

# Developing a Culture of Prayer

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Alright, please be seated. Please take out your Bibles, Matthew 26. We're going to be spending some time. You can actually put one thumb in at Matthew 26 and another thumb at 1 Peter 5.

I'm going to be creating a contrast between those two verses, which is going to be the central thesis of my sermon today.

As you may or may not know, I am fond of questions. Maybe not answering questions, but I like to ask questions.

So one of the first questions that I want to ask you today is, if someone came up to you and said, Hey, I want to know what are the five top things about your faith, what would they be?

What are the top five things of your Christian faith, what would they be? Or to put it another way, what are the top five things about being a Christian?

[ 1 : 12 ]     Let me follow that up with, you got it all marked out? You don't have to write it down. If you're pretty good, you can write it down in your head. Did prayer make one of your top five?

Did you write down or think of prayer being one of the top five things as being a Christian? Should I ask for hands on this one? Should we go to a vote?

Well, if you didn't, don't feel too badly about it. I actually asked Google this week the same question. And I brought up ten like-minded articles on what are some things that you want a new believer to understand to.

What are the greatest things about being a Christian? And prayer only showed up in one article in the top five. Three articles mentioned prayer later on.

Now, the list contained many really great things, right? It included we have forgiveness. We have eternal life. Fellowship with Christ.

[ 2 : 25 ]     Some people answered freedom in Christ. We have a friend in Jesus. We are loved by God. We have a Christian family. But I want you to think about this for a second.

That prayer didn't rank in the top answers. Think about that.

That as a child of Christ, who we have been saved and redeemed by the Father, allows us to boldly go before our perfect Father to share our hearts, to speak, to commune with the...

This isn't a secondary God. This is the God of all gods. It's the only God. It is the great I Am. And yet, somehow, that doesn't rank in our top answers.

we're not talking about a father who we're trying to hide from, or a father who is indifferent towards us, or a father that is mad or even hidden from us.

[ 3 : 52 ]     This is a God who loves us, died for us, gave his son, so we could have that ability to come to him in a harmonious relationship.

So what gives? What is it? Now, I believe that every single person here who calls himself a Christian desires a rich and deep relationship with our Father in Heaven.

Amen? We do desire a rich and deep relationship. We recognize that this is what we want. Yet, at the same time, we realize that it's not as easy as making a decision, flipping a switch, or signing a piece of paper. It's kind of like fitness, right?

Who doesn't want to be in shape, say, as a Navy SEAL? Right? Who doesn't want that? If I had a pill up here saying, I'll give you the fitness and bodily shape of a Navy SEAL, you'd probably pay a lot of money to come up.

[ 5 : 13 ] Like, Sabian's already halfway out of the chair ready to grab it, right? We'd want that. But we all know that reality and desire do not always intersect because few of us look like Navy SEALs.

The fact of the matter is, prayer is tough. Prayer is tough. And you know what? It's meant to be tough.

You know that? Prayer is meant to be tough. Now, let me tell you of my motivation for preaching on this subject today.

I desire a powerful church. I do. But more importantly than me, Jesus Christ desires a powerful church. Amen? He desires a church that is able to withstand the gates of hell.

That is the type of church that Jesus Christ dies for, and that's a type of church that Jesus desires. The reality is, there is a spiritual battle going on all around us, right?

[ 6 : 31 ] We see it in Squamish. We see it in our churches. We see it in our families. Many of you know exactly what I'm talking about when I say this church has been assailed by the evil one.

Churches and families that are gospel-centered will come under attack. You know that? You will come under attack. And sadly, in some aspects, Satan has gotten his way.

Now, Jesus Christ, what we're going to soon learn, gives us the best defense against Satan, is developing a powerful prayer life. Is developing a powerful prayer life.

Both in our families and in our churches. And I'm not talking about having families or churches that pray. I'm talking about praying families and praying churches.

You understand the distinction? One, it's a part of their natural DNA and one who just acts like it once in a while. So please turn with me to Matthew 26.

[ 7 : 48 ] And one of the points that I have to make, so when I'm talking about praying families and praying churches, do you understand that our church can only be as strong as the families that are here?

Do you know that? We can't be completely messed at home, on our own, all of a sudden coming here and expecting this church to stand strong.

If we can't stand strong as family, now, we come to a place of encouragement and help, of course, together, right? But if prayer isn't a part of our life at home, rarely does it show up as a characteristic of the prayer life of a church.

church. The reality is, God is not fooled. God is not mocked. Now, before I go into today's text, there's two things that I want to do.

I'm hoping that you guys are all saying, I want to be a praying family. I want to be having a praying church. So we're going to go over an assessment of where we are, right? We have to test ourselves.

[ 8 : 52 ] We have to give ourselves an assessment. It's like, I'm going to find Squamish on a map. I use the map of BC, not Texas, right? You understand that?

We've got to understand where we are first before we understand how to get to where we need to go. So that's the first thing that I want to do. And secondly, I'm going to give us eight keys to developing or helping us to develop this life of prayer.

So take a look at Matthew 26. And we're going to start at verse 36. All right, this is the context of Jesus being in the Garden of Gethsemane with his disciples.

He's just endured. One of the men who's been with him has now deserted him. He's taken off. His name was Judas. And he knows that he's going to this cross.

That the next day he will be crucified. So one of the favorite places that he would go to is the Garden of Gethsemane when there. And he's praying.

[ 10 : 01 ] So take a look at verse 36. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, sit here while I go over there and pray.

And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Before I go any further, the two sons of Zebedee, do you remember who they are?

They're James and John. All right? These are the kind of the inner circle that we see throughout the gospel when Jesus would come. They're kind of the leaders amongst the leaders. So he's taking these three guys with him.

Notice verse 38. And he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful even to death. Imagine that, right?

Remain here and watch with me. Can you imagine ever telling someone that? My soul is very sorrowful He knows what's happening.

[ 11 : 15 ] He knows that he is about to bear the wrath of the sins of those who came before him and who come after him. The sins of all mankind will be poured on him and he will be separated from his most loving father.

To say he's feeling sad would probably be the greatest understatement of the English language. The whole idea that he's troubled.

He'd be faint depressed overwhelmed heavy hearted. Now it's interesting he asked them and he says hey sit here while I go over there and pray remain here and watch with me.

What is that word watch? What are they supposed to watch for? Right? One author on the subject says this involves the duty of vigilance the duty of vigilance combined with prayer in regard either to a certain day or hour when the son of man shall arrive or some actual crisis or trial or as a preparation for some impending temptation.

verse 39 and going a little further he fell on his face and prayed saying my father if it be possible let this cup pass from me.

[ 12 : 50 ] What he's saying there is that cup of sorrow. God if there was another way that your will could be accomplished take it from me. That's how sorrowful he is.

Do you understand? Jesus Christ understands before time began that this would be his place. And there's such dread sadness and pain and sorrow there.

And he's almost begging if you can take this but I bow to your will oh my God nevertheless not as I will as but you.

Verse 40 and he came to disciples and found them sleeping. Sleeping. Imagine if you asked your spouse I need you to pray for me.

I'm under intense temptation. You walk away come back and they're sleeping. How would you feel? And then he said to Peter so could you not watch with me one hour.

[ 13 : 58 ] I'm not asking for the whole night I'm just asking for an hour. Could you not be vigilant and in prayer with me for this one hour? Again verse 41 watch be on alert and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak. Again for the second time he went away and prayed my father if this cannot pass unless I drink it your will be done.

Verse 43 and he came again and found them sleeping for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again he went away and prayed for the third time saying the same words again.

Then he came to the disciples and said to them sleep take your rest later on. See the hour is at hand and the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Rise let us be going see my betrayer is at hand. How do you think you would feel if you were Peter, James or John that night?

[ 15 : 16 ] Jesus has just told you I am going to be accosted this night and I need your prayers. There was no other time that Jesus needed them to be on guard.

What's interesting was Jesus was in the desert remember when he started his ministry and he was in the desert for 40 days? Remember that? Undergoing the temptation? Take that multiply it by 100 that's what happened this night before he was crucified.

We're talking about this is a last second rush to get Jesus to stop dying on the cross. This was Satan's last chance to thwart the plan and he came at him with everything.

All of his forces came to Jesus that night to get Jesus not to follow the will of the Father. So what do we see here?

Three men who love Jesus desperately. They love Jesus dearly yet they failed to pray and be on alert.

[ 16 : 36 ] If someone told you that they would die without your prayers would you keep praying? Of course you would.

Now take a look at verse 1 Peter 5. I think it's safe to say they failed that night right? So take a look at 1 Peter 5.

We're going to look at verse 6. Okay here's a trick question. Who wrote 1 Peter? 1 Peter. Who wrote 1 Peter?

Peter right? Okay I want you to pay attention to that. Many years have passed since that time in the garden and one of the men who we could say arguably greatest failure of his night is now writing this book to us.

And it's a great book. book. And he's writing this book to Christians who are getting discouraged by constant persecution and encountering because they were Christians.

[ 17 : 52 ] You get that? So he finds out there's this Christian body out there that are discouraged. They're under fire. And what does he do? He writes them this incredible letter.

Starting verse 6. Now before I say that who's behind these attacks? Who's behind the attacks of this church? Satan right?

The same guy he saw all those years before in the garden is still at it that very day. So he writes so here it says humble yourself.

Did you understand that prayer is probably the most humbling thing that you can do? To pray is to acknowledge you have no power. You have no say. You have no control.

You are nothing. And God is everything. Amen? That's what the declaration of prayer is. So he comes to them.

[ 18 : 52 ] Therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.

Now pay attention verse 8. Be sober minded be watchful. That was the same command that he was given decades before by the king of kings lord of lords to be watchful.

Sober minded means to show self control to be aware. And that word watchful is the exact same word that we used in Matthew. Why?

Because we understand continuing in verse 8 your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

Resist him. Firm in your faith knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while the God of all grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore confirm strengthen and establish you.

[ 20 : 08 ] How in the world does he know that? Because God did it to him. Do you get that? He's writing this book because God has restored him has confirmed him strengthened him and now established him as one of the greatest preachers the world has ever known.

Now how did Peter get to this point? From being one of the greatest prayer failures to one who would go on to encourage thousands of first century Christians?

You see Peter heard those roars louder than anyone in history of mankind when he saw Jesus coming when he saw the devil coming after Jesus in the garden.

And one of the qualities that Satan has is he is a father of lies. He lives to distract and sometimes his roar is even a whisper.

So who do we want to be like? Peter in the garden or Peter as he stands and he writes this book? We don't want to be the Peter in the garden, right?

[ 21 : 22 ] We want to be the Peter who writes because God has restored him. So what I want to do is before we need to assess where we are so what I'm going to go through is six stages of prayer in order for us to assess both our prayer, our personal lives of prayer, our family lives, and that of our church.

Now what you're going to find is there's not a lot of chapter and verses that I can give you for some of these stages. Where these stages are from are from reading many books, taking the text of scripture, but also what I've learned from other pastors and preachers on this, and I'm especially grateful for a friend of mine that I went to seminary who kind of boiled it down to these six points.

And I remember hearing him preach and I said, hey, can I use those six points and he said, by all means, because they helped me many years ago in my personal walk and I want to share them with you.

Alright, so in your bulletins you have some spaces, we got six stages that we're going to go, hopefully you're going to find yourself on one of those stages, be able to assess and then we're going to go from there to being like Peter again, okay?

So the first stage is called callousness. The first stage is called callousness. And it is that part of your life where prayer is seen to have little or no value at all.

[ 22 : 46 ] What's really interesting is I spent over eight years living in the States. And here in Canada very different culture. But you can actually live in a part of the states where you think everybody around you is a Christian.

Right? You've heard of the term the Bible belt. Literally I was down in the south and I think I counted in a small city over 400 churches.

It was unbelievable. Just literally church at every corner. Right? Just everywhere. And what's interesting down in the south they fight for a whole bunch of things. And one of the things they fight for is the right to pray in school.

Right? You've heard this on the news. We need to have this right to pray in school. But the tragedy when you talk to people who live down there pastors will tell you that they might be fighting for prayer in the schools but they sure aren't praying in the homes.

They all want the right to pray but to actually be in that prayer before the king of kings rarely exists. And why?

[ 23 : 51 ] It's because they see prayer as little to no value. If this is you then it might be that you are spiritually dead.

If you believe that prayer has no value then you may be spiritually dead. If you have no desire to commune with God in prayer might actually show that you are not a child of God.

You may not have been brought forth from death to life. Your heart may be a stone heart and not a heart of flesh. Perhaps you thought well I prayed a prayer and I call it my fire insurance.

Let me tell you right now there is no such thing as fire insurance because at the moment of salvation you are actually transferred from the domain of darkness to the domain of light and you are made a new creation and within you is the Holy Spirit right you've been regenerated and that spirit in you has to desire the things of God it's a part of God to not desire to not show fruit would indicate there is no spirit you see if you're a child of God you will desire the things of God what's really interesting is that one of my friends pointed out that even an atheist can have this kind of prayer right and I know you guys have experienced this have you ever asked someone who's going through a hard time hey can I pray for you I had a friend his wife got cancer so he calls me and he's asking me to pray over them they don't believe in God but they're willing to bet that

I do and if there's some hope that something might happen they will do that most times you ask someone if you can pray for them they will say yes because they're like I'm just going to respect you right so that's the first one stage one is callousness now this callousness leads to a second stage which is called cooperation which is called cooperation and I define cooperation as prayer is treated as if it will offer some help that prayer will offer some help it's kind of like the idea of buying a lottery ticket right you can't win if you don't play right so I think if there's any chance that I might win you you know you're not you're buying that lottery ticket not really believing man I worked hard today I went all the way down to the grocery store and I took my 20 bucks out and

[ 26 : 45 ] I put it on the mega million jackpot that was hard work you know no one's coming out of they're really believing that they're really going to win you see it's the understanding that it is better to build wealth on my own but once in a while I'll ask God to intervene at some point it's the attitude that I will do things my own way and when things get a little out of control I'm going to start praying right it's the crisis that comes in that's when all of a sudden I start to pray that's the cooperative prayer whether I'm sick I'm having money issues or I'm looking for prayer to cover my own foolishness it's interesting we do this a lot in a lot of different ways you who are parents understand especially with all those parents with all these young kids do you understand now's the time to lay in the ground work for their future prayer life now is the time

I've had too many discussions with too many parents later in life asking me to pray for their children because they're wayward not following after Jesus but those prayers should have happened when they were young they it's never too late for God to intervene but you're making a wise investment it's interesting my wife and I both come from broken homes and weren't really taught a lot by our parents so we were doing the financial course Dave Ramsey helps you understand money biblically and that type of thing and that was really helpful for us and I remember we were doing it and the first thing that we wanted to do was tell our kids about it we wanted them to learn at a young age rather than getting to our age to understand you know really all the effects of it it's the same thing with prayer and the question to ask is what prayer legacy are you leaving for your kids churches that are at this stage tend to have prayer meetings if

I happen to say hey we're going to meet for prayer you're not going to say no because your attitude is there is not a lot of hope that it will really help much but we know it won't hurt I don't know if you've ever heard of the name Jim symbol he's a New York pastor and his prayer meetings are actually legendary and he's done a wonderful prayer study my wife and I were able to do the video and I would encourage you guys at any time but his prayer services are legendary that they're almost as well attended as the Sunday sermons thousands of people come to pray to be prayed over and he makes this common he says people will pay money to listen to a Christian musician but they won't come to meet Jesus for free if I ask you what is the lowest attended event at this church guarantee you it's the prayer meeting right you're all for it you won't stop us from having it but overall you'll think it's a pretty great to have one but don't really see it as helping you all that much that is the second stage let me tell you about the third stage third stage is concern prayer is treated as something valuable but not vital prayer is considered something valuable but not vital it's good it's something we should do but it's not vital how do you know if you're in this stage it's your concern for prayer gets overruled by the other busyness of life that's how you know when something else overrules your desire to go before the king of kings you know you're in this stage you say hey

I know I have to pray I know I want to be before God I believe it's good I believe that prayer accomplishes much I believe it's a wonderful thing but right now you're saying I've got a lot of other wonderful things in my life in fact to prove it I'll show you my schedule but I don't have time because I'm too busy right the reality is we are always going to be busy right the question is are we being busy with the right things you can believe that prayer is the greatest thing in the world but if you are not doing it it is not vital you know what's vital eating I die if I don't eat if I were to guess I'd say some of you are in this stage you are all in on the prayer thing it's just not that vital the reality is this is not a good place to be if we really want

God to do a work in our lives in our families and in our churches prayer has to be vital this doesn't mean we are not making good decisions for ourselves some of us might look at our kids and say you know what my kids are okay they're not like so and so kids our marriage is doing all right man we've made some decisions we're doing okay but the thing is and this is what's really triggered my thought when I first heard this sermon when I am doing anything without praying I'm essentially not asking God permission to do it you get that I might think I'm using biblical wisdom in a certain way as I lead my family but if I haven't gone before the king of kings and said how would you do this God and it's the same thing in our churches we could design a whole big program of what we're going to do but if we don't actually go before the king of kings and ask him what he wants this church to do what this church to look like we could be falling flat on our faces right if it's his church we need to go before him crying out

[ 33 : 24 ] Lord what would you have one author says we do not impress God when we leave him out of the planning if we are not in prayer and totally dependent on him then we are just building an empty shell having being a church planner I'm very sensitive I love to read different books I planted a church many years ago in Illinois grace it continues to thrive and do well but I know one group they'll come into the church and they will change the sound the stage the lights the signs video you'll have a brochure that's beautiful everything is slick websites near professional musicians all these things but a lot of times they fail you can go to their camp you can learn all their tricks but I think they have only a 30% success rate because what they're not doing is starting with prayer why does this happen one pastor tells us why we get easily deceived by what we can see okay we're easily deceived by what we can see if we see something that we can do or be we tend to be more productive right if

I see something I see something changes I'm going to generate more energy for it therefore we get busy doing and lack the faith that true power of fruit faithfulness is built upon and that is pleading for God to do it we can't build this church God is the one who builds this church and our role is to plead for him to reveal that to us and for him to build and we testify to his work amen all right so that's the third stage now the fourth stage is commitment stage four is commitment where prayer is treated as valuable and vital valuable and vital it's the realization that as leaders whether it's in your home or in your church that no matter how we plan and prepare we know that if we are not devoting enough time to prayer we are not developing something for

God you know how we know that God's really good to us is sometimes he creates a crisis in our life to get us understanding that prayer is valuable and vital you know that he does that because he loves us he wants to draw us into that relationship it was interesting just in our small groups and I have permission to share this quick story one of the members of our small group just lamented that last year was really tough it was time of crisis there was more prayer as opposed to now where it's kind of tapered off can anybody else identify with that it's kind of natural right he uses those crises to remind us hey you need me and as soon as we're doing okay we tend to think I don't need you God now stage four the commitment stage it is a good place to be and I believe it's probably a place where many of you are but know that it's actually one of the hardest stages to move beyond all right this is the next stage ready culture the next stage is culture this is where prayer is treated as a life giving treasure a life giving treasure this is what

I would love to see for you for me in our church it is where prayer goes from duty to a delight from duty to a delight there isn't anything moving you from the place to come before the Lord it's when you allow nothing to crowd out your prayer time now the reality is if you've been a mature Christian at some point you probably traveled between stage four and five right and I guarantee you you were thinking times right now in your life where you were in that stage five then you're wondering you know hey I kind of went down to stage four and maybe down to stage three where I let busyness kind of take me out of this so why don't we stay in stage five especially as churches and I'll tell you why it's we begin to depend on others those people that we call prayer warriors you know you've all have those prayer warriors

I have a mom that's a prayer warrior I believe the only reason I am walking in the light of Jesus Christ is because of my mom's prayers and nobody else's prayers but growing up I knew my mom had me even if I was doing something stupid that you kind of know stupid I knew it was kind of covered and what would really make me mad is if I made a decision I share with my mom and mom would say I'm praying against you oh I knew I would lose every time and I'd ask your dog pray for that you know the problem is we feel they've got us covered right but if we're going to see our lives transformed our families transformed our church transformed and ultimately our prayer is for this city be transformed this is where we really need to get going is where prayer becomes a culture that we are no longer a church that prays but that we are a praying church when they're talking about

[ 39 : 14 ] Squamish Baptist man that's a praying church when I come I know I'm coming before the king of kings and all his glory because they're praying how do we get there well it's when teachers come early to pray for the children's ministry right it's we come as worship leaders to pray for our worship service it's when we come before growth group or we stay later just to pray in fact sometimes we don't even have a meeting because we're too busy praying that's when we know we're in this stage five culture this stuff is praying is all about not just asking God for stuff but praising God for what he is doing you get that we're not in the supplication where we're asking for things God's already working and we're here thanking him and adoring him and the last stage is the contagious stage the contagious stage it is prayer that is a treasure and it must be shared it goes from our culture and overflows to other cultures it's a culture that multiplies it's a group of people who come together and say what we would like to see



God accomplish it means when people come to worship with us they catch this vision as well it's the knowledge that this just doesn't happen with flipping a switch signing a piece of paper or making a decision it's understanding that an action has to be done so we have all those six you guys got them all written down right well I'm going to give you quick eight quick keys to develop what I would believe is a contagious prayer life I take some of these from things that I have done and things that I have not done and recognize why is my prayer life lagging it's because I have failed to keep up with these things the first one is practice with persistence you gotta practice and the reality is when you first start praying you're not going to be a prayer warrior you're not you don't go into the gym on day one and all of a sudden you're looking like me no you might actually like a

Navy seal or something right you gotta work at it you gotta put time into it be consistent and you will find as you go before the grace of God it just multiplies don't start with you know what I'm gonna start off I guarantee you you'll struggle to get past the first 15 minutes if that do the first five minutes before you eat a meal and not just talk about thanking God for the food but pray to him about what you're thankful for what's going on in your life an intimate relationship with the Lord takes time and persistence I did not know my wife perfectly on day one of our marriage we're three and a half years in and I still don't know her perfectly but I know her a lot more now than I did then right and for some of you guys who've been married for years if not decades you know exactly what

I'm talking about so practice with persistence persistence remember Peter James and John it took them a while number two don't view prayer as a program when we start to view prayer as a ministry of the church we're losing the understanding of what prayer is prayer is the gas for everything that goes on here you know that it's not a separate thing it's everything a culture is not defined by what we do but who we are it's not about adding more prayer events it's actually about just praying more Jim Cimbala would say human ingenuity cannot be compared to God's power doesn't have to be anything fancy so first pray pray with persistence number three prayer leaders need to lead in prayer whatever it be your ministry here at church or at home the level of the group never rises above its leader you know that that drives me to pray you know that it's been fun

I've been able to develop a prayer life just with myself but when I got married that was new to me all of a sudden I have someone else I'm kind of praying with in a time and my wife is wonderful at reminding me hey we need to be taking these things to the Lord in prayer and I think that's what we need to be as partners if you happen to be blessed in marriage to remind ourselves of those things right hey did we pray enough about this are we going before the Lord Almighty it's understanding that prayer is the heart of our families and our ministries when the body's heart stops beating so does the body when someone's prayer life dies so does the spirit prayer is actually seeking God's provision power and permission it's all about asking God what he wants for this church for this family the best definition I've ever heard of prayer that's affected me is prayer is essentially aligning our desires with

[ 44 : 56 ] God's desires you get that prayer is aligning my will with God's will that's what it's all about prayer gives us life focus and power number five quit looking for a magical pill it doesn't exist so if someone can give you a book there's a lot of wisdom and a lot of books in fact if you want to read a book on prayer come on up to my office I've got plenty of them some are good some are better but there is some nuggets to pull but some make lists don't make lists whenever I'm struggling I don't know what to pray I actually just pick up my Bible read and pray that just pray what the writer is trying to get through to us pray that in my own life one of the things when we were in seminary we had to take an hour to pray every day and we had to journal it and the most effective way

I found was going on prayer walks there was a certain blockable blocks that I measured out take me for an hour and that's the time of prayer sometimes I would pray aloud it's something that you have to keep working doesn't matter if you're on your knees or on your feet doesn't matter if it's in the morning or in the evening doesn't matter if you pray out loud or pray silently find what works best for you but be ready prayer is hard just like working out in a gym is hard the fruits far outweigh the work later on number six it's between you and God don't police your spouse don't police your kids pray for them one of the things it's very easy to do I actually told my mom I was going to preach on this and my mom was all excited because she was praying this because she saw she goes son you're doing too many things in the flesh and not in the spirit what she was saying is

I wasn't getting up and saying hey I'm going to act in the flesh this day I'm just going to go on and remember I talked about Colossians 3 and it talks about consciously putting on Jesus Christ sometimes we just kind of forget in the busyness of certain things I rely on my experience or my past sometimes to give me wisdom rather than the spirit so make sure it begins with God in that moment and the number seven is seek God do you understand that our God wants to be sought after look up the term seek God in the Bible it's everywhere he's not a mystery he wants us to come he wants us he wants to be found he's not distant and he's more glorious than we can ever imagine and the eighth thing that I have for you is write down answered prayer write down answered prayer when you get a we're always asking

God for something rather than coming and adoring him for what he is and I usually take that as a sign of we're really not clued into who God is if we're not adoring and thanksgiving I don't want to rush but I know it was a little bit of a long sermon but these are the things and I'm going to ask you guys to take some time right now if you're here with friends I want you to team up with them if someone's a stranger team up with a stranger bring some people in and I want you to pray together about what stage you're in confess if you need to confess there's no shame but ask the Lord to start coming into your family start coming into your life he will make you uncomfortable God's really good at that so I'm going to let you guys to kind of separate come apart a little bit

I know this is really different and I'm breaking down some barriers here alright are you guys alright with this you think you can sit pray with people alright Carl's like oh do I get to get out of the back room back row but man so come on up go forward find some people if you're new here I know I would love to pray with you or some of the other leaders so