



THIRTEEN WEEKS FOR A MEN'S CLASS

WHEN MEN PRAY

LEADER GUIDE

A companion to *The Battle Begins on Your Knees*. Everything a man needs to lead thirteen sessions, including the weeks he does not feel like leading.

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JAKE MCCLUSKEY
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BEFORE YOU TEACH A SINGLE WEEK

Read this part. It is short, and it will save you the four mistakes that sink a men's class.

WHAT THIS CLASS ACTUALLY IS

It is not a book study. You are not going to discuss chapters.

It is a workshop where men learn one way to pray and then practice it, out loud, in front of each other, for thirteen weeks. By the end, every man in your room will have written nine or ten prayers in his own handwriting about his own life.

That is the deliverable. Not knowledge. Prayers.

If a man leaves your class knowing more about prayer and still not praying, the class failed, no matter how good the discussion was.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE A BIBLE TEACHER

I want to be clear about this because it stops good men from volunteering.

You need to be a man who is willing to pray out loud in front of other men and not be very good at it. That is the whole qualification. If you can do that, you can lead this.

Nothing in this guide asks you to explain a difficult passage or answer a theological question you have not thought about. Where a hard

question comes up, this guide tells you what to say, including how to say “I do not know, let me ask our pastor and bring it back next week.” That is always an acceptable answer and men respect it more than a guess.

SOME MEN IN YOUR ROOM HAVE NEVER TRUSTED CHRIST

Thirteen weeks, a dozen men, a church class. Assume at least one man came because a friend asked him and he has never settled anything with God.

This study assumes a man is praying to a Father he already belongs to. That is the right assumption for most of your room and the wrong one for somebody in it.

You do not have to turn a session into an invitation. Do two things instead.

In week one, say it once, plainly: prayer starts with belonging to God through Jesus Christ, not with getting good at praying, and if any man here is not sure where he stands with God, come find me after and I would count it a privilege. Say the same thing again in week thirteen.

In between, if a man tells you he is not sure, do not make it a public moment. Take him to your pastor, and take him to the prayer titled “Praying for Salvation” in the book. That is the whole job.

THE FOUR MISTAKES

One. Teaching too long. Twenty minutes is the ceiling. Every minute past twenty comes out of the part where men write and talk, which is the part that changes them. When in doubt, teach less.

Two. Praying all the prayers yourself. If you are the only man who ever prays out loud in that room, you are proving the exact fear that keeps them silent. Get somebody else praying by week two.

Three. Letting it become a discussion group. Good conversation feels like success. But a room that talks for sixty minutes and writes nothing has produced nothing. Protect the writing time even when the discussion is going well. Especially then.

Four. Skipping the pairs. More on this below. It is the single most important structural element in the class and it is the one leaders cut when they run behind.

THE SHAPE OF EVERY WEEK

Same sixty minutes, every session. Men relax into a predictable room.

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
0-5	The question. One question, answered around the room in one sentence each. Nobody passes.
5-10	A man reads a prayer aloud from that week's section of the book. Not you.
10-30	Teach. One idea. Twenty minutes maximum.
30-40	Write. Silence in the room. Men work the page.
40-50	Pairs. Each man reads what he wrote to his partner.
50-60	Pray it. Two or three men pray theirs aloud. Close.

If your class is 45 minutes, cut the teaching to twelve and the pairs to seven. Do not cut the writing.

ABOUT THE PAIRS

Assign partners in week one and keep them all thirteen weeks. Do not rotate. The whole value is that by week eight a man is reading a prayer about his marriage to somebody who has heard him for two months.

Put men together who do not already know each other well if you can. Best friends will joke through it.

If you have an odd number, make one group of three, and take the third man yourself only if you have to. You want to be free to move.

ABOUT THE READ-ALoud

Every week a different man reads one prayer from the book out loud to the room. Ask him the week before, never on the spot. Some men need six days to make peace with it.

This is not filler. The book's own diagnosis is that men avoid prayer because they are afraid of sounding stupid. Hearing an ordinary guy from their own church read a plain prayer in a plain voice does more for that fear than anything you will say.

DO NOT MAKE MEN SHARE

Say this out loud in week one and mean it: nothing a man writes gets read to the room unless he offers it.

The pairs are different. Reading to one man is the assignment and it is where the growth is. But the room is voluntary, always, and men will write more honestly once they believe you.

IF A MAN DISCLOSES SOMETHING SERIOUS

It will happen. Thirteen weeks with a room of men will surface a marriage in trouble, a drinking problem, a man who has been thinking about ending his life.

You are not the counselor and you should not try to be.

Do three things. Take it seriously in the moment and do not rush past it. Get him connected to your pastor or a counselor this week, not eventually. And follow up personally within a few days, because most men never make the call on their own.

If it is a safety issue, the crisis numbers are on the last page of the participant guide. 988, any hour, by call or text. Veterans dial 988 then press 1, or text 838255. Do not hand a man a number and move on. Sit with him while he makes the call if that is what it takes.

If he is in danger tonight, meaning he tells you he has a plan, or the means, or that he does not intend to be here tomorrow, do not send him home and do not wait for the week. Stay with him. Call 988 together. Call 911 if he will not stay and will not call. Then call your pastor that night, not Monday.

Tell your pastor either way. “Get him connected” does not mean handing over a phone number and hoping. You make a call too.

One more thing, about the confidentiality rule. In session ten you are going to tell the room that nothing said in here leaves this room. Say the exception in the same breath, every time: the one exception is if somebody is in danger, and then I am going to go get help, and I would do exactly the same for any of you. Men trust that more than a blanket promise, and it keeps you from being trapped by your own word on the night it matters.

SESSION ONE

WHY WE DON'T PRAY



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

get every man in that room to say something out loud, and get him to believe he is not the only one who struggles with prayer.

Nobody writes a prayer in week one. That is on purpose. Week one is about lowering the bar far enough that men come back.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“What did prayer look like in the house you grew up in?”

Around the room, one sentence each. This question works because every man has an answer and none of the answers are embarrassing. You will hear everything from “we prayed before every meal” to “never once,” and that spread is exactly what you want the room to hear in the first five minutes.

5 MIN **READ ALOUD**

Ask a man beforehand to read “Praying for Consistency in Prayer” or “Praying for a Stronger Faith” from the Walk with God section.

20 MIN **TEACH**

The one idea: **men do not avoid prayer because they do not love God. They avoid it because they are not sure they are doing it right.**

Cover, in this order:

- The reasons men give themselves. Too short, lost my train of thought, do not know the words, could never pray like that guy.

- That carrying everything alone is not strength, it is exhaustion. This line is in the book and in the study guide and it is the sentence most likely to land in week one. Say it slowly.
- God has never asked anybody to pray perfectly. He asked them to come.
- Luke 11:1. The disciples had watched Jesus for a long time and still had to ask how to pray. If they had to ask, so can these men.

Say plainly: “Some of you have not prayed out loud in front of another man in years, or ever. In thirteen weeks you will have, and it will be fine.”

Do not open with your own testimony about a rich prayer life. It is the wrong week and it widens the gap you are trying to close.

10 MIN WRITE

The two questions in the guide. Question two, the real reason a man does not pray more, is the one that matters. Give it the time.

10 MIN PAIRS

Assign partners now. Have them trade answers to question two.

10 MIN CLOSE

Take the assignment yourself in front of them: pray one short prayer out loud right now, thirty seconds, plain words, nothing impressive. Then send them home with the same job.

Before you close week one, hold up the last page of the study guide and say what it is, in one sentence, without a speech. “There are two phone numbers on the back page. I hope none of you ever need them. They are there anyway.” Then move on. Some man in that room just heard something he needed and you will never know which one.

If nobody talks: answer the opening question yourself first, with a real answer, including the parts that are not flattering. A room follows whatever you model.

SESSION TWO

WHAT PRAYER ACTUALLY IS



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

separate prayer from performance.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“Who is the best pray-er you have ever heard, and what made him sound that way?”

Men will describe eloquence. Let them. You are going to take it apart in the teaching.

5 MIN **READ ALOUD**

“Praying to Hear God’s Voice” or “Praying for Salvation.”

20 MIN **TEACH**

The one idea: **prayer is a conversation with your Father, and every other thing men think it is turns out to be packaging.**

- Most men describe a format when asked what prayer is. Posture, words, amen. Fine, but not the thing.
- How Jesus actually prayed. Early. Alone. Before decisions. In grief. For the men He was leaving.
- The point that carries the session: there is not a word in the recorded prayers of Jesus that a working man could not have understood. Plain vocabulary, no jargon. Say it that way. Do not say no prayer of Jesus was unique to Him, because some were. If a man raises John 17, agree with him and keep the point on vocabulary.
- Psalm 145:18. Near to all who call on Him in truth. Not beautifully.

10 MIN **WRITE**

They write one honest sentence to God. Some men will freeze. Tell them a sentence counts, and that “God, I do not know how to do this” is a sentence.

10 MIN **PAIRS**

Read your sentence to your partner. This is the first time in the class a man reads his own words about God to another man. Watch the room. It is usually easier than they feared, and that is the lesson.

10 MIN **CLOSE**

Two or three men pray their sentence aloud. Do not push. If you get one volunteer, that is a win in week two.

Watch for: the man who writes a paragraph instead of a sentence because he is performing on paper. Gently point him back to one honest line.

SESSION THREE

THE FOUR STEPS



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

every man leaves with a prayer he built himself.

This is the hinge of the entire study. Sessions six through twelve all assume a man has this. If a regular misses this week, catch him up before session six. See the catch-up note in the appendix.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“What is something you know how to do so well you could teach it in five minutes?”

Sounds unrelated. It is not. You are setting up the idea that a method turns something intimidating into something repeatable, and every man in the room already has one of those.

5 MIN **READ ALOUD**

Any prayer from the book. Then ask the room: “Did you hear the four parts?” Most will not have. Read it again after you teach the steps and they will hear it. That moment is the best teaching in the whole thirteen weeks and it costs you ninety seconds.

20 MIN **TEACH**

The four steps, one at a time, with an example you build live on a board or a sheet.

1. **Who and what is happening.** Plain words, real name, real situation.
 2. **What is needed.** Specific. Say out loud that “bless my family” is a greeting card, not a prayer. 3. **Anchor in God’s truth.** This is the step men skip. It is what turns a wish into a prayer. One thing you know about who God is. 4. **End with confidence.** Not confidence in the outcome. In Him.

Build one all the way through in front of them, out loud, about something ordinary. A man at work. A decision this week. Let them watch a real one get made.

Hebrews 4:16 is the anchor: we draw near with confidence to the throne of grace. Say why that matters here. The four steps do not make God listen. Christ already did that. The steps are for you, not for Him.

James 4:8 is in the study guide alongside it. If a man asks about the rest of that verse, the honest answer is that James is calling wandering men to repent, and that is not a smaller promise than the one on the page. It is a bigger one.

Say this out loud, because the study guide says it and men need to hear a man say it: specific prayer means you will sometimes get a no. Vague prayer protects you from ever finding out. That is why men pray vaguely.

If you want one verse for it, 1 John 5:14 is the honest one: “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” According to His will. That is the guardrail on the whole method and it is also the comfort.

If you read on into verse 15, “we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him,” say the bounding sentence in the same breath, because on its own it sounds like a blank check to a room you have just taught to pray specifically. **Verse 15 lives inside verse 14’s according to His will, not outside it.** John is not promising a yes to everything. He is promising that a prayer inside God’s will is never lost.

If somebody objects that a method makes prayer mechanical, the answer is one sentence: the disciples asked Jesus how to pray and He

gave them a pattern, not a feeling. Matthew 6:9, “Pray, then, in this way.”

10 MIN **WRITE**

Their first full prayer, using the template in the guide.

10 MIN **PAIRS**

Read it to your partner. Partners are listening for one thing only: did he include step three. Most men will have skipped it.

10 MIN **CLOSE**

Two or three pray theirs out loud, as written. Then tell them the assignment: pray it daily as written, do not improve it.

If men get stuck: the sticking point is almost always step three, because men think they need a verse. Tell them a truth about God counts. “You are not surprised by this” is step three.

Watch for: the man in a later week who says the prayer he wrote in week three did not work. Do not rescue it with a promise. Ask him what he has learned about God since he wrote it. That question is the session.

SESSION FOUR

WHEN YOU HAVE NO WORDS



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

take away the excuse that a dry week ends a man's prayer life.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“When was the last time you wanted to pray and could not?”

5 MIN **READ ALOUD**

“Praying When I Feel Spiritually Dry” from the Spiritual Battles section.

20 MIN **TEACH**

The one idea: **there are two ways through a week with no words, and both of them count as prayer.**

- Pray the Bible. Borrow His words when yours are gone. Read a psalm to God as your own. This is the oldest way believers have prayed and it is not cheating.
- **The guard, and say it out loud:** read a verse in its own address before you pray it in your own name. Psalms take it straight. Some verses are spoken to one man in one situation and do not transfer. Jeremiah 29:11 is to exiles with a seventy year clock in the verse before it. Joshua 1:9 is a commission to one man. If you skip this, you have taught a room of untrained men a technique for making any sentence in the Bible a promise with their name in it.
- Sit in silence. A man who sits quietly before God because he is out of words is closer to prayer than a man producing paragraphs he does not mean.

- Romans 8:26. The Spirit is already carrying what you cannot say. Read it twice. “We do not know how to pray as we should” is Scripture describing all of us, not condemning any of us.

10 MIN **WRITE**

Pick a verse, build a prayer out of it.

20 MIN **PAIRS AND CLOSE**

Standard. In the close, have the room read a psalm aloud together, one verse per man around the circle. Psalm 23 or 121. It gets every voice in the room saying words to God, which for some men is a first.

Watch for: the man who says he does not have a verse. Hand him one, and hand him a psalm. Psalm 23, 27, 34, 51 or 121. Do not let him leave without one, and do not reach for a promise verse to cheer him up.

SESSION FIVE

THE FIVE HABITS



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

every man leaves with a specific time, a specific trigger, and a plan for the day he misses.

This is the least spiritual-sounding session and one of the most useful.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“What is a habit you have kept for more than a year, and how did it start?”

5 MIN **READ ALOUD**

“Praying at the Beginning of the Day.”

20 MIN **TEACH**

The one idea: **nobody drifts into a prayer life. It gets built the way any habit gets built.**

- Attach it to something you already do. Coffee, the truck, lights out. A habit bolted to an existing one survives; a free-floating one does not.
- Make it smaller than feels respectable. Five minutes. Two sentences at a red light.
- Plan for the miss. The question is never whether a man misses a day. It is whether missing one ends the whole thing. Miss Tuesday, pray Wednesday.
- Do not chase perfection. A man waiting to feel spiritually ready will wait his whole life.

- 1 Corinthians 16:13. Be on the alert, stand firm, act like men, be strong. Four commands about staying at your post, none about feeling strong first.
- One caution on “act like men.” In a men’s class that phrase will get heard as a masculinity line. Paul is talking about courage and staying at your post in the faith, and the very next verse says to do everything in love. Keep it there. Also worth saying: “be strong” in Greek is passive. It means be strengthened. Nobody is being told to generate it.

10 MIN **WRITE**

Not a prayer this week. The plan: the habit, the trigger, the recovery.

10 MIN **PAIRS**

Partners trade plans and agree to ask each other about it next week. Then actually ask next week, out loud, in front of the room. They will remember that you did.

10 MIN **CLOSE**

Say plainly: “The four steps are the method. This is the thing that keeps you using them in March.”

SESSION SIX

YOUR OWN WALK WITH GOD



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

get men to pray for themselves without apologizing for it.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“Are you closer to God than you were five years ago, or further? One word is fine.”

That question lands hard and it should. Let the silence sit before the first man answers.

5 MIN **READ ALOUD**

“Praying for Spiritual Growth” or “Praying for a Hunger for Scripture.”

20 MIN **TEACH**

The one idea: **a man cannot give what he is not receiving, so praying for your own soul is not selfish. It is the foundation.**

- Why this section comes first in the book and first in the practice weeks. Before you lead your house, you follow Christ.
- Name the hiding place: it is easier to pray for your brother's marriage than to ask God to deal with your own pride. Praying for others can be a way of avoiding yourself.
- The world says strength comes from independence. Scripture says it comes from dependence.
- Ephesians 2:10. His workmanship. A man is not the project manager of his own soul. He is the work.

30 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, CLOSE**

Standard shape. A prayer for himself, four steps.

Watch for: men who write a prayer for their family on the week they were asked to pray for themselves. It is not defiance, it is the habit of deflection. Send them back to the page kindly.

SESSION SEVEN

THE MAN YOU ARE BECOMING



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

move men off willpower and onto surrender, without letting them hear “do nothing.”

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“What is one thing about yourself you have tried to fix and failed?”

You will get real answers to this one. Anger, temper, patience, the phone, the drinking. Do not chase any of them in the moment. Let them sit and get to the teaching.

5 MIN **READ ALOUD**

“Praying for Self-Control” or “Praying When I Feel Like I’m Failing.”

20 MIN **TEACH**

The one idea: **the man God is building is not built by trying harder. He is built by surrender.**

- Walk the list from the book: strength through dependence, courage through trust, patience through waiting, humility through surrender, integrity in the hidden places. Every one of those happens to a man who keeps showing up to God, not to a man gritting his teeth.
- Say clearly that surrender is not passivity. He still obeys, still shows up, still says no to the thing. What changes is where the power comes from.
- Expect repeat battles. Fighting the same thing twice is not failure, it is the ordinary shape of being changed.

- The line worth repeating: the fact that you still need Him is not proof you are failing. It is proof you are human.
- Philippians 1:6. He began it, He finishes it. Your job is to stay in the room.

30 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, CLOSE**

One thing he wants dead, one thing he wants grown, then a prayer about it.

Watch for: the man who names something enormous and vague, like “my whole attitude.” Help him get specific. Specific is prayable.

SESSION EIGHT

YOUR WIFE



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

get a specific, named prayer written for a specific woman.

Handle the single men before you start. Say at the top: “If you are not married, you are praying this week for a marriage in this church that is under strain, or for the man beside you and his wife.” Say it once, plainly, without making it a thing. Do not let a single man sit through this session with nothing to do.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“What is one thing your wife is carrying right now that she did not ask you to help with?”

Some men will not know. That is itself the answer and it is worth naming gently.

5 MIN **READ ALOUD**

“Praying for My Wife When She’s Hurting” or “Praying That I Treasure My Wife.”

20 MIN **TEACH**

The one idea: **praying for your wife changes you before it changes anything else.**

- You know things about her nobody else knows. That is the raw material of specific prayer and most men never use it.

- What it tends to do to a husband over time: it gets harder to hold a list against someone you carry to God daily, and thanking God for her strengths starts crowding out the cataloguing. **Say tends, not does.** Some man in that room has prayed for his wife every morning for two years and still walked in resentful last Tuesday, and if you state it as a mechanism you have just told him he is doing it wrong.
- Prayer builds a bridge where frustration was building a wall.
- The seasons point, and do not skip it: there will be seasons when this comes easy and seasons when the marriage is under pressure. Pray anyway. Especially then.
- Ephesians 5:25. No husband reaches that standard by effort alone, which is exactly why a husband prays.

Do not let this session become marriage advice or a gripe session. If a man starts describing a conflict, redirect: “That sounds like something to pray about tonight. What would you ask God for?”

30 MIN WRITE, PAIRS, CLOSE

A prayer for her, by name.

The assignment matters this week: pray it daily, and tell her once that you have been praying for her. Not the contents. Just that you are.

SESSION NINE

YOUR KIDS



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

a named prayer for one specific child, and relief for the man carrying regret.

Same handling as last week for men without children. A nephew, a grandson, a kid in the youth group. Every man here is a father to somebody.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“What are you most afraid of for your kid right now?”

This one goes deep fast. Budget the full five minutes and be ready to let it run to seven.

5 MIN READ ALOUD

“Praying for My Children’s Protection” or “Praying That My Children Always Come Home.”

20 MIN TEACH

The one idea: **there is a point where you cannot hold their hand anymore, and prayer is what a father does with hands that are now empty.**

- The transition every father faces. You can walk them across a street. You cannot walk them through their twenties.
- Your children may never hear a single prayer you pray for them. God hears all of them.

- Pray specifically: their faith, their character, the friends they choose, decisions years out, the person they will marry.
- **The most important sixty seconds of this session:** the man carrying regret. Say it directly. “No father here got it all right. Some of you have years you would run again if you could. Do not let those years keep you from praying tonight. God is still writing your story and He is still writing theirs.”
- Psalm 127:3. A gift, not a project and not a performance review.

30 MIN WRITE, PAIRS, CLOSE

A prayer for one child, by name. The assignment includes praying out loud with that child once, even briefly, even awkwardly.

Watch for: the man who goes quiet in this session. Follow up with him during the week. This is the session most likely to open something.

SESSION TEN

THE PEOPLE YOU WOULD RATHER NOT PRAY FOR



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

get every man to write something honest about a person who hurt him, without turning the room into a therapy session or a gossip circle.

This is the hardest week in the study. Read this whole session twice before you teach it, and pray about the room beforehand.

SET THE RULES FIRST (2 MIN, BEFORE THE QUESTION)

Say this out loud before anything else, in your own words:

- No names of people in this church. None.
- Nothing said in here leaves this room. **Say the exception in the same breath, every time, and do not soften it: the one exception is if somebody is in danger, and then I am going to go get help, and I would do exactly the same for any of you.** Men trust that more than a blanket promise, and it keeps you from being trapped by your own word on the night it matters. Do not promise more than you can keep in a room where a man may be about to tell you the truth.
- Nothing you write gets read to the room unless you offer it, and this week you do not even have to read it to your partner. If you would rather pray together instead, do that.

Those three sentences make honest writing possible. Skip them and men will write something safe.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“Without naming anybody, what does it cost a man to carry something for years?”

Note the phrasing. It asks about cost, not about the person. That keeps the room out of the details and on the thing you are actually treating.

5 MIN READ ALOUD

“Praying for Freedom from Bitterness” or “Praying When the Person Never Apologized.”

20 MIN TEACH

The one idea: **praying for an enemy is not about excusing what happened. It is about refusing to let it make you less like Christ.**

Cover the boundaries clearly and early. Men will not go anywhere near this until they know what you are not asking.

Praying for someone does not mean:

- pretending it did not happen
- calling evil good
- ignoring wisdom, boundaries or accountability
- trusting them again
- giving an unsafe person access to your family
- that reconciliation is always possible

Forgiveness and wisdom can walk together. Grace and boundaries can stand in the same room.

What it does mean: refusing to let hatred own your heart.

Then the progression from the book, which is the best teaching in this section: bitterness starts as a wound, becomes a habit, then becomes the lens you see everybody through, including yourself.

And the permission that gets the stuck man moving: “Father, I do not want to pray for this person” is a real prayer and a real beginning.

Luke 6:27-28. Jesus prayed for the men who nailed Him to a cross.

10 MIN WRITE

Give this the full ten and protect the silence.

10 MIN PAIRS

Remind them: reading is optional this week. Praying together is not.

10 MIN CLOSE

Do not push for volunteers. Close by praying yourself, out loud, for every man in the room carrying something.

Aftercare: check on two or three men during the week. This session surfaces old things and some of them need a follow-up conversation more than they need session eleven.

If what a man describes is happening now rather than ten years ago, stop treating it as a session-ten topic. Ongoing abuse is a safety matter, not a forgiveness lesson, and you are not equipped to sort it in a Sunday school room. Get your pastor involved this week. If what he tells you involves a child being harmed, tell your pastor the same day and follow your church's reporting policy. National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788.

SESSION ELEVEN

THE SEASON YOU ARE IN AND THE WORK YOU DO



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

bring the class back to ordinary life after a heavy week, and connect prayer to Monday.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“Name the season you are in right now in one sentence.”

5 MIN **READ ALOUD**

“Praying Before Work” or “Praying During a Season of Waiting.”

20 MIN **TEACH**

The one idea: **God is present in every season, including the ordinary ones, and your work is where your faith is most visible.**

- Seasons: celebration and sorrow, strong faith and barely hanging on. God never promised every season would be easy. He promised to be faithful through all of them.
- Name the unglamorous ones from the book: the unexpected diagnosis, the new job, the long drive home after hard news, the ordinary Tuesday when nothing happened.
- Work: the world measures titles and income, God measures faithfulness. He sees the early mornings nobody notices and the honest decision that cost something.
- The men you work with may never open a Bible. They will watch how you treat people.
- Colossians 3:23. Heartily, as for the Lord. An audience of One reframes a Monday.

30 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, CLOSE**

A prayer for the season or the work. Assignment: pray before work every day, in the truck, sixty seconds.

Note: this is a good week for a lighter room. After session ten, that is not a weakness in the curriculum. It is the design.

SESSION TWELVE

SPIRITUAL BATTLES



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

move men from praying after they lose to praying when the fight starts.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“What is a battle you have been fighting mostly alone?”

5 MIN READ ALOUD

“Praying When I’m Being Tempted” or “Praying to Put On the Armor of God.”

20 MIN TEACH

The one idea: **prayer is not the last resort. It is one of the first weapons God gave you.**

- Every man faces battles that strength, experience and determination do not win.
- The enemy’s best work is convincing a man he is fighting alone.
- The image from the book that carries the session: a soldier does not wait until the shooting starts to put on his armor. A man who only prays when he is already losing left his gear in the truck.
- **The guard, and it belongs in this session more than any other:** a man can pray in the first ten seconds and still fall. That is not gear left in the truck, that is Romans 7, and it is the ordinary Christian experience. Say it out loud. Session seven’s line applies here too: you are going to fight some of these battles more than once, and that is not failure.

- When temptation comes, pray. When fear grows, pray. When your mind will not stop at midnight, pray. When you are too tired, pray then most of all.
- Ephesians 6:10. Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Not asking him to generate anything.

Keep it sober. Do not let this become a session about demons and dramatic stories. The book does not go there and neither should the class. Keep it on the ordinary battles these men are actually losing.

30 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, CLOSE**

A prayer for his own mind or for the specific battle. Assignment: next time the fight starts, pray in the first ten seconds.

SESSION THIRTEEN

A LIFE OF PRAYER



YOUR ONE JOB THIS WEEK

every man reads one of his own prayers out loud to the room, and leaves with a plan for week fourteen.

10 MIN

OPEN DIFFERENTLY

No question this week. Have them turn back through the guide and read what they wrote in weeks three through twelve, silently, for five minutes.

Then ask one thing: “What do you notice?”

Most men have not looked back at their own pages. Watching a man realize he wrote nine prayers is the best moment in the thirteen weeks.

TEACH (15 MIN, SHORTER ON PURPOSE)

The one idea: **prayer was never meant to be what you do when life falls apart. It is meant to become the rhythm of your life.**

- The line from the book’s opening, and say it as the point of the whole class: the greatest prayers you will ever pray will never be printed in this book. They come from your own heart. Then hold up the guide and say, “Those are in here now, in your handwriting.”
- Some days short, some days long, some days only “Lord, help me.” Pray them anyway.
- A praying man is not a perfect man. He is a dependent one.
- Colossians 4:2. Devote. A word about the long haul, not about a quarter.

25 MIN **THE LAST THING**

Every man reads one prayer he wrote, out loud, to the room.

Give it the time. Twelve men at two minutes is twenty-four minutes and it is the most valuable half hour of the entire study. Do not let it get squeezed.

Go around in order rather than asking for volunteers, and go last yourself.

If a man will not, do not force him. Ask him to read it to his partner while the room is packing up.

10 MIN **CLOSE**

Three things, plainly:

1. Keep praying the prayers they wrote. 2. Keep the four steps. Hand out the one-page card if you printed it. 3. Find one man from this class and keep meeting. Trade what you are praying about. Ask each other in a month.

Then close in prayer, and let it be short.

APPENDIX A



CATCHING A MAN UP ON SESSION THREE

Session three is the only session the study cannot run without. If a regular missed it, give him fifteen minutes before or after a later session.

Walk him through the four steps, build one prayer with him out loud about something in his life, and have him write it down. That is the whole catch-up. He does not need weeks four or five to continue.

APPENDIX B



WHEN NOBODY TALKS

Every men's class has a quiet week. Four things that work:

Answer first, honestly. A room follows what you model. If you give a polished answer you get polished answers back. If you say something true that does not flatter you, the room opens.

Go around instead of asking the room. "Let's just go down the line" removes the burden of volunteering. Almost no man will refuse a direct, low-stakes turn.

Ask a smaller question. If the room is silent, the question was probably too big. "What did prayer look like growing up" gets answers. "How is your prayer life" does not.

Use the pairs. Two men talk when twelve will not. If the room is dead, move to pairs early and come back.

APPENDIX C



THE EIGHT-WEEK VERSION

If your calendar will not hold thirteen weeks, run this and keep the session shape identical.

1. Why we don't pray (session 1) 2. The four steps (session 3) 3. When you have no words, plus the habits (sessions 4 and 5 merged) 4. Your own walk with God (session 6) 5. Your wife (session 8) 6. Your kids (session 9) 7. The people you would rather not pray for (session 10) 8. A life of prayer (session 13)

You lose sessions 2, 7, 11 and 12. That is a real loss and the men will get less, but eight weeks of this beats thirteen weeks of something nobody finishes.

Do not cut session 3 or session 10. Session 3 is the method and session 10 is where the deepest work happens.

APPENDIX D



A NOTE TO THE MAN LEADING THIS

You are going to feel unqualified somewhere around week four.

A man will ask something you cannot answer, or the room will go flat, or you will realize the guy across the table prays better than you do. Keep going anyway.

The men in that room do not need an expert. They need somebody willing to go first. Every week you pray out loud imperfectly in front of them, you are teaching the one lesson this whole study exists to teach.

You are not doing this because you are good at prayer.

You are doing it because they are worth it.

Thank you for teaching it.

BEFORE YOU CLOSE THIS



If you have questions, you can reach me through jakemcccluskey.com.

You just spent thirteen weeks with a room of men, so you know things about this study that I don't. I want to hear how it went. What worked, what didn't, what you had to change to make it fit your church. If something in here was wrong, tell me that too. I would rather know.

If there is anything I can do to help your men, ask.

Jake