

1  **Progress through prayer**

Colossians 1:19-21

2  **Prepare for the finish line**

- I am going to ask you to think of the names of 3 specific people (don't choose them yet).
- I am going to give you a specific prayer list for these 3 people
- You are going to write these on the back of your bulletin
- You are going to use this as your prayer list for the next 30 days

3  **What motivates you to pray for others?**

- Emergencies:
  - Accidents
  - Sickness
  - Job loss
  - Family problem
- But God wants us to regularly intercede for others!

4  **Four types of prayer**

- 1 Timothy 2:1 – *"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men"*
  - Supplication – petitions for personal needs
  - Prayers – worship and adoration (*proseuche*) of God
  - Intercession – prayer for others
  - Giving of thanks

5  **Colossians 1:9-12a**

*"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:"*

6  **Why Christians should pray (Henry Blackaby)**

1. Prayer is an essential leadership (Christian) activity
2. Prayer brings the Spirit's filling
3. Prayer brings God's wisdom
4. Prayer accesses God's power
5. Prayer relieves stress
6. Prayer reveals God's agenda

7  **But do we really pray?**8  **Fenelon ( French writer of the late 1600's)**

- "Of all the duties enjoined by Christianity, none is more essential and yet more neglected than prayer. Most people consider the exercise a fatiguing ceremony, which they are justified in abridging as much as possible. Even those whose profession or fears lead them to pray, pray with such languor (lethargy, sluggishness) that their prayers far from drawing down blessings, only increase their condemnation."

9  **E.M. Bounds, *Purpose in Prayer***

- “When we calmly reflect upon the fact that the progress of our Lord’s kingdom is dependent upon prayer, it is sad to think that we give so little time to the holy exercise. Everything depends on prayer, and yet we neglect it – not only to our own spiritual hurt, but also to the delay and injury of our Lord’s cause upon the earth. The forces of good and evil are contending for the world. If we would pray, we could add to the conquering power of the army of righteousness; and yet our lips are sealed, our hands hang listlessly by our side, and by holding back from the prayer chamber we jeopardize the very cause in which we profess to be deeply interested”

10  **How God wants Christians to pray**11  **1. Pray CONSTANTLY (Colossians 1:9)**

- *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you*
- The Colossian church was at war with the culture
  - The church at Colossae was surrounded by pagan religions that worshipped all types of gods.
  - For some Christians in the town, Christ was being regarded as an add on figure to their spiritual life.
  - Paul wants them to know that Christ is the foundation of knowledge, wisdom and understanding.

12  **Prayer: the wartime walkie-talkie**

“Life is war. That’s not all it is. But it is always that. Our weakness in prayer is owing largely to our neglect of this truth. Prayer is primarily a wartime walkie talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief. It is not surprising that prayer malfunctions when we try to make it a domestic intercom to call upstairs for more comforts in the den.

13  **Prayer: the wartime walkie-talkie (2)**

God has given us prayer as a wartime walkie talkie so that we can call headquarters for everything we need as the kingdom of Christ advances in the world. Prayer gives us the significance of front line forces, and gives God the glory of a limitless Provider. The one who gives the power gets the glory. Thus prayer safeguards the supremacy of God in missions while linking us with endless grace for every need.” (John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*)

14  **2. Pray EARNESTLY (1:9)**

- ... *and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*
- aiteo (αἰτέω) – For a supplicant to “beg, crave, desire, require” something from a superior being
- If you could peek in to my prayer life or I could peek into yours, how earnest would we find one another’s prayers?

15  **George Mueller**

- When asked how much time he spent in prayer, George Mueller’s reply was, “Hours every day. But I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk and when I lie down and when I arise. And the answers are always coming.”

16  **Martin Luther**

- “If I should neglect prayer but a single day, I should lose a great deal of the fire of faith.” Martin Luther

17  **Samuel Chadwick**

- “The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless

studies, prayerless work and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray."

18  **3. Pray SPECIFICALLY (1:9-11)**

Write down these specific prayer requests on your bulletin

19  **Request #1: Pray for Christians to be FILLED with a knowledge of God's WILL**

- People yearn to have knowledge of a supernatural will
  - Illustration of temple in Chang-wa and how people tried to discern the will of their gods
  - Illustration of student at Southeastern Baptist College in Mississippi about a potential girlfriend
- The world places a high value on knowledge
  - Some knowledge is useful (illustration of golf game)
  - Much of the world's knowledge is NOT useful

20  **Worldly knowledge can corrupt theology**

- The decline of Europe after the Reformation began when they "intellectualized Christianity" instead of practicing it in their daily lives.
  - Martin Luther emphasized disciplines of piety
  - Philip Melancthon founded liberal arts universities and placed greater emphasis on intellectual pursuits
  - These liberal arts universities eventually led to people like:
    - Jean Jacques-Rousseau (human reason is all that matters)
    - Friedrich Nietzsche (God is dead)
    - Rudolph Bultmann (explained away miracles).

21  **Colossians 2:8-10 (Paul's warning)**

- *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

22  **Request #2: Pray for Christians to be FILLED with God's WISDOM**

- Wisdom is seeing life from God's point of view.
  - Isaiah 55:8-9 – *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*
- Wisdom comes from spending time in God's Word and then letting it spend time in YOU.

23  **Request #3: Pray for Christians to be FILLED with God's WAYS**

- "spiritual understanding" = God's spiritual revelation dominates our thinking so that God dominates our behavior
- Today, many Bible classes read a passage of Scripture and then talk about everyone's opinion of an issue raised by the passage.
  - Their opinions control their behavior.
  - But God isn't interested in our opinions.

24  **2 Corinthians 10:4,5**

- *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

25  **Request #4: Pray for Christians to have a WEIGHTY WALK (1:10)**

- 1:10 -- *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing...*
- "Worthy" = "weighty"
  - A walk that reflects the character and thoughts of God
  - Jesus was a "weighty" person – when He walked into a room, everyone there immediately felt the impact of His presence
  - What happens when you walk into a room?
- Pray that others will see Christ in the face of the one for whom you are praying; that he would bring peace and hope to those in pain

26  **John 17:20-23**

- *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*
- *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*
- *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:*
- *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

27  **John 17:24-30**

- *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*
- *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.*
- *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

28  **John 17:20-30 -- from THE MESSAGE:**

*I'm praying not only for them  
But also for those who will believe in me  
Because of them and their witness about me.  
The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind—  
Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you,  
So they might be one heart and mind with us.  
Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me.*

29  **John 17:20-30 (The MESSAGE – 2)**

*The same glory you gave me, I gave them,  
So they'll be as unified and together as we are—  
I in them and you in me.  
Then they'll be mature in this oneness,  
And give the godless world evidence  
That you've sent me and loved them  
In the same way you've loved me.  
"Father, I want those you gave me  
To be with me, right where I am,  
So they can see my glory, the splendor you gave me,  
Having loved me*

*Long before there ever was a world.*

30  **John 17:20-30 (The MESSAGE -- 3)**

*Righteous Father, the world has never known you,  
But I have known you, and these disciples know  
That you sent me on this mission.  
I have made your very being known to them—  
Who you are and what you do—  
And continue to make it known,  
So that your love for me  
Might be in them  
Exactly as I am in them."*

31  **Request #5: Pray for Christians to be FRUITFUL in GOOD WORKS**

- Good works do not save us.
- But we cannot be truly saved without it affecting our behavior.
- God expects good works from us.
  - Ephesians 2:10 – We are his WORKmanship.
  - John 15:4-5 – *"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."*
  - If we aren't bearing fruit, it is simply because we are not abiding in Him!

32  **Request #6: Pray for Christians to be FRUITFUL in SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

- We must grow as Christians.
- Ronald Reagan once said government was like a baby. "An appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility on the other."
- How do you measure spiritual growth?
  - Effectiveness for the Lord
  - Decreasing worldliness
  - Increasing holiness (set apart to the Lord)
  - Greater concern and love for others
  - Increased giving
  - Habit of prayer
  - Meditating on the Word of God

33  **Request #7: Pray for Christians to be FORTIFIED with DYNAMIC EFFECTIVENESS**

- 1:11 -- *Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;*
- Strengthened = "energized with dynamite"
- Many Christians leave this world without having made much of an impact on it.
- Other Christians leave this world with a testimony that lasts for generations or centuries (like George Mueller, Hudson Taylor, or William Carey)

34  **Request #8: Pray for Christians to be FORTIFIED with MIGHTY WORKS**

- We admire power
  - Just ask a guy what size engine he'd like under the hood of his car
- What are these "mighty works"

- Not miracles
- Hint in last part of verse 11: *"for all patience and longsuffering with joy."*
- Paul says we need to pray for God's power to get us through problems and that we get through them with JOY!
- This is what turns the world upside down (or right-side up). It is when the world see us, as believers, trusting God through sickness and tragedy and maintaining our Joy.
- Do you recall where Paul was when he wrote this letter? (In prison about to be executed)

### 35 Requests #9-11

- To be FORTIFIED with powerful worship – "glorious power"
- To be FORTIFIED with unswerving constancy – hupomone –
  - Sterling coinage; made even more perfect through trials.
  - Faith that doesn't waver in the face of trials, bankruptcy, cancer.
- To be FORTIFIED with joyful thanksgiving – Being thankful for the grace of God.
  - The most pleasant of people are those who are thankful – not complaining.
  - They acknowledge that any success they have is attributable to the Lord. They don't keep praise for themselves.
  - They begin every day thanking the Lord for His sustaining power that gives them the desire and ability to serve Him.
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### 36 Who are your praying for?

- Take out a piece of paper and write the #s 1-3. We're each going to pray for three people today.
  - Next to #1, write the name of a family member for whom you want to pray.
  - Next to #2, write the name of someone NOT in your family that IS on your side of the auditorium.
  - Next to #3, pick someone from the opposite side of the auditorium for whom you want to pray.
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