anchoring phrase for when your mind wanders. "Jesus, here I am." or "Be still and know God." When your mind wanders, simply pray that phrase and then refocus on hearing from God.

Start with small increments of time. You'll be amazed how 1 minute feels like 5 or 10. Try being in silence and solitude with God for 5 minutes at first.

Don't feel guilty if it doesn't work out or if you get distracted. Don't feel discouraged if you don't "feel" God speaking anything specific to you.

The goal is to be present and attentive TO Him.

## Daily Practice

Each day add silence and solitude into your normal prayer rhythms. Consider starting your morning with this prayer practice. Don't rush through it - focus on spending time with God within it.

After your time of silence and solitude, pray through one Psalm each day. Start with Psalm 1 on day 1, 2 on 2, etc... Don't simply read it, but take the space to PRAY it. The goal isn't to get through it, but for the Psalm to work it's way into you. Maybe pray through it a couple of times.









# WEEK TWO

*Awaken us to Your Purpose*

**“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”**

**Luke 19:10**

## **Sensing God’s Purpose through Intercessory Prayer**

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Intercessory prayer is a type of prayer that is rooted in going to battle for someone or something. Intercession typically gives the idea of mediation or going between. While we don’t believe that someone can be saved through our interceding (that’s between them and Jesus), we believe that our prayers for our neighbors, family, and coworkers are powerful. For believers to intercede on behalf of others is for them to stand in the gap and ask God to move for His name sake and for His purposes. When we take part in intercessory prayer, we essentially bear the burdens of others and carry them before God. Intercession wells up from deep places of concern and passion. When we feel so compelled and moved in our spirit, sometimes the only thing we can do is to take these thoughts and emotions intentionally before God. Intercessory prayer has a strong effect on how we view God and how we view others.

Intercessory prayer strengthens our bond with God’s word and shows us His purposes in the world. Intercession looks strongly at God’s promises in His word and offers these promises back to God regarding a certain situation.

Intercessory prayer gives us an outward focus instead of an inward focus - we are praying specifically for God to show up in people’s lives through relationship or healing. This takes our perspective off of ourselves and binds our hearts with others.

Intercessory prayer teaches us humility and patience. Often when we labor in prayer, we might not see the results immediately - this teaches us to trust in the Father.

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Intercessory prayer inspires us to do something about what we see around us. While we are praying deeply about certain issues or for certain people, the deep emotions that God puts in our hearts beckon us to join in with Him in speaking the Gospel to the world around us.

## **Daily Practice**

Each day, begin your prayer time in silence and solitude.

After some time, begin to ask God about situations that He would have you engage with. Is there something that someone else is carrying that is heavy on your heart? Someone who needs to be impacted by the Gospel? Healing or restoration that you need to pray for? Take time to pray about every aspect of the situation. Ask God to illuminate each area that you can pray about in this person's life or situation. Ask God to connect you more deeply to the emotions that you're feeling about the situation at hand. Ask Him to give you the words to pray.

Spend some time in scripture to find God's promises or character surrounding these specific areas that you feel compelled to pray about. Pray these verses to God. Ask Him to move, to heal, to provide opportunities for you to help or speak truth.

After some time, continue to pray through a Psalm each day.











# WEEK THREE

*Awaken us to Your People*

**“Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.”**

**1 Peter 3:8-9**

# Opening our Hearts and Eyes to People through Prayer

This week we are focusing on simplifying and unhurrying our lives to be prepared for when God places someone in our path. We will also focus on asking God for opportunities to see Him in those around us. Just as the Good Samaritan was ready and willing to minister to whoever God put in his path, we need to awaken to the slowed down pace where we stop to notice and then ask God to prepare our hearts to be the answer to people's holistic needs around us. As you pray each day this week, focus on upward, inward, and outward prayers that focus your heart and mind on God and His mission in your life. Here are some suggestions for how to pray each day as you think about availability to the Holy Spirit.

## Daily Practice

Each day, begin your prayer time in silence and solitude. After some time, continue your prayer time by praying through a Psalm. Remember to pray it - not just read it! After spending some time in the Psalms each day, continue your prayer time with the following prompts:

Upward - Give praise to God for who He is. Try to focus on His character. What are His attributes that are worthy of being praised? What are some specific things that He has done that you are grateful for? Who is He to you? How are you sensing He wants to pour His love on you?

Inward - For this week, we are focusing on simplifying our lives and unhurrying our time - not only with God but with the world around us. Ask God to illuminate what He wants to do in your heart. Ask Him to show you specific areas that can be slowed down. Take time to embrace what He's sharing with you and think of areas that you will commit to this work each day. Ask for conviction and confess where it's needed. This prayer is a movement between you and God and it's ok to be honest and to feel vulnerable. Now ask God to prepare your heart, hands, and mind to join Him in what He wants to do in the world around you. Ask Him to help you be a noticer - someone who sees with His eyes and answers accordingly.

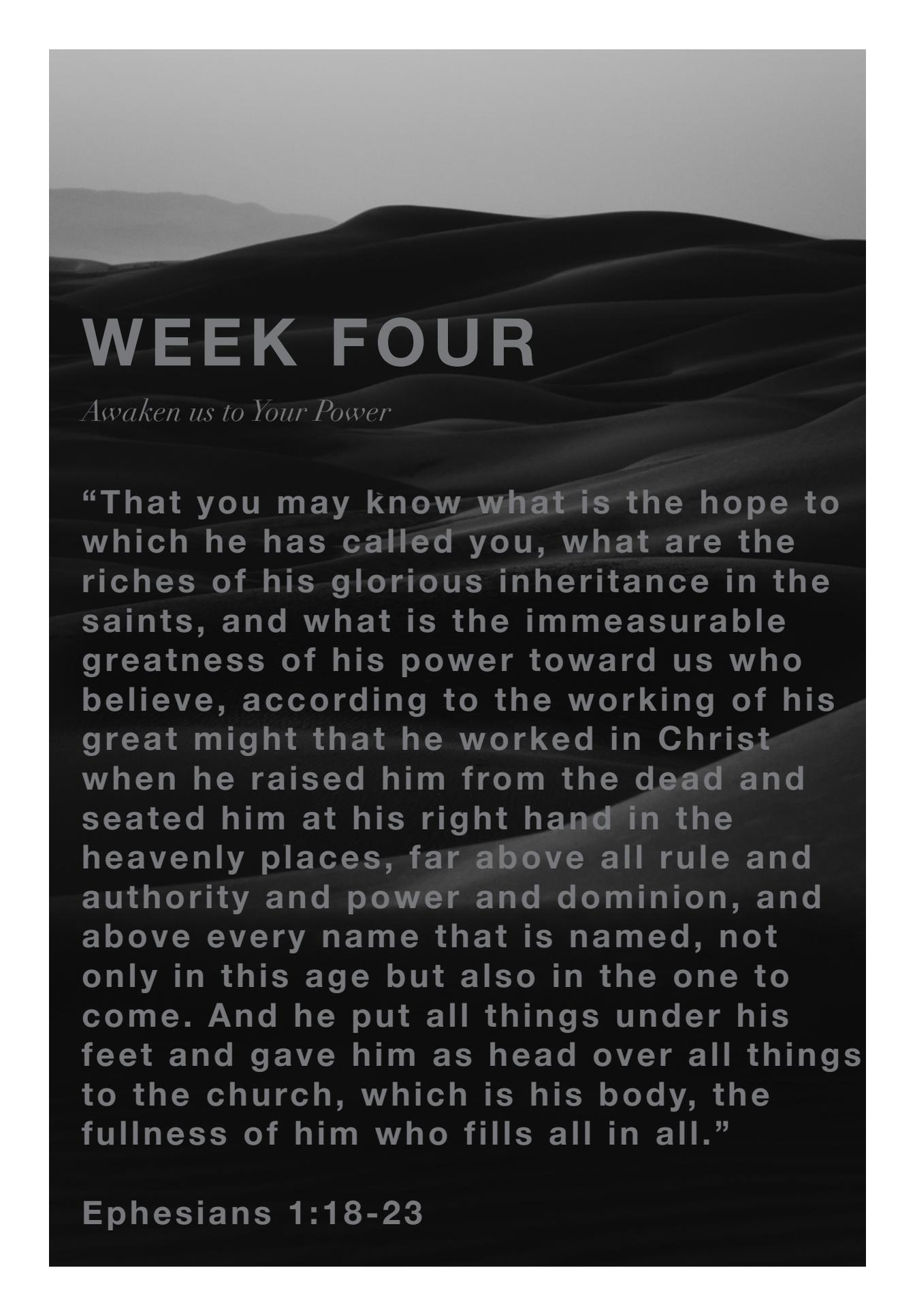
Outward - Move into a time of asking God for opportunities to see what He has for you each day. If you know of people in need, pray for them. If you know of situations where God needs to show up, pray for those. Ask God how you can be part of the solution and how He might inspire you to move. Ask for wisdom, guidance, and direction. As you finish praying, take some time to journal. You can use some of the following prompts to spur your journaling time forward.











# WEEK FOUR

*Awaken us to Your Power*

**“That you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”**

**Ephesians 1:18-23**

# Experiencing God through The Lord's Prayer

This week we are focusing on being attentive to God through praying the Lord's Prayer. Take a look back at the page at the beginning of the guide on The Lord's Prayer. Jesus was teaching His disciples how to pray in a way that focused on knowing God in a real way and embracing His character as followers.

These movements help us to focus on God's:

- Character
- Kingdom
- Provision
- Forgiveness
- Guidance
- Protection

## Daily Practice

Each day, begin your prayer time in silence and solitude.

After some time, pray through your daily Psalm. Reflect on the words and how it speaks to your heart.

Take time to focus on the six aspects of the Lord's prayer. Are there any of these aspects that reflect your heart or your needs right now? Spend time slowly praying through the words of the Lord's Prayer and present your desires to God. As you internalize each of the words, praise God and ask Him to be present with you. Ask Him for the things you need. Ask the Lord to inhabit these words and walk with you through your day. Take some time as you finish your prayer time to journal your thoughts and feelings. You can use the following prompts to help you during this time.









# WEEK FIVE

*Awaken us to Your Perspective*

**“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”**

## **1 Corinthians 2:12-13**

### **Viewing God’s Perspective through The Examen**

The Examen is a historical church practice by Ignatius of Loyola. It is a type of prayer that helps us to ground ourselves and focus on remembering God through our days and remember Him in the big and small things that happen to us. The practice is a form of prayer and thoughtfulness where we are challenged to look back through our day and find God in the good and bad moments and to embrace Him in each. The following is a basic outline for praying through The Examen.

Spend time becoming aware of God's presence.

With gratitude in your heart, look back on the day that just passed and spend time in review. Look for times that were good and that were challenging. Thank God for the good and the bad - asking Him to show you the lessons He has in each.

Be attentive to your emotions in the midst of these prayers.

How are you feeling and how do you see God in the midst of this?

Ask God for what you need for tomorrow.

Pray that He will bless and guide you in your day ahead.



## Daily Practice

Each day, begin your prayer time in silence and solitude.

Take about 10-15 minutes each day to pray through the following steps of The Examen:

Take time to think through the day that just passed. What are the things you are grateful for? What are the moments that passed that you feel indifferent about? Were there areas of regret, sin, or frustration? Pray, thanking God for the good and the bad. Ask God for forgiveness in the places that you need to. Ask God to show you His presence in all of the aspects of your day.

Ask God to show you how your emotions were created and used by Him. What were the most overwhelming emotions you experienced in the day? How did God use them? How do you feel about them? Praise God for creating you in His image and ask Him to be present in the midst of each feeling you had.

Focus on tomorrow. What do you need from God? Do you have anything stressful or exciting coming up? How would you like God to move in these situations? Spend time asking for what you need and for Him to guide you through your day as well as inviting the Holy Spirit to move with you throughout your day.

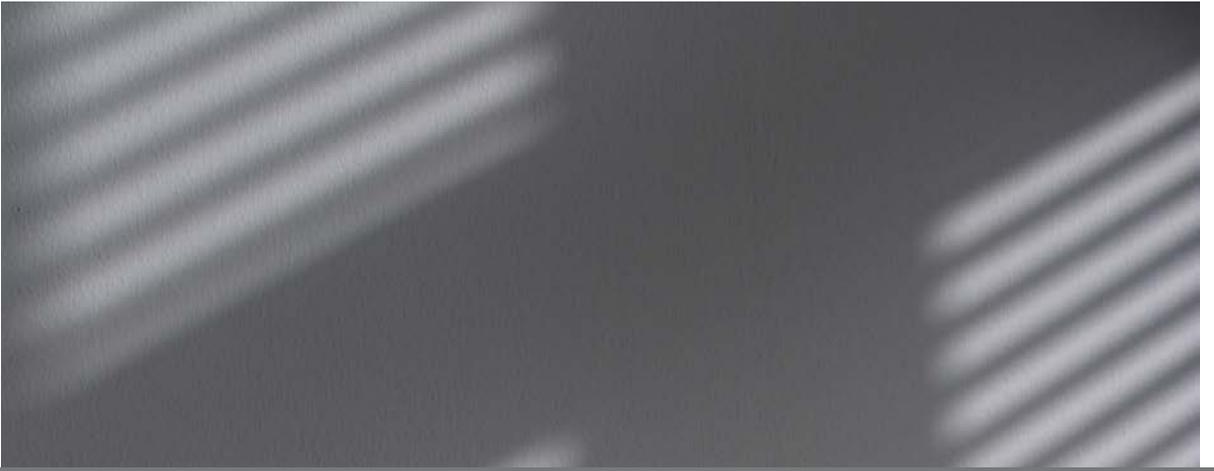
Continue praying through a Psalm each day, focusing on what God is speaking to you and how you can respond.













# COMMUNITY PRAYER GUIDE

*We have prepared a guide for each week of this series to spend time in prayer and reflection with your gsLife group. Use these guides to pray and spend time with God together.*

# WEEK ONE

## *Awaken us to Your Presence*

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Instructions for gsLife group facilitators: Have members sit in a circle so that everyone can see each other and discuss the items below. If your group is large, you may split into two groups in separate areas. Provide paper and a pen to each member as needed. Instruct each group member to specifically write down notes regarding any revealed prayer concerns and needs for the person on their right. Read John 5:1-11 and 10:38-42 together. Engage in the following discussion and prayer activities. Remember to be sensitive to any individual who does not feel comfortable sharing prayer requests or praying out loud, and indicate that individuals have the right to decline to respond and/or pray out loud.

Do you ever find that it is hard to spend adequate time in devotion and prayer? Do you ever become distracted during prayer? What distracts you from spending time with Jesus and during your prayers? Are your distractions mostly internal or external? As a group, discuss strategies for avoiding or eliminating distractions from spending time in prayer and during prayer. Then, pray for the Holy Spirit to provide guidance in your prayer during the following prayer activities and to each group member during their private prayer times.

Going around to each member, share your areas of need for physical, emotional, and/or spiritual healing. After each individual shares, the individual on that person's right will pray for that person's healing. Continue until each member of your group has a chance to share and to be prayed for.

Next, continue asking each member to share a prayer request for physical, emotional, and/or spiritual healing of someone outside of the group. After each individual shares, the individual on that person's right will pray for that person's healing. Continue until everyone in the group has a chance to share and to be prayed for.

Do you believe that Jesus still heals? Why or why not? Do you ever feel that your prayers for healing for yourself or someone else have gone unanswered? If so, how has that affected your faith? If anyone expresses concerns in these areas, as a group, pray for one another.

Do you believe that Jesus still performs miracles? Why or why not? Do you ever feel that your prayers for a miracle for yourself or someone else have gone unanswered? If so, how has that affected your faith? If anyone expresses concerns in these areas, as a group, pray for one another.

In light of the above passages, consider gracespring's mission "Helping people to take a step closer to Jesus." Why is prayer an important part of preparing for your role in our mission as a church and as the Church? Have you been regularly talking with and listening to the Holy Spirit regarding your role? If so, what has He revealed regarding your calling? After discussion, pray for each member and their faith journey as each participates in fulfilling their part of our mission.

As a group, discuss how you can each be intentional in praying for each other between meetings. Commit to praying specifically for the group member to your right between this and the next meeting.





# WEEK TWO

## *Awaken us to Your Purpose*

Jesus sent out 72 followers to preach and perform miracles in the villages of Judea. Their purpose was to prepare the hearts of the people to recognize their Messiah.

How can you help those around you recognize Jesus and know Him better? Take time to pray for someone specific who needs to know Jesus. Ask God to help you recognize opportunities to share your faith with others.

In Luke 10:2 Jesus tells His followers to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field. This reminds us that it is His work and His calling. We are called to pray and follow His lead. Take time to pray and acknowledge to God that He is the one who calls people. Ask Him to help those in your community group/family to hear His voice clearly.

Luke 10:3 is a command for those who are called to go prepare people to receive their Messiah. They were to be like sheep among wolves. This points out that the enemy is powerful and, on our own, we will fail. We need God's consistent guidance and protection. Take time to ask God for courage, guidance and protection as you seek to introduce others to Jesus.

# WEEK THREE

## *Awaken us to Your Purpose*

### **Belong:**

Do you often recognize needs around you either in your family, your neighborhood, or your workplace? When you see a need, what do you typically do?

Have you ever needed to accept help from others? Are you able to do so gracefully, or do you struggle to accept help from other people?

### **Grow:**

In Luke 10, Jesus teaches His listeners what it looks like to love one's neighbor. Have a member of your group read verses 25-32, and discuss the reasons why both the priest and the Levite might have passed by the beaten man.

Some believe that both the priest and the Levite may have thought that the man was already dead.

Some believe that the two men might have worried that the scene was a trap (with the robbers hiding nearby).

Others believe that the two men were focused on retaining their ritual cleanness.

Next have a member of your group read verses 33-37, and discuss all that the Samaritan did for the beaten man:

Bandaged his wounds (resolving the visible and immediate need)

Poured on oil (believed to protect from further infection)

Poured on wine (disinfectant properties)

Put the man on his own donkey (inconveniencing himself for the sake of the stranger)

Brought the man to an inn and paid the bill (gave of his own time and wealth)

In what areas have you received care from others?

Care of physical injuries or needs?

Care for your needs/wants at the expense of someone else's inconvenience?

Care for your needs/wants at the expense of someone else's time/money?

Returning to the beginning of this passage (verses 26 and 27), it is clear that loving our neighbor as ourselves is not an option, but rather an expectation summarizing the entirety of the law. How often do you think of loving your neighbor as your main task for the day?

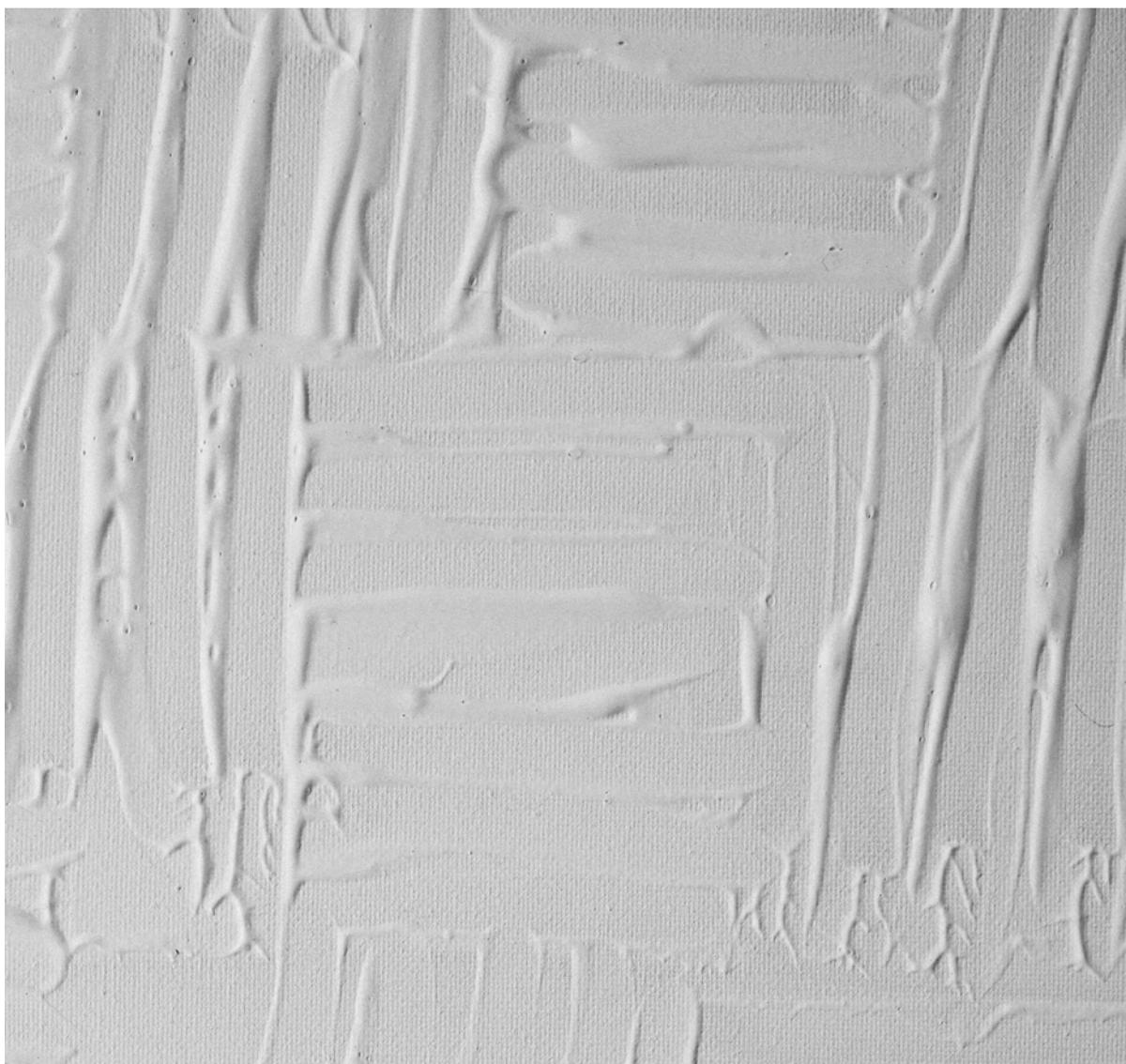
## Reach:

Do you enjoy giving to others and/or serving?

Do you intentionally keep an eye out for needs that you can help meet?

Who in your life has a need that you are able to meet this week?

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# WEEK FOUR

## *Awaken us to Your Power*

When was the last time you felt empowered by God? What does it look like to live in God's power?

Spend time in prayer focusing on WHO God is. Not what He's done for you, but His character. In your prayer time have your group do a popcorn prayer where they say the short sentence, "God you are \_\_\_\_\_."

Have each person answer: What is an area of your life that you could use God's power in? What do you think keeps you from living in that power?

As you transition back to prayer, have each person pray for the person on their right, mentioning what they've just shared and asking God to show Himself to them.

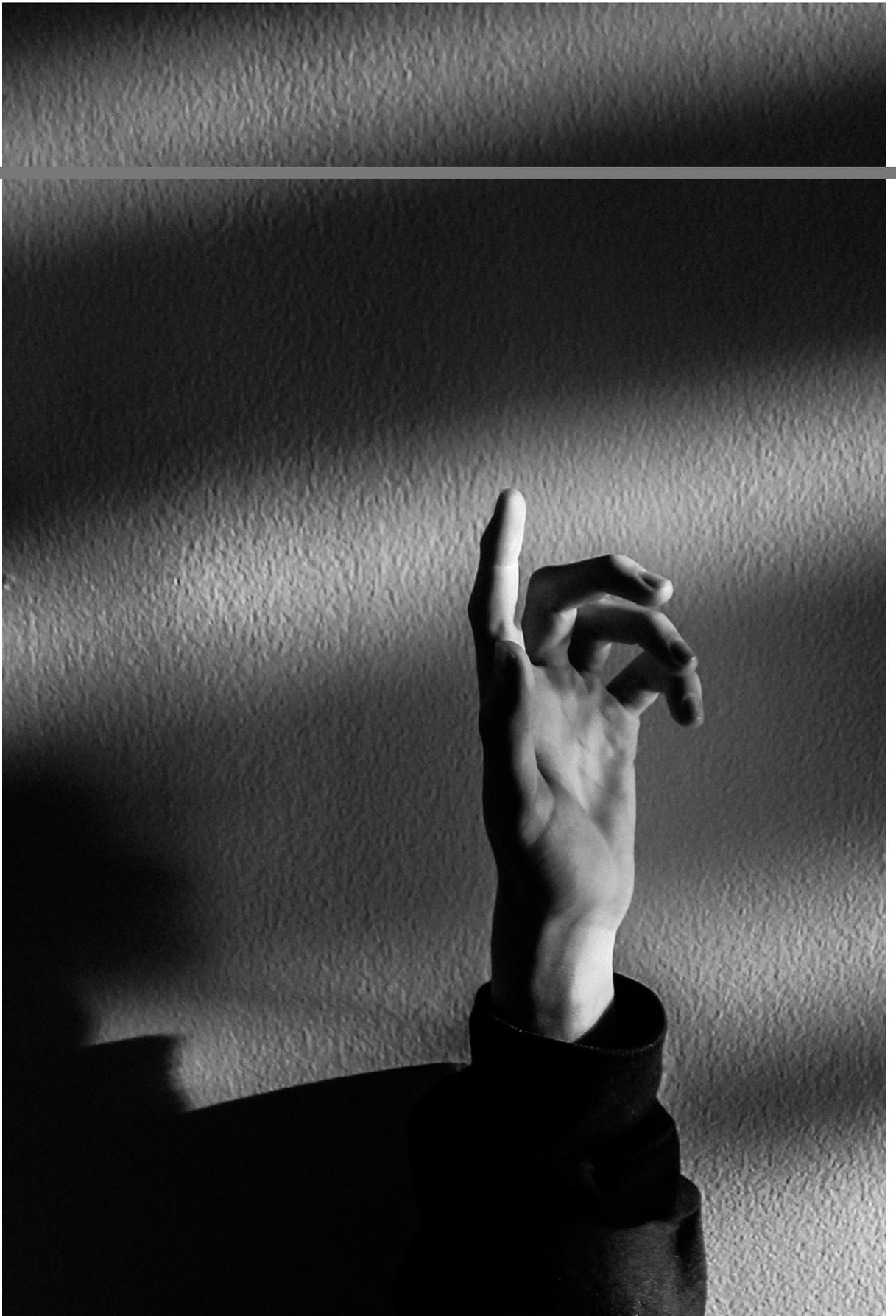
Read Psalm 27 aloud. Ask each group member to listen to the Psalm and look for specific phrases that stand out to them.

What aspects of this Psalm resonated with you? Why?

Turn your hearts to prayer and have group members pray the areas of these Psalms back to God. Worship Him, ask Him for what you need, surrender to Him, and give Him praise for who He is and how He is moving.

Do you have anything big coming up this week that we can be praying for?

Take time to pray for these things as a group before you dismiss.





# WEEK FIVE

*Awaken us to Your Perspective*

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What does it mean to have God's perspective? What do you think His perspective on our lives is?

Spend time in prayer as a group asking God to illuminate His perspective to you. As you finish, discuss what the Lord is illuminating.

Have each group member answer the following questions:

What was the highlight of the last week? Where did you feel God the most?  
What was the hardest part of the last week? Where did you feel farthest from God?  
What emotions did you feel in each of these situations?

Take time to recognize God in the midst of each of these situations - the good and the bad. Thank Him for allowing you to experience life. Spend time in prayer asking God to show you His emotions regarding these situations.

What do you sense God is telling you?

Spend time in thoughtful prayer thanking Him for the different emotions that we have. Have each member of your group pray about the strongest emotion that they've felt this week and to give God praise for giving us the depth of emotion to experience Him through. Ask God to show Himself to each person through their emotions.

What is the thing you're most excited about this week? What is the thing that you are most dreading or nervous about this week?

Spend time praying for the person on your right regarding the exciting and nerve-wracking things coming up in their lives.

Close in prayer.



**Thank You  
for studying  
God's word  
with us!**

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