



THIRTEEN WEEKS FOR A MEN'S CLASS

# WHEN MEN PRAY

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## STUDY GUIDE

A companion to *The Battle Begins on Your Knees*. Thirteen weeks of learning to pray, and a place to write the prayers you write yourself.

BY JACOB MCCLUSKEY  
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**JAKE MCCLUSKEY**  
STAND YOUR WATCH

# PRINT THIS. ALL OF IT. FOR FREE.



Print as many copies as your church needs. You do not need to ask me. You do not need to write to anybody, fill out a form, or pay for a license.

Copy it, hand it out, mark it up, lose it, print it again.

If it helps one man in your church learn to pray, it did its job.

The only thing I ask is that you do not sell it.

## BEFORE YOU START

This is not a book you read. It is a book you write in.

Thirteen weeks from now, the pages that matter most in here will be the ones in your handwriting. That is the whole point, and I want you to know it before you start, because most men come into a class like this expecting to take notes on somebody else's ideas.

You are going to learn a way to pray, and then you are going to use it, every week, on the things actually happening in your life.

Here is what that looks like.

**Each week has four parts.** Something to read. Something to answer. A prayer you write yourself. And one small thing to do before you come back.

**You do not need the book to use this guide.** If your class is reading *When Men Pray* alongside it, good. Every session points you to the section that goes with it. If your church could not get the books, this guide still works on its own.

**You will be asked to read what you wrote to one other man.** I am telling you now so it does not ambush you in week two. Nothing you write gets read to the whole room unless you offer it. But you will have a

partner, and you will read to him, and that is where most of the work in this class actually happens.

**Write badly.** Nobody is grading this. If all you get down is three sentences, that is three more honest sentences than most men have prayed all month.

One more thing, and then we will begin.

You are not doing this to become impressive at prayer. There is no such thing. You are doing it because a man who talks to God regularly is a different man in his own house, and the men who live with you deserve that man.

Let's begin.

## THE FOUR STEPS

Every prayer you write in this guide uses the same four steps. They come straight out of the book, and once you have them, you will never again be a man who does not know how to start.

**One. Tell God who you are praying for and what is happening.** Plain words. No performance. "Lord, this is about my son, and he has stopped talking to me."

**Two. Ask God for what is needed.** Be specific. Vague prayers are hard to recognize as answered.

**Three. Anchor your prayer in God's truth.** One thing you know about who God is or what He has said. This is the step men skip, and it is the one that turns a wish into a prayer.

**Four. End with confidence.** Not because you are sure what He will do. Because you are sure who He is.

That is it. Four steps. You will use them thirteen times in this guide and, I hope, for the rest of your life.

SESSION ONE

# WHY WE DON'T PRAY



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READ THIS WEEK

An Invitation, and Why Men Need Prayer

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Most men do not avoid prayer because they do not love God.

They avoid it because they are not sure they are doing it right.

Maybe you have wondered if your prayers are too short. Maybe you have started praying and lost your train of thought a minute in. Maybe you have sat in a room while another man prayed out loud and thought, I could never do that.

If that is you, you are not the exception in the room. You are the room.

Here is what I want you to hear in week one, before anything else. God has never once asked you to pray perfectly. He asked you to come.

As men we are used to carrying things. We carry responsibility at work, at home, in our families, in our finances. Somewhere in there a lot of us picked up the idea that carrying it alone is what makes a man strong.

That isn't strength.

It's exhaustion.

Prayer is where a man stops pretending he was built to carry all of it by himself. Not because God does not already know what he is carrying, but because he needs to remember where his help comes from.

You do not have to sound like your pastor. You do not have to know every theological term. You do not have to clean yourself up first.

You can come as a son coming to his Father.

#### SCRIPTURE

“It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples’” (Luke 11:1, NASB 1995).

Notice who asked. Men who had walked with Jesus, watched Him heal people, heard Him teach, and they still had to ask how to pray. If they had to ask, you are allowed to ask.

#### TWO QUESTIONS

**1. When was the last time you prayed about something that mattered, and what happened?**

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**2. What is the real reason you do not pray more? Not the churchy answer. The true one.**

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#### THIS WEEK

Pray once, out loud, alone, where nobody can hear you. In the truck works. Thirty seconds is enough.

You are not building a habit yet. You are proving to yourself that your voice works.

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SESSION TWO

# WHAT PRAYER ACTUALLY IS

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READ THIS WEEK

What Prayer Really Is, and Jesus' Example of Prayer

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Ask ten men what prayer is and most of them will describe a format.

Bow your head. Close your eyes. Use certain words. Get to the amen.

That is a posture, and postures are fine, but they are not the thing. Prayer is a conversation with your Father. That is all it has ever been. Everything else is packaging.

Look at how Jesus prayed, because He is the model that settles it. He prayed early, before anybody wanted anything from Him. He prayed alone, on hillsides and in gardens, away from crowds. He prayed before the big decisions. He prayed when He was grieving. He prayed for the men He was about to leave behind.

And He prayed in plain words.

There is not a word in the recorded prayers of Jesus that a working man could not have understood. The vocabulary is ordinary. No performance. No words you would need a seminary to reach for. He talked to His Father like a Son who knew He was loved.

That is the model. Not eloquence. Relationship.

Which means the question is not whether you are good at prayer. The question is whether you are talking to Him at all.

SCRIPTURE

“The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth” (Psalm 145:18, NASB 1995).

Read the condition on that. Not to all who call upon Him beautifully. In truth. Honest gets you closer than polished ever will.

## TWO QUESTIONS

**1. Where did you learn what prayer is supposed to sound like, and has that helped you or gotten in your way?**

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**2. What is one thing you have never said to God because it did not sound like a prayer?**

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## WRITE IT

One sentence to God. Honest, not polished. The thing from question two, if you have the nerve.

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## THIS WEEK

Say that one sentence out loud to God, once a day, for five days. Same sentence is fine.

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SESSION THREE

# THE FOUR STEPS



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READ THIS WEEK

How to Build Your Own Prayer

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This is the week the class turns.

Up to now we have talked about why men do not pray and what prayer actually is. Today you learn a way to build one, and from here to week thirteen you will use it every single week.

Four steps. That is the whole method.

**One. Tell God who you are praying for and what is happening.** Say the name. Say the situation, plainly, the way you would tell a friend at a diner. God is not confused about the facts, but you often are, and saying it out loud sorts it.

**Two. Ask God for what is needed.** Specifically. “Bless my family” is not a prayer, it is a greeting card. “Lord, give my daughter one friend at that school who is kind to her” is a prayer.

Know what specific praying costs before you start. Pray vaguely and you never find out what God did. Pray specifically and you will sometimes get a clear yes, sometimes a no, and sometimes years of quiet. Jesus asked for the cup to pass and the answer was no. Paul asked three times and got grace instead of the thing he asked for. Both men kept praying. Specific prayer is not how you get God to agree with you. It is how you stay in the conversation long enough to hear what He actually says.

**Three. Anchor your prayer in God’s truth.** One thing you know about God, or one thing He has said. You are not informing Him. You are

reminding yourself who you are talking to, and it changes the whole tone of what you are asking.

**Four. End with confidence.** Not confidence that you will get what you asked for. Confidence in who He is. Every prayer in the book you are reading ends the same way, and it is worth saying out loud: I am not alone because You are always with me.

Four steps, and you can run them in ninety seconds in a parking lot.

#### SCRIPTURE

“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16, NASB 1995).

Confidence at the throne. Not because the method is good. Because Christ opened that door and it has never once been shut.

James put it to men who had wandered a long way off: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8, NASB 1995). Read the rest of that verse sometime. It is a call to come clean, not a technique to work. Come anyway. Come dirty if that is where you are.

## TWO QUESTIONS

**1. Which of the four steps do you think you will skip, and why that one?**

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**2. What is the situation in your life right now that you have been praying about vaguely?**

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## WRITE YOUR PRAYER

Take the situation from question two and build it, one step at a time.

### Who and what is happening

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### What is needed

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### What I know is true about God

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### Ending with confidence

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## THIS WEEK

Pray that prayer, as written, once a day. Do not improve it. Just pray it.

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SESSION FOUR

# WHEN YOU HAVE NO WORDS



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READ THIS WEEK

Praying Scripture, and When You Don't Know What to Pray

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There will be weeks when the four steps are more than you can manage.

Something happens. A diagnosis. A phone call. A marriage that has gone quiet. And a man sits down to pray and finds he has nothing, and then he feels guilty about having nothing, and then he stops trying.

I want to give you two ways through that, because both are in the book and both have carried men for a very long time.

**The first is to pray the Bible.** When you cannot find words, borrow His. Open a psalm and read it to God as your own. This is not a trick and it is not cheating. It is the oldest way believers have prayed, and there is something steadying about saying words to God that He wrote first.

One caution, because it is the place this goes wrong. **Read a verse in its own address before you pray it in your own name.** The psalms are built for this and you can take them straight. Some other verses are spoken to one man in one situation, and they do not transfer by putting your name in them. Jeremiah 29:11 is spoken to exiles with a seventy year clock attached in the verse before it. Joshua 1:9 is a commission handed to one man for one campaign. Both are true, both are God's word, and neither is a personal guarantee with your name in the blank. Ask first who is being spoken to. Then pray what it actually says.

**The second is to stop talking.** Sit down, tell Him you have nothing, and be quiet in front of Him. That counts. A man who sits in silence before

God because he is out of words is closer to prayer than a man producing paragraphs he does not mean.

And here is the part I do not want you to miss.

You are not the only one praying. When you cannot form the words, the Spirit of God is not standing there waiting for you to get organized. He is already carrying what you cannot say.

#### SCRIPTURE

“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words” (Romans 8:26, NASB 1995).

We do not know how to pray as we should. That is Scripture describing you and me, not condemning us. It is a fact God already built around.

## TWO QUESTIONS

**1. When was the last time you wanted to pray and could not? What was going on?**

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**2. What would it change if you believed the Spirit was praying for you in the weeks you cannot?**

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## WRITE YOUR PRAYER

Pick one verse. A psalm is the safest place to start. If you pick something else, read the verses on either side of it first and ask who is being spoken to, then write your prayer out of what it actually says, using the four steps.

**The verse**

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**Who and what / What is needed / What is true / Confidence**

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**THIS WEEK**

Read one psalm out loud to God as your prayer. Psalm 23, 46, 51, or 121 if you want somewhere to start.

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SESSION FIVE

# THE FIVE HABITS

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READ THIS WEEK

Five Habits of a Praying Man, and Don't Chase Perfection

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Nobody drifts into a prayer life.

Men drift out of one. Into one, never. It gets built, and it gets built the same way anything else does, by doing a small thing at a predictable time until it stops requiring a decision.

The book gives five habits. I am not going to repeat all five here because you are reading them this week. I want to talk about what makes them stick.

**Attach the habit to something you already do.** You already drink coffee. You already start the truck. You already lie down at night. A new habit bolted onto an existing one survives. A new habit floating free in your day does not.

**Make it smaller than you think it should be.** Five minutes. Two sentences at a red light. The men who are still praying in March are the ones who started in January with something almost embarrassingly small.

**Expect to miss.** You will. The question is never whether you missed a day. It is whether missing a day ends the whole thing. It does not have to. Miss Tuesday, pray Wednesday. That is the entire recovery plan.

And do not chase perfection in this. A perfect prayer life is not on offer to anybody, and a man waiting to feel spiritually ready before he starts will wait his whole life.

Start where you are, this week, badly.

### SCRIPTURE

“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13, NASB 1995).

Four commands, all of them about staying at your post. None of them about feeling strong first.

Jesus made the same point about prayer specifically. Luke says He told a parable “to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart” (Luke 18:1, NASB 1995). Not to pray well. Not to lose heart.

### TWO QUESTIONS

**1. What is the one thing you already do every single day without deciding to?**

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**2. Which of the five habits from this week’s reading is most missing from your life right now?**

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### WRITE YOUR PLAN

Not a prayer this week. A plan.

**The habit I am starting**

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**The thing I already do that it attaches to**

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**When I miss a day, here is what I will do**

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### THIS WEEK

Run it five days. Same habit, same trigger, same size.

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SESSION SIX

# YOUR OWN WALK WITH GOD



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READ THIS WEEK

Prayers for Your Walk with God

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We have spent five weeks on how. Now we start using it, and we start where the book starts, with you.

Not your wife. Not your kids. You.

That order is deliberate and it is not selfish. A man cannot give what he is not receiving. He cannot lead a house from a heart that is running empty. Before you can pray well for anybody else, something has to be happening between you and God.

Every strong building starts with a foundation, and this is yours.

Here is what I have noticed in men, and maybe you will recognize it. We are quick to pray for other people and slow to pray for ourselves. It feels more spiritual that way. It is also a good place to hide, because praying for your brother's marriage costs you nothing, and asking God to deal with your own pride costs you something.

This week the prayer is about you.

Ask for the thing you actually need. More faith. Wisdom you do not have. Repentance you have been circling for months. A hunger for Scripture that has not been there in years.

The world says strength comes from independence. Scripture says it comes from depending on God. The strongest man is not the one who never struggles. He is the one who keeps returning to his Father.

SCRIPTURE

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them”  
(Ephesians 2:10, NASB 1995).

His workmanship. You are not the project manager of your own soul.  
You are the work.

## TWO QUESTIONS

**1. What is one thing about your own walk with God that you have never prayed about out loud?**

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**2. Where are you spiritually right now compared to five years ago? Be honest, either direction.**

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## WRITE YOUR PRAYER

For yourself. Four steps.

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### THIS WEEK

Pray it daily, and read one prayer from this section of the book each day alongside it.

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SESSION SEVEN

# THE MAN YOU ARE BECOMING

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READ THIS WEEK

Becoming the Man God Created You to Be

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There is a version of you that your family has never met.

Not a better-performing version. A different one. Patient in the moment that usually turns you. Gentle when you have every right not to be. Steady on the days nothing goes your way.

God is not indifferent to that man. He is building him.

But here is what I have to say plainly, because most men get this backwards and it costs them years. That man is not built by trying harder. He is built by surrender.

Strength gets formed through dependence. Courage gets formed through trust. Patience gets formed through waiting, which nobody volunteers for. Humility gets formed through surrender. Integrity gets formed in the places nobody is watching.

Every one of those is something that happens to a man who keeps showing up to God, not something he manufactures by gritting his teeth.

Hear what I am not saying. Surrender is not passivity. You still obey. You still show up. You still say no to the thing at ten o'clock at night when nobody would ever know. What changes is where the power comes from, not whether you move.

Paul put both halves in one sentence: “work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13, NASB 1995).

Work it out, because He is at work in you. Same sentence. Never one without the other.

So when you pray this week, do not pray to become impressive.

Pray about one thing. One thing you want dead in you, or one thing you want grown. Anger. Fear. A lack of self-control that has embarrassed you. A hardness that showed up in your voice last Tuesday and you heard it.

And do not be discouraged when it takes longer than you want. You are going to fight some of these battles more than once. That is not failure. That is the ordinary shape of a man being changed.

The fact that you still need Him is not proof you are failing. It is proof you are human.

#### SCRIPTURE

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6, NASB 1995).

He began it. He finishes it. Your job is to stay in the room.

## TWO QUESTIONS

**1. Name one thing in you that you want God to kill, and one thing you want Him to grow.**

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**2. What have you been trying to fix by willpower that has not moved in years?**

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## WRITE YOUR PRAYER

About the one thing. Four steps.

## THIS WEEK

Pray it daily. When the thing shows up in real life, pray it again right there, in the moment.

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SESSION EIGHT

# YOUR WIFE



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READ THIS WEEK

Loving Your Wife Through Prayer

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If you are not married, this week is not a week off. Pray for a marriage in your church that you know is under strain, or for the man next to you and his wife, or for your own future. The work is the same.

You know things about your wife that nobody else on earth knows.

You know what makes her laugh. You know what she is carrying that she has not said out loud. You know what she looks like at the end of a week when she is holding everything together and would never say so.

That knowledge is not trivia. It is the raw material of the most specific praying you will ever do, and most of us never use it.

Here is what praying for your wife actually does, and it is not mainly about her.

It changes how you see her. A man who prays for his wife regularly stops cataloging her weaknesses, because it is very hard to hold a list against someone you are carrying to God every day. He starts thanking God for her strengths instead. He stops trying to fix every problem himself and starts trusting the One who loves her more than he does.

Prayer builds a bridge where frustration was building a wall.

And it reminds you of something a hard season makes easy to forget. You are not on opposing teams. You are walking through this together.

There will be seasons when praying for her comes easy. There will be seasons when your marriage is under real pressure and it does not.

Pray anyway. Especially then.

#### SCRIPTURE

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25, NASB 1995).

That is the standard, and no husband reaches it by effort alone. Which is exactly why a husband prays.

### TWO QUESTIONS

**1. What is your wife carrying right now that she has not asked you to help with?**

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**2. When you think about your marriage, what do you tend to pray about, and what do you avoid praying about?**

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### WRITE YOUR PRAYER

For your wife, by name. Four steps.

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### THIS WEEK

Pray it every day. And once this week, tell her you have been praying for her. Do not report the contents. Just tell her.

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SESSION NINE

# YOUR KIDS



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READ THIS WEEK

Covering Your Children in Prayer

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If you do not have children, take a nephew, a grandson, a kid in your church, or a young man you have influence over. Every man in this room is a father to somebody, whether he signed up for it or not. And if that box just went through you, this one is for you. Some of you have buried a child. Some of you have been trying for six years and the answer keeps being no. Some of you have a grown child who does not take your calls. **This week is going to be heavy and you are not on the outside of it.** Take the week as it comes, pray for the child you have or the one you lost or the one who will not speak to you, and do not read a room full of men talking about their kids as a verdict on your life. It is not one.

There comes a point where you cannot hold their hand anymore.

For a while you can. You can hold their hand across a street, walk them into a school, stand between them and most of what is out there. Then one day the job changes, and you have to trust God to hold a heart you can no longer reach.

That transition is not easy. Every father I have ever talked to about it says some version of the same thing: I would take the pain for them if they would let me.

You cannot. What you can do is bring them, every day, to the One who loves them more than you do.

Do not underestimate that. Your children may never hear a single prayer you pray for them. God hears all of them.

So pray for their faith. Pray for their character. Pray for the friends they pick, because those friends will shape them more than your lectures will. Pray for decisions they will make years from now. Pray for the person they will marry, even if they are seven.

And one more thing, for the man in this class who is carrying regret about the kind of father he has been.

No father gets it all right. Every one of us has years we would run again if we could. Do not let those years keep you from praying today. God is still writing your story and He is still writing theirs.

#### SCRIPTURE

“Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward” (Psalm 127:3, NASB 1995).

A gift. Not a project, not a performance review, and not a reflection of you. A gift.

## TWO QUESTIONS

### 1. What are you most afraid of for your child right now?

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### 2. What is one thing you have been trying to control that you need to hand to God?

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## WRITE YOUR PRAYER

For one child, by name. Four steps.

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## THIS WEEK

Pray it daily. And once, pray out loud with that child, even briefly.  
Even awkwardly.

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SESSION TEN

# THE PEOPLE YOU WOULD RATHER NOT PRAY FOR



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READ THIS WEEK

Strengthening Every Relationship, and Praying for Your Enemies

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We are going to do two things this week, and the second one is hard.

The first is easy enough. God made us for each other. Your parents, your friends, your pastor, your church, the guys you work beside, the neighbor you wave at. Those relationships are a gift and they are worth praying about specifically instead of generally.

Now the hard one.

Somebody came to mind when you read the title of this session.

A friend who betrayed you. A father whose words you still hear. A business partner who lied. A leader who failed you. Somebody who did real damage and never seemed to care.

Praying for that person may be the hardest thing Jesus ever asked of you. It goes against everything that feels natural. You want distance. You want justice. You want them to finally understand what they did.

Some of that is understandable. Let me be as clear as I know how about what praying for an enemy does not mean.

It does not mean pretending the hurt never happened. It does not mean calling evil good. It does not mean ignoring wisdom, or boundaries, or accountability. It does not mean trusting that person again. It does not mean reconciling, because reconciliation takes two and you only control one. It does not mean handing an unsafe person access to your life or your family. Forgiveness and wisdom can walk together. Grace and boundaries can stand in the same room.

What it means is refusing to let hatred take ownership of your heart.

Because bitterness never stays small. It starts as a wound. Then it becomes a habit. Then it becomes the lens you see people through, including yourself.

Prayer interrupts that. When you pray for the man who hurt you, you put him in God's hands instead of letting him live rent free in your head.

And if you are not ready, start honestly. "Father, I do not want to pray for this person" is a real prayer and it is a real beginning.

#### SCRIPTURE

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:27-28, NASB 1995).

Jesus prayed for the men who nailed Him to a cross. That kind of love is not natural. It is the work of God in a man's heart.

## TWO QUESTIONS

**1. Who came to mind? You do not have to write the name. Write what they did, or just write "him."**

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**2. What has carrying it cost you?**

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## WRITE YOUR PRAYER

For that person. Four steps. If all you can honestly write in step two is “help me want to pray for him,” write that.

## THIS WEEK

Pray it once a day. Watch what changes in you, not in them.

M T W T F ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

This week is about an old wound, not a present danger. If somebody is hurting you or your family right now, that is not a bitterness problem, and what you need this week is more than a page. Talk to your pastor. The National Domestic Violence Hotline is **1-800-799-7233**, or text **START** to **88788**, any hour. Men call that number too.

Nothing on this page gets read aloud to the room unless you offer it. If you would rather not read it to your partner this week, tell him so and pray together instead. That is not a failure. That is wisdom.

SESSION ELEVEN

# THE SEASON YOU ARE IN AND THE WORK YOU DO



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READ THIS WEEK

Prayers for Every Season of Life, and Praying Through Work and Leadership

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Life is not lived in one season.

There are seasons of celebration and seasons of grief. Seasons when your faith feels solid and seasons when taking the next step is all you have. Some days are full of answers. Some are full of waiting.

God never promised every season would be easy. He promised He would be faithful through all of them.

So this week we pray about the season you are actually in, not the one you wish you were in or the one you are trying to get to. The unexpected diagnosis. The new job. The stretch where money is tight. The long drive home after hard news. The ordinary Tuesday when nothing much happened at all.

And we pray about work, because work is where most of your waking hours go and where your faith is most visible to people who will never come to your church.

The world measures success by titles and income. God measures faithfulness. He sees the early mornings nobody notices. He sees the honest decision that cost you something. He sees the integrity that never makes headlines.

The people you work with may never open a Bible. They will watch how you treat people. They will notice whether your words match what you do.

Ask God to make you the kind of man whose work honors Him long before anybody praises him for it.

Faithfulness is never wasted.

SCRIPTURE

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men” (Colossians 3:23, NASB 1995).

Heartily, and for an audience of One. That reframes a Monday.

TWO QUESTIONS

**1. What season are you actually in right now? Name it in one sentence.**

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**2. Where at work is your faith most visible, and where is it least?**

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WRITE YOUR PRAYER

For the season, or for the work. Four steps.

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## THIS WEEK

Pray before work, every day, before you get out of the truck. Sixty seconds.

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SESSION TWELVE

# SPIRITUAL BATTLES



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READ THIS WEEK

Praying Through Spiritual Battles

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Every man will face battles that cannot be won by strength, experience, or determination.

Some are physical. Some are emotional. Some are spiritual, and those are the ones men are least prepared for, because nobody trained us for them and most of us would rather not talk about them at all.

The enemy of your soul would love for you to believe you are fighting alone.

You are not.

Here is the thing I want you to take out of this week. A soldier does not wait until the shooting starts to put on his armor. He is dressed before he ever needs it. And a man who only prays when he is already losing has left his gear in the truck.

Prayer is not the last thing you try. It is one of the first weapons God gave you.

Now the part that has to be said in the same breath, because otherwise this page turns into a stick. **You can pray in the first ten seconds and still lose the fight.** That happens, and it does not mean you left your gear in the truck or that you did it wrong. Paul wrote a whole chapter about wanting to do the right thing and doing the other thing anyway, and he did not conclude that he was a fraud. Some of these battles you are going to fight more than once. **Getting up is the part.**

So when temptation shows up, pray right then. When fear starts growing, pray. When your mind will not stop running at midnight,

pray. When your family is struggling, pray. When you are too tired to keep going, pray then most of all.

And understand where the victory comes from. Not from you being strong enough this time. It was already won.

Stand firm. Keep praying. Trust the One who has already overcome the world.

#### SCRIPTURE

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might”  
(Ephesians 6:10, NASB 1995).

In the Lord. In His might. Read that twice, because it is not asking you to generate anything.

## TWO QUESTIONS

### 1. What is the battle you have been fighting alone?

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### 2. What would it look like to pray at the beginning of that fight instead of after you have lost it again?

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## WRITE YOUR PRAYER

For your own mind, or for the specific battle. Four steps.

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### THIS WEEK

The next time the fight starts, pray in the first ten seconds. Not after.

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SESSION THIRTEEN

# A LIFE OF PRAYER

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READ THIS WEEK

Living a Life of Prayer, and A Final Prayer

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Thirteen weeks ago some of you could not have prayed out loud in a room of men.

Go back and look at what you have written in this guide. Nine or ten prayers, in your handwriting, about your own life. Your wife's name is in here. One of your kids is in here. Somebody who hurt you is in here.

Nobody wrote those for you.

That was the whole point. The book you have been reading says it in the opening pages, and I will say it again here at the end: the greatest prayers you will ever pray will never be printed in this book. They come from your own heart.

So here is what I want for you from this point forward.

Prayer was never meant to be the thing you do when life falls apart. It is meant to become the rhythm of your life. Some days your prayers will be short. Some days they will be long. Some days you will know exactly what to say and some days the only words you will manage are "Lord, help me."

Pray them anyway.

A praying man is not a perfect man. He is a dependent one. He is a man who has figured out that every day begins and ends with his Father.

Your Father has never asked you to impress Him. He invited you to come.

Keep coming. One conversation at a time.

#### SCRIPTURE

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2, NASB 1995).

Devote. That is a word about the long haul, not about this quarter.

## TWO QUESTIONS

**1. What is different about you now than thirteen weeks ago? Be specific and be honest, even if the answer is “not much yet.”**

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**2. What is the one habit from this study you are going to keep?**

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## THE LAST THING

Turn back to any prayer you wrote in this guide. Pick one.

Read it out loud to the room.

Not because anybody is grading it. Because thirteen weeks ago most of us could not have done it, and the man next to you needs to hear an ordinary guy pray an ordinary prayer in plain words.

## FROM HERE

Keep praying the prayers you wrote. Keep using the four steps. Keep the book somewhere you will actually reach for it.

And find one man from this class and keep meeting. Trade what you are praying about. Ask each other in a month whether you are still doing it.

You were never meant to fight your battles by yourself.

The battle begins on your knees. Go start.

# MY OWN PRAYERS



The four steps do not expire in week thirteen. This is where the rest of them go.

# BEFORE YOU CLOSE THIS

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If you have questions, you can reach me through [jakemccluskey.com](http://jakemccluskey.com).

And if you ran this with a room of men, 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

# IF TONIGHT IS DARKER THAN A PAGE CAN REACH

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Some weeks a man comes to a class like this carrying more than a study guide can hold. If that is you, or if it is the man sitting next to you, here is where to go.

Call or text **988**, any hour. It is the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and a real person answers.

Veterans: **dial 988 then press 1**, or text **838255**.

Then tell one person who knows your face.

Using those numbers is not weakness. It is the first fight you will win.