

Pray as the Father Wants

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- [0 : 0 0] All right, let's have a show of hands as we begin. I'm going to start, I love to start with questions, surveys. So here's the survey for today.
- How many of you, raise your hand, how many of you feel like, you know what, I'm praying enough? I'm praying enough. Anyone feel confident enough to raise their hand?
- All right, I'm just looking out to make sure if there's anyone who's like, yeah, I feel confident enough to say that, but I don't want to look bad, so I'm not going to raise my hand, right? Most Christians, I know, they feel a bit dogged by sort of this self-accusation that runs in their minds, that Christians are supposed to pray.
- I ought to pray more. I'm not praying enough. So we think we ought to pray more, but the reality is all these concerns, all these distractions in life seem, just seem to take over moment by moment, day by day.
- When we take a step back, we look at our lives and we think, you know, I should be praying more. I should be talking more to God. I should be communicating more with God. And then we carry around a low-level guilt, sort of a low-level guilt about not praying enough, as though we haven't met some sort of heavenly quota, some sort of heavenly quota.
- [1 : 3 0] So if that is something that resonates a little bit with the way that you've ever felt, if you are a Christian, if you are walking, you know, trying to walk the Christian life, walk the path that Jesus walked for us, then I want to, and I'm hoping that this sermon will be one that encourages you and offers you a new way to think about prayer.
- And this is going to be part one of two. And so what I'd like to do is, before we continue, when we tackle that question of, do I pray enough? Let me continue with prayer.
- Our God, our Father, we thank you that your word gives us guidance. It helps us to think a little bit more clearly about questions like these. It helps show us the path we are to walk by showing us Jesus Christ, all that he did for us in his life, his death, his resurrection, all that he is for us now, all the good news that is bound up in a Savior who has offered us deliverance from the power of sin, deliverance from the power of Satan, deliverance from the presence of sin in our lives.
- And Lord God, I'm asking that as we listen to your word, we pay attention to what it's saying, pay attention to the words that your apostles and prophets wrote, to the words of Jesus Christ.
- Lord God, may your spirit be at work among us. Give us eyes to see, ears to hear, a heart to understand. All that you have for us and all the good news that we have and that we can live out of in hope.
- [3 : 1 1] Amen. So, we've got that question. What quantity of prayer do you think is enough? What do you think is enough?
- Is it 15 minutes a day? Half an hour? An hour a day? There is a legend that Martin Luther, the 16th century reformer, he's supposed to have begun his day with three hours of prayer.

I don't know if that's a genuine fact or not, but that would be quite the burden to carry. What if you went through life thinking, I'm not praying three hours a day, I'm not praying enough? Can you imagine that?

It just doesn't seem doable for most of us. Perhaps we could look to the Bible. Maybe we think, okay, maybe the Bible will give us some guidance and direction here.

Maybe God will tell me how much I ought to pray. So, then we open the Bible and we look for people who talk about how much they pray or what their praying looks like. And we might stumble across a couple of examples.

[4 : 18] One is the Old Testament prophet Samuel. In 1 Samuel 12, verse 23, here's what Samuel tells the people of Israel. Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.

And I will instruct you in the good and the right way. So, Samuel says, I won't cease praying for you. And in the New Testament, Romans chapter 1, verses 9 through 10, the Apostle Paul, he says something quite similar.

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

And then Paul turns around to us, his readers, in 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 17. And that's where he issues this directive. Pray without ceasing.

Pray without ceasing. So, there you have it, right? If these verses are modeling a quantity of prayer, if these verses are commanding a quantity of prayer, then you and I are in a lot of trouble.

[5 : 33] Because every second that you're not praying, you're sinning. You're disobeying God. If we run with the idea that these verses are teaching a quantity of prayer, then basically where we arrive at, where we are logically going to arrive at is, oh man, at every moment you're either praying or you're sinning.

You feeling better yet? Maybe you thought, you know, I was feeling pretty good about myself when I came in, but thanks to Dave's help, God really turned that around. You know, have we ratcheted up our insecurities just a little bit here?

Well, I'm going to throw something out here that I think will actually help you feel a little bit better. And I think for the moment you might think, hey, that sounds like it contradicts the scriptures that we just read.

And I want you to hang in there. I don't think it does. I think as we look at what Jesus' words say, that's going to help us understand properly the scriptures that we just read. Here's what I'm going to suggest.

Nowhere, anywhere, does the Bible ever express any concern about the quantity of your prayer. Nowhere does the Bible ever express any concern about the quantity of your prayer.

[6 : 48] In other words, nowhere will you ever find any verse that says, you're not praying enough. You're not praying enough. You're not praying enough. If you've got a sense of insecurity or guilt about prayer, about the presence of prayer in your life, I want you to know this.

I do not think that the quantity of your prayer is the problem. I don't think the quantity of your prayer is the problem. Now, that's not to say that your insecurities and your guilt that you're carrying around, that does not say they aren't coming from somewhere, because they probably are.

Most of us, we most of us kind of, if you have been a Christian for any length of time, most of us know that, hey, there's something not quite right about how I'm praying, about how I'm relating to God in prayer.

And we know that our prayer is deficient somehow. But we just can't put our finger on what it is exactly. And so we tend to think, well, maybe it's the quantity.

Maybe it's the quantity. Maybe I'm not praying enough. Maybe I need to pray more. Oh, I need to pray harder. And then we just lower. And boy, isn't that a real motivator to relate to God when you just, you associate God with all these guilty feelings?

[8 : 02] That really encourages you to want to pray more. You know what? That sense of deficiency in prayer, that shouldn't surprise us, because it's something that Jesus' disciples felt too.

They felt it as well. While he was with them during his ministry on earth, they go to Jesus in the passage that we're going to look at today, and they ask him, they have this request for him.

And their request is very simple. Teach us to pray. Teach us to pray, which is wonderful. They don't assume they know how. They ask for help.

And Jesus responds in a way that is so practical, so powerful, so liberating, that I just can't wait to share it with you today. We're going to cover a lot of it today.

Next week is going to be part two, and we're going to pick up where we left off. And so we're going to focus today on what Jesus says about prayer in Luke 11, verses 1 through 10.

[9 : 02] Now, if you're using one of the blue Bibles that our ushers have made available to you, you'll want to find that on page 869. On page 869, you'll find Luke 11, verses 1 through 10.

Here's what we read here. Now, Jesus was praying in a certain place. And when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples.

And he said to them, when you pray, say, Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us, and lead us not into temptation.

And he said to them, which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him.

[10 : 14] And he will answer from within, do not bother me. The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything. I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything, because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence, he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives, and the one who seeks, finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened.

This is the word of the Lord. Now, in these verses, there are three basic lessons about prayer. Here's the first lesson.

The first lesson is simply this. Pray with simplicity. Pray with simplicity. Look at the prayer. In verses 2 through 4.

The disciples see Jesus praying, and there's something about that. They're thinking, oh, wow, okay, we want to pray like he does. We want to learn how to pray. So they ask him for help, and he gives them this prayer, and I want to ask you this question.

[11 : 37] How long do you think that it would take you to pray the prayer that Jesus took? How long do you think? How many hours? How many minutes?

How many minutes? Any ideas? Maybe some of you are like running through it in your head right now. Sorry? Seconds? How many do you think?

30? If you go slow, yeah. I timed myself at just over 15 seconds. Okay. So now we've got a little bit more of a concrete number.

How much prayer is enough? Apparently 15 seconds. So, okay. Feels like we're setting the bar low here. You know, think about that. Jesus' disciples ask him, Lord, teach us to pray, and his response is, okay, here's a 15-second prayer.

What a sharp contrast. And it would have been for them, too. A sharp contrast to the, you know, to the long, flowing, formulaic prayers that were common in the ancient world.

[12 : 41] In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus tells us that those long prayers, he has a few words to say about them. Here's what he says. When you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. You hear that? Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

So why belabor the point? Just say what you want. Say what's on your heart. Keep it simple. Keep it normal. Don't be weird.

Keep it short. In the Gospel of Matthew, right after this, Jesus introduces them to the Lord's Prayer, which we see here in Luke as well.

In Matthew, it's a really short 25-second prayer. Then in Luke, Luke has Jesus deciding to shorten it down even further for his disciples. Now it's 15 seconds long.

[13 : 45] Every line in this prayer is profound. Every line is also short and to the point. So we pray simple prayers.

When you pray as the Father wants, you pray with simplicity. The short version of the Lord's Prayer contains a second lesson. Pray with need.

Pray with need. The simple, profound requests in this prayer, every single line highlights the needs of our world and highlights our own needs as well.

Look at each line. Father, hallowed be your name. Maybe you're thinking, I thought you said this was simple. Hallowed is not a simple word. Well, not to us. You know, we sort of, we're stuck with the legacy of King James English here.

But this is actually quite ordinary language in the original. Father, may your name be recognized as holy. Or, you could say, may everyone know that you are pure and good and set apart from every other being.

[14 : 59] This is a prayer. We are opening this prayer that, saying that our Father's holiness, we want, we need it to be recognized by everyone, everywhere in the universe.

This is what our world needs. Our world needs to know God as he really is. how would your life be different?

How would our church be different? How would our town be different? If we, here in this room, and in fact, everyone around us in this town knew what it meant for God to be holy, if they knew he was holy, that would change everything, wouldn't it?

it would make your life a lot different than it is, a lot better. It would make your jobs a lot easier, your families a lot easier, it would make my job a lot easier as pastor.

Heck, it would make our city council's job a lot easier if everyone in our town knew God is holy. Think of what a different world this would be. And that leads us then into the next simple request in this prayer.

[16 : 16] Your kingdom come. Your kingdom come. And so the kingdom of God, Jesus talks about it in two ways. He first talks about it as something that is already here in some sense.

It is here because of the gospel, because of the good news of all that Jesus did. He died, but now he has been raised to life out of the grave.

He has won the victory. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus. but things are not as they should be.

Jesus has not yet returned to claim his kingdom yet. And so we are still living in a world in which sin is still present, still corrupting everything, a world that is still crooked, a world that is still not as it should be.

His kingdom is already here, but it has not yet fully arrived. It hasn't yet fully arrived. And we are eagerly waiting for his return.

[17 : 15] We are eagerly praying for this. In that simple yet massive prayer, it is the final, it is actually the final prayer found in the Bible.

Come, Lord Jesus. Your kingdom come. There is no bigger need in the world and there is no bigger prayer in the world than that Jesus will come and upend the order of the universe, judge the world, save his people, set everything right again.

And now that Jesus has showed us that we can bring these massive, universe-sized, world-sized needs before God, our Father, now that he showed us we can bring these massive yet simple requests about God and about his work in the world, we're thinking, oh man, huge prayers, simple yet huge prayers, we're now going to experience quite a bit of whiplash when we reach this next request because we're going to all of a sudden go from universe-sized requests all the way down to something very small.

This is like, have you ever seen one of those videos on YouTube where it starts out looking, you know, it might start out looking at the entire universe and then the view just goes smaller and smaller and smaller and collapses down to the planet Earth and collapses down to one single individual person, zooming way, way, way in.

That's what we're doing here. One little person and their little bitty needs. Give us each day our daily bread. Yes, we want God's name to be honored as holy.

[18 : 59] Yes, we want his kingdom to come. That's the big story of the world. Those are big needs. We come helpless about the state of our world. We come unable to fix things, overwhelmed, stressed out by all the news and we pray, Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

But also today in the little story of my world, I need something to eat. I have and we have simple, physical, everyday needs that our Father, he cares about them too.

he cares about those little things. There is no, there is nothing too small for him to care about. Every hair of your head is numbered. He has more thoughts of you than you have of yourself.

We have these simple, physical needs and they certainly did in a subsistence culture where they literally didn't know where their food was going to come from tomorrow. If they didn't go and work for it, they weren't going to eat.

And then on top of that, just like us, they had spiritual and relational needs. Forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

[20 : 19] Today, I have sinned against God, against him personally. I have defied his right expectations of me.

I have sinned rebelliously and consciously. I have sinned unconsciously, not even aware I'm doing it. I've sinned by what I've done and I've sinned by what I've failed to do.

And I need my Father in Heaven to forgive me. To no longer count that against me. To say, your debt is canceled forever.

I know that he forgives those who have let go of their own efforts to make others pay, who have learned to forgive one another.

And I need his help. I need to be forgiven too. And I need protection from sin that could enter my life.

[21 : 17] I am that needy that I can't even protect myself. Lead us not into temptation. temptation. That's the final line. We are much more vulnerable than we think we are.

We are far more needy than we think. We are easily deceived. We easily go astray. Bad things seem good to us at first. Sinful things seem appealing.

And we aren't honest with ourselves about our need. We need our Father's protection so that we don't fall prey to sinning against him and sinning against one another.

And so from beginning to end, from these great things to these small things, from physical to relational and spiritual needs, this is a prayer that is all about need.

need. You cannot be a Christian and not be needy. If your goal is to reach a place in your Christian life where you've got it all handled and got it all figured out and you've got it all worked out, I've got some bad news for you.

[22 : 33] You're not on the path of the Christian life. It is a life of need. In Revelation chapter 3 verse 17, Jesus tells one of his churches, you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.

Not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Notice this isn't some sort of threat of judgment.

I'm going to make you that way. It's, no, no, no, no, no, you are deceived. You think you need nothing, but in fact your needs are far greater than you know. And that is true of us.

If you come with an overwhelming sense of need, then you are being, for the first time, maybe, honest about who you are. Wherever you feel that sticky shame that you carry with you, that you just can't seem to escape, you can't seem to overcome, wherever you feel powerless in relationships with others, powerless to act and respond in love, wherever you feel stuck in your life, stuck without the wisdom that you need to move forward, wherever it is, that is where your prayer begins.

It begins with your need. Wherever you have need, there you pray. And the more you learn to pray, the more you are going to begin to realize the truth.

[24 : 15] You have need everywhere. You have need everywhere. Your self-sufficiency, your sense of I need nothing is utterly an illusion.

If we have learned nothing over the last two years, we ought to have learned that at least. When you pray as the Father wants, you not only pray simply, but you also pray with need.

Now, Jesus moves on in verses 5 through 10, Luke 11 verses 5 through 10, and he introduces a third lesson. So here's the third lesson. Pray with nerve. You pray with nerve.

Jesus tells a parable to illustrate this. Now, I'm going to switch to another translation for a moment, because the English Standard Version does a great job of showing us the Greek, but the Greeks would have been easy for them to read it, but it's a little convoluted for us.

So we're going to read this from the New International Version, and here's what Jesus says. Jesus said to them, suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, friend, lend me three loaves of bread.

[25 : 31] A friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him. And suppose the one inside answers, don't bother me.

The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything. I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity, he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

This is a fun one. I love the parables that introduce awkward situations. Jesus just loves stories of awkward situations. So the idea is that you all of a sudden have this guest show up at your house.

Now in the culture of that time, hospitality is everything. Being a good host is everything. It was an utter shame to be a bad host.

And so this is an emergency situation. this is a 911 call right here. And so you go and it's in the middle of the night.

[26 : 43] You're knocking on your friend's door. And of course, you and he are not wealthy people. You live in a small house. So if you ever wonder, is co-sleeping in the Bible? You know, kids sleeping with their parents.

Yes, it is. Out of necessity. They would all sleep in one room and everybody would sleep in the same bed. Think about that the next time you complain about not having enough room in your home. So you got this co-sleeping situation.

Jesus says that your friend will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship. He doesn't want to disturb his family. He's got boundaries, you know, right?

But you're in need. And in this war of the immovable object versus the unstoppable force, guess who's going to win this one? You have the shameless audacity to push right through those boundaries that your friend has set.

You've got a lot of nerve to make this demand. And that's exactly what Jesus says that the Father wants.

[27 : 51] Pray with nerve. if you are the kind of person, if you're like me and you're the kind of person who pushing boundaries makes you really uncomfortable, if you're the kind of person who, oh, you don't want to trouble anyone else, if you're the kind of person who says, I don't want to impose, I don't want to be a bother, I don't want to be a nuisance, I don't want to be a burden, this parable is for you.

You may feel like you are imposing on God, you may feel, oh, I don't want to trouble him with things that are too small, he's got bigger things to be concerned with.

This is just a silly little thing. You may feel that you're not supposed to pray like this. If that's kind of your gut and where it goes, I want to tell you, ignore your gut.

You can't trust your gut here. Pray with nerve. Be forward. Be bold. Be audacious.

Be like Jacob who said to God, I will not let you go unless you bless me. Praying with nerve. What does that look like in practice?

[29 : 09] BK, as part of the reading BK did this morning, he gave us another parable. I'll read it again. Luke chapter 18, verses 1 through 8. He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

He said, in a certain city, there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, give me justice against my adversary.

For a while, he refused. But afterward, he said to himself, though, I neither fear God nor respect man. Yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.

And the Lord said, hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect who cry to him day and night?

Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?

[30 : 25] So again, we have a story of a widow, one of the neediest people in the ancient world, no support network, no safety net, and she comes with a need day after day after day.

and she makes herself an absolute nuisance to this unrighteous judge. And Jesus says, that's great. That's great.

Remember at the beginning how we read about those commands and models in scripture, pray without ceasing? That's what this widow is doing. That's what this is all about.

Pray without ceasing is not about the quantity of your prayer. It's about your nerve. It is about your persistence that you do not stop.

Make yourself a nuisance. Make yourself a nag. That's exactly how you were to pray. Cry to God day and night.

[31 : 34] That's what Jesus says. You are not only allowed to do this. He's not just giving you permission. It is exactly what God wants you to do. It is what God is prodding you to do.

Some of us perhaps were raised in families or no friends where they didn't want to hear it. They didn't want us to come boldly and audaciously.

They didn't want us to have the nerve to be honest about our needs to cry out for help. And we've internalized that. We've come to think that's the way God relates to us too.

He'll be annoyed. He can't be bothered. It's too small. Don't keep coming. God is waiting eagerly for you to do this.

He is inviting you. He is beckoning you. And if you doubt that, here's what Jesus says. Here's his words of encouragement urging you on. He says in Luke 11, verses 9 through 10, I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you.

[32 : 49] Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened.

We're going to talk a bit more about this next week. Jesus' biggest concern in prayer is his biggest fear for us is, it's not that we'll pray too much or pray selfishly, it's that we won't pray at all, that our prayer is too small.

When you pray as the Father wants, you not only pray simply, you not only pray with need, but you also pray with nerve.

Now this may all lead us to some lingering questions. Number one, can't this be abused? Could this be abused? Some of us know people who treat God as the great big vending machine in the sky for all of our selfish requests.

Can't this be abused? Number two, what about all those prayers of yours that have gone unanswered? you've asked and it wasn't given to you. What do you do with that?

[34 : 06] Number three, maybe you're just not comfortable with this idea of like, oh, if this is, Jesus is using all these illustrations of people being annoyed when people have nerve.

Do I really want that from God? Do I want that kind of relationship where he's irritated with me? Do I want to risk being an irritation to God? Is that what's going to happen when I pray like this?

Or the answer to all these three questions, I'm going to leave you hanging, you're going to have to come back next week. Because next week we're going to continue and we're going to look at Luke chapter 11, verses 11 to 13, and we're going to find there some of our answers to these questions.

And my hope, my prayer, is that we'll give you even more encouragement and even more hope. Today we learned how to pray as the Father wants. Next week we'll learn about the Father who wants you to pray.

But for now what I'm going to do is I'm going to conclude with some practical guidance. Because for some of us we hear this and we think okay great, I get the principle, but how do I actually do this in my life?

[35 : 12] And so here's just some practical advice. Some of you may find that maybe some of you are already doing this and you've found what works for you. What I find with prayer, with Bible study is there's a lot of different ways to do it well.

And when I'm counseling people we try out different things, throw spaghetti at the wall, see what sticks. And so here's one thing though that I find helps a lot of people. So how do you pray with simplicity, with need, with nerve?

If you're not doing it already here's just a great way to get started. You start by making a handful of prayer cards. And so this isn't an idea that's original to me, but I found it effective.

Here's an example of what a prayer card could look like. We're going to put it up on the screen here. So you take four index cards to start with. For two of them at the top, write as a title the name of a person in your life who is very important to you.

Maybe somebody you care deeply about. Maybe somebody who affects you deeply. Someone you can't stop thinking about. Maybe they're a blessing to you. Maybe they're a difficult person in your life.

[36 : 19] write the names of the two people who just seem to occupy your thoughts the most. Then I want you to write a few things here on the card. First, write down your primary request for that person.

What's the big ask that you're praying to God about? What do you want the most for that person? Be specific, not just vague and generic. Be specific. What are you wanting? Maybe it's more than just one thing you're wanting.

Maybe it's two or three big things you're wanting in that person's life. Okay, write those down. You may also want to include a scripture verse or a phrase or a scripture reference that you're like, man, I think this is just, God's put this on my heart to pray this scripture about this person.

And then you may also want to include a question. Maybe you have a question that you're asking God about this person or this situation. What do I do? How do I help? What's going on with him? Maybe you need wisdom and you've got questions.

Write that down too. And then leave a lot of room on your card because as you begin to pray and as God begins to move in this person's life, you want to leave room in that card to start writing down details of the story that God begins to tell.

[37 : 37] you do that with a couple of your index cards. And then on a third card, you write down a title and name it a personal matter where you feel stuck, where you feel powerless.

Maybe something in your own life. It could be an issue of sin or temptation where you feel stuck or powerless. Maybe an area of personal growth. Maybe a situation or decision that you or your family are facing.

Whatever it is. Just as before, write down your primary request, maybe a passage of scripture, maybe a question you're asking God. Then the fourth card, title this one, My Prayer Life.

You're going to pray about prayer. Under it, write what you want your prayers to look like. Write what you want your life of prayer to look like.

And start praying simply with need with nerve. And then here's what you do. You've got these four cards. Set aside a regular time every day to pray through all four cards.

[38 : 46] That'll take you about 10 to 15 seconds per card. Great. Pray all four and then you're done. That's it. Now I know it won't feel, you're like, I just prayed like 60 seconds.

That can't possibly be enough. Don't worry about that. Don't mind that feeling. You're not praying to meet a quota.

You're here to pray with persistence, to pray with nerve. And so what you do is you pray and then you put your cards away. And then the next day you take them out again and you pray again and then you put them away.

And then the next day you do it again and then the next and the next. And then after about two weeks maybe you add a couple more cards because boy you've got a lot of needs in your life. Maybe you adjust, you go back to these cards and you add a line here.

Maybe you cross something out. Maybe you write down some notes about what God's doing and you just keep going. Guess what? You're praying without ceasing. Now you're praying with simplicity, with need, and with nerve.

[40 : 01] Now you're praying as your father wants. And watch what God begins to do. My experience, both in my own life and with the people that I'm counseling, as I'm beginning to kind of basically require everybody to do this when I'm counseling them now.

I'm moving people towards doing this all. My experience is that with some of these cards you're going to start seeing God at work really quickly. Within a few weeks, things are going to start to happen.

An adventure begins to unfold. It's kind of fun. That'll encourage you. There are going to be some other cards which might take months or years of persistent prayer.

The needle doesn't seem to move at all. The ones where he is working encourage you to keep persisting with the others. And you keep praying and you keep watching. And maybe you miss a day here or there.

No big deal. And then you think, you know what? Prayer isn't just something that I want to do alone. One of the best ways to pray with nerve is to recruit a bunch of people to pray with you.

[41 : 17] There's nothing like a group of believers gathering together to cry out in faith to God. Ask other people to join you in your prayers. And then join them in their prayers.

And then we as a church need to start meeting together for prayer as a church family. We have, we are going to start doing that again. The evening of May 29th we want to set apart.

I want to encourage you to mark this on your calendar. May 29th we are going to gather together to pray for the needs of our church and our community. So make a note of that. Be there for that.

There's a lot more about prayer that we have to learn. But it just begins here. We just need to get started. It's really not about whether you're praying enough guys.

So I want to never hear from any of you again. I'm not praying enough. Okay? You're forbidden. You're not allowed to say that anymore. Okay? Leave that nonsense behind.

[42 : 16] That's not the issue. What really matters is that you pray simply. You pray with need. You pray with nerve.

What really matters is that you pray as the Father wants. Our Father, we really make this weird and complicated in ways that it isn't.

Lord, we know that prayer is hard not because it's a hard thing to do but because our hearts get so convoluted and weird in our self-reliance.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Father, I'm asking that anyone here who does not know you as Father, who doesn't have that sense of boldness, that sense of nerve, that sense of confidence that they can just walk right into your presence, Lord, may they come to believe and know in Jesus Christ, put their faith in him and find that because Jesus can enter boldly into your presence, because your very own dear son is welcome, so everyone who believes in him and is united to him by faith, everyone who belongs to Jesus is also welcome.

[43 : 44] I pray next week we may be encouraged by that. We may find that more and more we pray with nerve. more and more we see our needs and come to you because we know how needy we are and more and more we pray simply because we know you see our, because we know, Father, that you already know what's going on in our lives.

We don't need to convince you and talk you into anything. We just need to be persistent and to pray as our Father wants. Do this in our life.

Do this in our church. Amen.