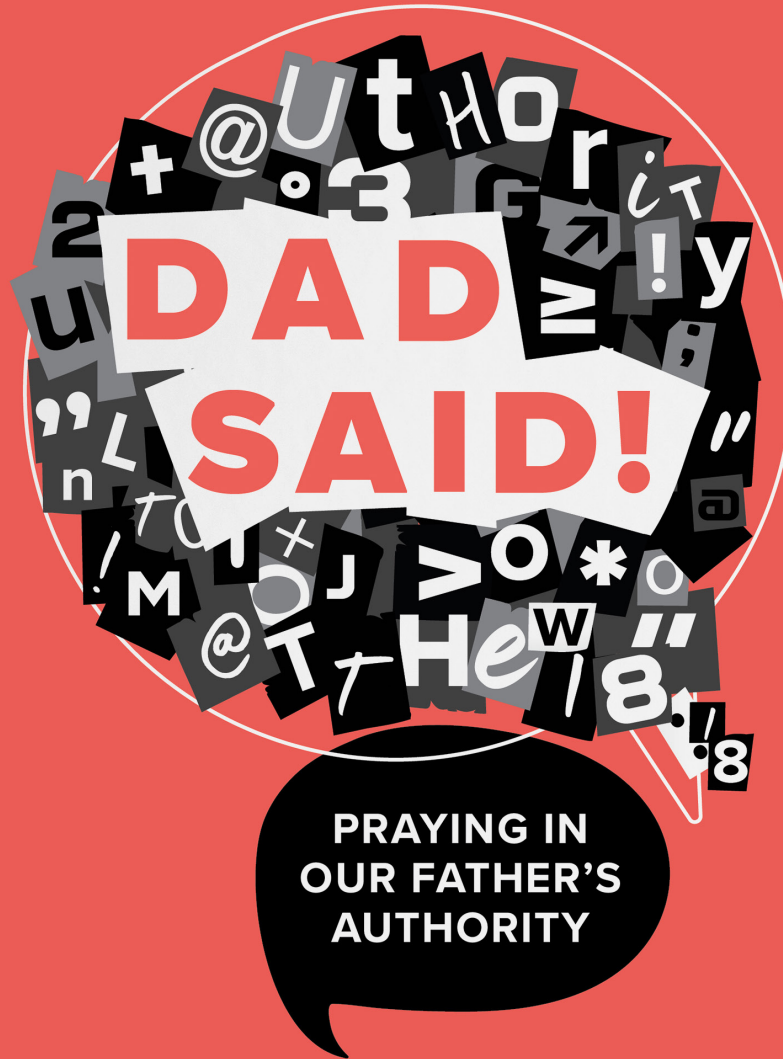




LEADER'S GUIDE

Use of AI in Creation of This Leader's Guide

Claude.ai was used to help generate content within this Leader's Guide. The content from *Dad Said! Praying in Our Father's Authority* is not AI generated. The Small Group agenda design, primary themes discussed, and target audiences to consider were not AI generated. These items were used to train Claude.ai, and AI was used to create instructions, activities, discussion questions, summaries, and facilitator helps. All sections were further edited by live editors for consistency with *Dad Said! Praying in Our Fathers Authority*.

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HOW TO USE THIS LEADER'S GUIDE

Welcome, Leader!

Thank you for stepping into this important role. Leading a small group study on prayer is both a privilege and a responsibility. This guide is designed to equip you with everything you need to facilitate meaningful, life-changing discussions about declaratory prayer.

You don't need to be a prayer expert or a Bible scholar—you simply need to be faithful, prepared, and willing to let the Holy Spirit work through you. This section will walk you through how to prepare, how to lead, and how to create an environment where hearts can be transformed.

Basic Session Outline (60 minutes)

Each week follows this simple structure:

Fellowship & Settling In (5-10 minutes). Before the official start time, allow people to arrive, greet one another, grab refreshments, and catch up. Don't rush this! Fellowship builds the trust and connection that makes vulnerable discussion possible. Consider providing simple snacks (cookies, fruit, coffee, tea) to create a welcoming atmosphere. At the designated start time, invite everyone to find their seats and open with a brief welcome.

Opening Activity/Icebreaker (5-10 minutes). Use the provided activity to introduce the week's theme. Keep it light and engaging—this helps people transition from their day into the lesson. Everyone should participate, but keep it brief.

Book Content Summary (5 minutes). Read the summary aloud OR summarize it in your own words. This ensures everyone is on the same page, even if they didn't finish the reading. You can ask, "Who read this week's chapters?" to encourage accountability without shaming.

Discussion Questions (35-40 minutes.) This is the heart of the session. Use the facilitator transition statements to move between sections. You don't have to cover every question—prioritize depth over breadth. Follow the Spirit's leading if the conversation goes in a helpful direction.

Closing Prayer/Application (5-10 minutes). Use the suggested closing activity. Practice declaratory prayer together. Send people out with a specific action step or prayer focus.

Announcement (1 minute) Remind participants of next week's reading assignment. Share any group logistics (schedule changes, etc.).

Preparing for Each Session

A Week Before

- Read the assigned chapters yourself at least once.
- Read them prayerfully, asking God to show you what He wants your group to learn.
- Underline or highlight key passages that resonate with you.

3-4 Days Before

- Review the lesson plan for the upcoming week.
- Read through all the discussion questions.

- Note which questions feel most important for your group.
- Think about which stories or illustrations from the chapters to which your group might relate.

The Day Before

- Pray specifically for each participant by name:
 - Ask God to prepare their hearts.
 - Pray for those who might be struggling.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your facilitation.
- Prepare your materials:
 - Bring your book, leader's guide, and Bible.
 - Gather any supplies needed for the icebreaker activity.
 - Arrange for snacks/refreshments if you're providing them.
- Read the chapters one more time—you'll be amazed what the Spirit shows you on a second or third reading.

Day Of

- Arrive 15-20 minutes early to set up the space.
- Arrange chairs in a circle (not rows) so everyone can see each other.
- Set out refreshments.
- Spend 5-10 minutes in prayer before people arrive.
- Greet people warmly as they arrive.

Best Practices for Leading Small Group Discussions

Ask, Don't Tell. Your role is not to lecture but to facilitate conversation. Instead of saying "Here's what this passage means..." try asking "What do you think Jesus is teaching us here?" The best discussions happen when participants discover truth together, not when a leader downloads information.

Create Space for Silence. After asking a question, wait. Count to 10 in your head. Don't rush to fill the silence. People need time to think. The first person to speak is rarely the only one with something to say.

Follow Up with "Why?" and "Can You Say More?" When someone shares, dig a little deeper:

- "That's interesting—what made you think of that?"
- "Can you give us an example?"
- "How did that experience shape your view of prayer?"

Redirect, Don't Shut Down. If someone goes off on a tangent:

- "That's a great point. Let's come back to that after class, but for now let's focus on..."
- "I love your enthusiasm! Let's hear from someone else and then we can return to your thought."

Encourage Quiet Members (Gently). Some people need an invitation:

- "Sarah, you've been listening carefully—what's your take on this?"
- "I'd love to hear from someone who hasn't shared yet."

But never force participation. Some people process internally and that's okay.

Manage Dominant Personalities (Lovingly). If one person consistently dominates:

- Make eye contact with others while the person is speaking (inviting them non-verbally)
- "Thanks, John. Let's hear from someone else on this one."
- Privately talk to the person outside of class: "I value your insights, but I need your help drawing out others who are quieter."

Don't Feel Pressured to Have All the Answers. If someone asks a question you can't answer:

- "That's a great question. I don't know. Does anyone else have thoughts?"
- "Let me research that this week and we can talk about it next time."
- "What do you think? Let's explore this together."

Your honesty builds trust more than pretending to know everything.

Creating A Safe Space

Small groups thrive when people feel safe to be honest. Here's how to build that environment:

Establish Ground Rules (Week 1) At your first meeting, discuss and agree on:

- Confidentiality: "What's shared here stays here." (Exception: If someone reveals they're in danger or planning to harm themselves or others)
- No fixing: We're here to listen and pray, not solve everyone's problems
- Respect: No interrupting, no judgment, no side conversations
- Participation: Everyone is invited to share, but no one is required to
- Time: We start and end on time out of respect for everyone's schedules

Model Vulnerability. Share your own struggles with prayer. Admit when you don't understand something. Let the group see that you're learning too. Your transparency gives others permission to be real.

Celebrate Honesty. When someone shares something vulnerable, thank them:

- "Thank you for trusting us with that."
- "I really appreciate your honesty."
- "I think a lot of us can relate to that struggle."

Protect the Vulnerable. If someone shares something painful, pause and pray for them immediately. Don't just move on to the next question. Show that people matter more than your lesson plan.

Watch Your Body Language.

- Sit at the same level as everyone else (not elevated)
- Make eye contact
- Nod, lean forward, smile
- Put away your phone
- Don't look at the clock repeatedly

Remember: It's Okay If People Don't Speak. Some people:

- Process internally
- Are naturally quieter
- Are still building trust
- Learn by listening

Don't pressure them. Their silence doesn't mean they're not engaged.

About Snacks and Hospitality

Why Food Matters. Breaking bread together has been part of Christian community since the beginning. Food says, "You're welcome here. I care about you." It creates warmth and helps people relax.

Simple Ideas:

- Coffee and tea (always popular)
- Store-bought cookies or brownies
- Fruit and veggie trays
- Cheese and crackers
- Donuts or bagels for morning groups
- Chips and salsa

Tips:

- Keep it simple—this isn't a competition
- Rotate who brings snacks so it's not all on one person
- Be mindful of dietary restrictions (have at least one option that works for most people)
- Set out food before people arrive so it doesn't become a distraction
- Give people 5-10 minutes to eat and fellowship before starting the lesson

Encouragement for the Journey

You Were Chosen for This. God hand-picked you to lead this group. He knows your strengths and weaknesses, and He's equipped you for this task. Trust Him.

Progress Over Perfection Not every discussion will be profound. Some weeks will feel flat. That's okay. You're planting seeds, and God is responsible for the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

Pray Without Ceasing. The most important thing you'll do as a leader is pray. Pray before, during, and after each session. Pray for your participants by name. Prayer is the power source of your leadership.

You're Not Alone. If you're feeling stuck or discouraged, reach out to your pastor or a mentor. Consider finding another small group leader to encourage each other.

Celebrate Small Wins. When someone prays with new boldness, when a quiet person shares for the first time, when the group rallies around someone in crisis—celebrate! God is at work.

The Goal Is Transformation, Not Information. At the end of 8 weeks, success isn't measured by how much your group knows about declaratory prayer. Success is measured by whether they're actually praying with authority. Are they declaring God's will over their families? Over their circumstances? Over the evil attacking them? That's what matters.

A Final Word

Leading a small group is one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do. You'll watch people grow, see prayers answered, and witness the Holy Spirit move in powerful ways. Yes, it takes time and energy. Yes, there will be challenging moments. But the investment is worth it.

As you prepare each week, remember the words of Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Jesus Himself will be in your group. You're not doing this alone.

Thank you for saying yes to this calling. May God bless you richly as you lead His people deeper into prayer.

FACILITATOR OVERVIEW

Study Purpose

This 8-week study equips believers to pray with authority through "declaratory prayer"—partnering with God to declare on earth what He has already decreed in Heaven (Matthew 18:18). Participants will learn to bind what opposes God's will and loose what He intends to free.

Target Audience

- Believers age 15 and up
- Mixed groups (new believers and mature Christians)
- Small groups of 6-12 participants

Session Format (60 minutes)

- Opening Activity/Icebreaker: 5-10 minutes
- Book Content Summary: 5 minutes (read or summarize)
- Discussion Questions: 35-40 minutes
- Closing Prayer/Application: 5-10 minutes
- Homework Assignment: Announced at end

Weekly Reading Requirement

Participants should read the assigned chapters BEFORE each session. The only homework is reading for the upcoming week.

Facilitator Tips

1. Create a safe, judgment-free environment for honest sharing.
2. Don't feel obligated to cover every question—follow the Spirit's leading.
3. Use the transition statements to move smoothly between discussion sections.
4. Model vulnerability by sharing your own struggles and growth.
5. Encourage participants to practice declaratory prayer at home between sessions.
6. Keep discussions focused—gently redirect if conversations wander.
7. Watch the time and pace accordingly.

WEEK 1: Borrowed Authority - The Foundation of Declaratory Prayer

Reading Assignment

Introduction + Chapters 1-2

Opening Activity: "Dad Said!" (5-10 minutes)

Ask participants: "When you were a child, did your parents ever send you to deliver a message to a sibling? What words did you use to make them listen?"

Allow 2-3 people to share. Then ask: "Why did those words carry weight?"

Transition: "Today we're learning that sometimes when we pray, we carry our Heavenly Father's authority. When He tells us to bind or loose something, we pray, 'Dad said,' and everything changes."

Book Content Summary

In declaratory prayer, God speaks His will through Scripture and the Holy Spirit, then invites us to partner with Him in bringing that will into reality. Using Matthew 18:18 as our foundation, Jesus teaches that whatever we bind on earth "shall have been bound in heaven," and whatever we loose on earth "shall have been loosed in heaven." This isn't about commanding God—it's about declaring what He has already decided in Heaven's court.

The authority is borrowed, not ours. Like a military lieutenant shouting "Charge!" on behalf of the general, we declare God's will with His full authority behind our words. To bind means to imprison or stop something—like placing spiritual handcuffs on what opposes God's will. To loose means to release or set free—breaking prison doors open so captives can walk out.

Our authority has clear boundaries: we can only bind or loose what God has already bound or loosed in Heaven. We discover His predetermined will through Scripture and the Holy Spirit's promptings. And the Spirit never contradicts God's Word. This borrowed authority is both humbling and empowering—we're not acting on our own but declaring Heaven's decrees on earth.

Discussion Questions (35-40 minutes)

SECTION 1 - Understanding Declaratory Prayer

Facilitator Transition: "Let's start by discussing what makes declaratory prayer different from other types of prayer."

1. What types of prayer are you most familiar with? (petition, praise, confession, etc.) How is declaratory prayer different?
2. The author uses the illustration of a father sending one son to tell another "Dad said, mow the lawn." How does this help you understand our authority in prayer?

SECTION 2 - Binding and Loosing

Facilitator Transition: "Now let's look at the specific language Jesus uses—binding and loosing."

3. Jesus uses prison terminology: to bind (imprison/stop) and to loose (release/free). What situations are you praying over right now that need binding? What needs loosing?
4. Look at the synonyms on page 10-11. Which words resonate most with you for binding and loosing? Why?

SECTION 3 - Borrowed Authority

Facilitator Transition: "The key to our authority is understanding that it's borrowed from God."

5. How does knowing your authority is borrowed (not your own) change how you approach prayer?
6. What are the two ways God reveals His predetermined will to us? Why is it important that the Spirit never contradicts Scripture?

SECTION 4 - Personal Application

Facilitator Transition: "Let's make this personal and practical."

7. Share one thing you'd like to bind this week and one thing you'd like to loose—either in your own life or for someone you're praying for.
8. What's the biggest obstacle to you praying with this kind of authority? Fear? Doubt? Lack of understanding?

Closing Prayer/Application (5-10 minutes)

Close by praying together as a group. Have the facilitator model a simple declaratory prayer, then invite 2-3 volunteers to pray declaratory prayers over the requests shared in the last question.

Homework for Next Week

Read the Introduction and Chapters 1-2 again, underlining phrases that stand out. Come ready to discuss Chapter 2 in more depth next week.

WEEK 2: The Scope and Limits of Our Authority

Reading Assignment

Chapter 2 (review and deeper study)

Opening Activity: "Authority Boundaries" (5-10 minutes)

Bring a set of keys. Hold them up and ask: "What do keys represent?" (Access, authority, ownership)

"If I gave you these keys to my car, what could you do? What couldn't you do?"

Discuss how borrowed authority has both power and limits.

Transition: "Today we're exploring the boundaries of our prayer authority—what we can and cannot declare."

Book Content Summary

Our authority to bind and loose is real but not unlimited. The perfect tense in Matthew 18:18—"having already been bound/loosed in Heaven"—reveals that God acts first, and we declare second. We don't command God; we echo Heaven's decrees on earth. This protects us from praying outside God's will and ensures our declarations carry divine power.

God reveals His will through two channels: His Word (Scripture) and His Spirit (personal promptings). The Bible gives us God's general will for all people—love, forgiveness, holiness, justice. The Spirit gives timely, specific direction for particular situations. These two always agree. If an impression contradicts Scripture, it's not from God.

The boundary of our authority is God's predetermined will. We cannot override human free will—we can't force someone to accept Christ. But we can bind deception, loose clarity, and create an atmosphere where people can clearly see God's offer of salvation. We fight for their freedom before they have faith to fight for themselves. This is why our prayers matter so much—we have authority to change the spiritual environment, even though we can't control another person's choices.

Discussion Questions (35-40 minutes)

SECTION 1 - Discerning God's Will

Facilitator Transition: "Let's dig deeper into how we discern God's will."

1. God reveals His will through Scripture and the Holy Spirit. Which one do you find easier to discern? Why?
2. Diana (the author's wife) struggled to hear God's voice clearly. What helped her finally break through? How can you apply that to your own prayer life?

SECTION 2 - Understanding Boundaries

Facilitator Transition: "Now let's talk about the boundaries—what we can and cannot declare."

3. Why can't we override someone's free will in prayer? Does this mean our prayers are powerless when someone resists God?
4. The author talks about praying for Landon (pp. 20-21), whose denial was bound by alcohol. How did declaratory prayer change the spiritual atmosphere around Landon, even though he still had to choose?

SECTION 3 - Testing Our Impressions

Facilitator Transition: "One of the most important boundaries is that the Spirit never contradicts Scripture."

5. Why is it dangerous to trust a 'feeling' or 'impression' that goes against God's Word? Can you think of examples where people have done this?
6. How do we test whether something is from the Holy Spirit or from our own desires? (See 1 John 4:1)

SECTION 4 - Personal Application

Facilitator Transition: "Let's bring this into our daily lives."

7. Is there someone you're praying for who seems resistant to God? How could you pray to change the spiritual environment around them without trying to control their choice?
8. What's one area where you need to grow in discerning God's will—listening to Scripture or listening to the Spirit?

Closing Prayer/Application (5-10 minutes)

Close by having someone read Romans 8:26-27 aloud. Then pray: "Father, teach us to pray according to Your will. Help us discern Your voice through Scripture and Your Spirit. Give us boldness to declare what You've already decided in Heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Homework for Next Week

Read Chapter 3. Pay special attention to the stories (Ben and Samantha, and the author's personal examples). Come ready to share how God's presence changes situations.

WEEK 3: Sanctify Your Name - Forcing Bent Knees

Reading Assignment

Chapter 3

Opening Activity: "Recognition Activity" (5-10 minutes)

Before group, write 5-6 names of very famous people on index cards (celebrities, historical figures, world leaders). Show them one at a time and ask: "How do people respond when they meet this person?" (excitement, respect, fear, etc.)

Then ask: "How do people respond to God's name in our culture?"

Transition: "Today we're learning that we have authority to force recognition of who God really is."

Book Content Summary

When Jesus teaches us to pray "hallowed be Your name," He's not making a polite request—He's giving us authority to sanctify God's name in places where He's been ignored or mocked. To sanctify means to set apart as holy, to elevate to the place of highest honor. Since God's name and His presence are interchangeable in Scripture, this declaration thrusts God Himself into godless situations.

This prayer unleashes what theologians call prevenient grace—the grace that comes before salvation, awakening people's hearts to see God. It forces confession and surrender. When God's holiness invades a space, knees bend and tongues confess His authority, whether people want to or not. Think of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, or the Roman centurion at the cross—they all acknowledged God's power.

But acknowledgment isn't the same as salvation. Belief admits Christ is real; faith commits to obey Him. We can't force repentance, but we can force people to face God's reality. When we declare "Your name be sanctified," we bind spiritual blindness and loose God's presence so powerfully that people cannot dismiss Him. This prayer works for unbelievers, those running from God, broken marriages, cities, and nations. We usher God's holy presence into every dark corner.

Discussion Questions (35-40 minutes)

SECTION 1 - Understanding Sanctification

Facilitator Transition: "Let's start by understanding what it means to sanctify God's name."

1. In your own words, what does it mean to 'sanctify' God's name? How is this different from just praying for someone to get saved?
2. The author says God's name and His presence are interchangeable. How does that change the way you understand this prayer?

SECTION 2 - Prevenient Grace

Facilitator Transition: "Now let's talk about prevenient grace—grace that comes before salvation."

3. Can you remember how God awakened your heart before you accepted Christ? What did that feel like?
4. Why do you think God forces confession and surrender but never forces repentance? What's the difference?

SECTION 3 - Power in Specific Situations

Facilitator Transition: "This prayer has power in specific situations. Let's look at the examples from the chapter."

1. In Dan and Shelbie's story (pp. 36-37), how did declaratory prayer rescue their marriage? What specifically was bound and loosed?
2. The author gives four categories for this prayer: unbelievers, people running from God, communities/nations, and failing marriages. Which one weighs most heavily on your heart right now?

SECTION 4 - Personal Application

Facilitator Transition: "Let's make this personal."

3. Who in your life needs to experience God's presence in an undeniable way? How could you pray 'sanctify Your name' over them this week?
4. Where do you see God's name being dishonored in our culture? How does this prayer give you authority to do something about it?

Closing Prayer/Application (5-10 minutes)

Practice declaratory prayer as a group. Ask each person to name one person or situation where God's name needs to be sanctified (no need to explain details). Then have the facilitator lead the group in a united declaratory prayer over all the requests:

"Father, we declare Your name be sanctified over [names/situations]. Force recognition of Your holiness. Let knees bend and tongues confess. Pour Your presence into these lives until they cannot ignore You. In Jesus' name!"

Homework for Next Week

Read Chapters 4-5. These chapters expand on "Your kingdom come, Your will be done." Come ready to discuss how we usher Heaven's throne room into earthly chaos.

WEEK 4: Your Kingdom Come - Ushering God's Throne Room

Reading Assignment

Chapters 4-5

Opening Activity: "Kingdom Power" (5-10 minutes)

Ask: "If you could speak one command and have the entire government/culture instantly obey, what would you say?" Let 2-3 people share.

Then ask: "Why don't we have that kind of power?" Discuss limits of human authority.

Transition: "Jesus teaches that we DO have authority to command God's Kingdom into places of chaos—authority that far exceeds any earthly power."

Book Content Summary

When Jesus commands us to pray "Your kingdom come, Your will be done," He elevates our authority above every earthly power structure. We're not asking God to intervene someday—we're declaring Heaven's throne room into the chaos of earth right now. This prayer is spiritual warfare. We crush principalities by declaring Christ's reign over territories Satan has claimed.

The Kingdom of God is both present and future. Jesus inaugurated it at His first coming; He'll consummate it at His return. We live in the tension—Christ reigns now, but Satan gasps his last breaths. Every declaration of God's Kingdom advances His rule and weakens the enemy's grip. We have authority to overthrow satanic strongholds—whether demonic spirits, destructive attitudes, or entrenched patterns of sin.

As priests in Christ's Kingdom (Revelation 5:9-10), we don't just pray about problems; we declare Heaven's decrees over them. This applies personally ("Your Kingdom come in me"), corporately ("Your Kingdom come in our church"), and culturally ("Your Kingdom come in our city"). The Spirit-filled witness becomes living proof of the Kingdom at work. We usher God's throne into our own hearts, our congregations, and our communities—forcing righteousness where rebellion once reigned.

Discussion Questions (35-40 minutes)

SECTION 1 - Understanding God's Kingdom

Facilitator Transition: "Let's start by understanding what the Kingdom of God actually is."

1. What does it mean that God's Kingdom is both 'already here' and 'not yet fully come'? How does that tension affect the way we pray?
2. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). If His Kingdom isn't political, what is it? How do we recognize it?

SECTION 2 - Spiritual Warfare and Strongholds

Facilitator Transition: "These chapters talk a lot about spiritual warfare and strongholds."

3. What is a 'stronghold'? Can you identify any strongholds in your life, your family, or your community?
4. In the story about the school (pp. 50-52), what did the prayer team do to reclaim that territory for God? What was the result?

SECTION 3 - Multiple Applications

Facilitator Transition: "This prayer has multiple applications—personal, church, and cultural."

1. How do you apply "Your Kingdom come" to your own heart? What areas of our lives tend resist God's rule?
2. The author mentions the 2020 riots and how churches prayed for Fort Wayne (pp. 45-46). Do you believe declaratory prayer can actually change what happens in cities and nations? Why or why not?

SECTION 4 - Spirit-Filled Witness

Facilitator Transition: "Jesus ties Kingdom authority to Spirit-filled witness (Acts 1:8)."

3. A Spirit-filled witness doesn't just tell what Christ did for them, but also what that means for others— "Here's what Christ did for me, and He can do the same for you." How does this change the way you share your faith?
4. Where is God calling you to be a witness this week—at home, work, school, or in your community?

Closing Prayer/Application (5-10 minutes)

Read Matthew 28:18-20 aloud together. Then pray as a group:

"Father, Your Kingdom come in this room right now. Your Kingdom come in our families. Your Kingdom come in our church. Your Kingdom come in our city. We declare Your throne established where chaos has reigned. We bind every force set against Your rule. We loose Your righteousness and justice. In Jesus' name, Amen!"

Homework for Next Week

Read Chapters 6-7. These represent a major shift—from praying over external situations to praying over ourselves. Come prepared to discuss how God uses daily dependence to build our faith.

WEEK 5: Give Us Daily Bread - Declarations of Dependence

Reading Assignment

Chapters 6-7

Opening Activity: "Safety Net" (5-10 minutes)

Ask: "What do you trust most for your sense of security?" Let people share (job, savings, family, health, etc.).

Then ask: "What would happen to your faith if that thing was taken away tomorrow?"

Transition: "Today we're learning that Jesus commands us to pray in a way that strips away our safety nets and forces us into absolute dependence on God."

Book Content Summary

When Jesus teaches us to pray "Give us today our daily bread," He's referencing God's provision of manna in the wilderness—just enough for each day, forcing Israel to trust daily. This declaration is dangerous because it asks God to limit our provision so we don't replace dependence on Him with dependence on His blessings. We're literally praying: "Father, give me only what I can manage without shifting my trust from You to Your blessings."

This prayer represents a shift in the Lord's Prayer. The first three declarations (sanctify Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done) focused outward. Now we turn the weapon on ourselves. We bind idolatry of money, success, and self-sufficiency. We lose faith that thrives on daily provision rather than stockpiled resources. God uses seasons of scarcity not to punish but to train us.

The author walks us through four gut-level questions: Is God really there? What do I trust for my safety? Is enough for today enough for me? Do I want entertainment or transformation? Each question forces us deeper into dependence. The chapter includes powerful stories (Rod Penrod, the author's own financial collapse, tithing) showing that God strips away false securities to teach us He alone is sufficient. Daily bread isn't about a single day—it's a decades-long pathway of faith.

Discussion Questions (35-40 minutes)

SECTION 1 - The Discomfort of Daily Bread

Facilitator Transition: "Let's start with the hardest part of this prayer."

1. Jesus commands us to pray for 'daily bread'—just enough for today. Why is this so uncomfortable for most of us?
2. What's the difference between trusting God who provides and trusting the provision itself? How can you tell which one you're doing?

SECTION 2 - Four Questions of Dependence

Facilitator Transition: "The author shares four questions God used to train him in dependence. Let's work through a couple of them."

3. Question 1: Is God really there? When resources run low, do you truly believe God sees you and cares about your needs? What makes this hard to believe?
4. Question 3: Is 'enough for today' enough for you? Could you follow God if He called you to a vow of poverty? Why or why not?

SECTION 3 - Stories of Learning Dependence

Facilitator Transition: "The chapter includes several powerful stories about learning dependence."

5. In Rod Penrod's story (pp. 62-64), what did God have to strip away before Rod could truly trust Him? How did that change Rod's ministry?
6. The author shares his own story of losing 80% of his income (pp. 67-76). What idols did God expose in his heart during that season?

SECTION 4 - Personal Application

Facilitator Transition: "Let's make this personal and practical."

7. Where are you tempted to trust in self-sufficiency rather than God right now? What would declaring 'daily bread' look like for you?
8. The author says 'daily bread' isn't just about a single day—it's often decades of God's provision. Looking back, can you trace how God has led you through a pathway of dependence?

Closing Prayer/Application (5-10 minutes)

This is a vulnerable prayer. Give people a moment of silence to confess areas of self-sufficiency. Then pray together:

"Father, we bind our idolatry. We've trusted Your blessings more than You. Strip away false securities. Give us daily bread—just enough to keep us dependent. We don't need tomorrow's provision to obey today. Loose faith over our hearts that thrives on Your presence alone. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Homework for Next Week

Read Chapter 8. This may be the most challenging chapter in the book—grace demands grace. Come prepared to discuss forgiveness, especially toward people who have deeply wounded you.

WEEK 6: Forgive Our Debts - Grace Demands Grace

Reading Assignment

Chapter 8

Opening Activity: "The Debt Collector" (5-10 minutes)

Ask: "If someone owed you \$10,000 and refused to pay, how would you feel?" Let people share emotions (anger, betrayal, frustration).

Then ask: "Now imagine you owed someone \$10 million and they forgave it all. How would that change how you treated the person who owed you \$10,000?"

Transition: "Today we're learning that Jesus commands a terrifying prayer—that God limit His grace toward us to the measure we show others."

Book Content Summary

The declaration "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" is the most dangerous prayer in the Lord's Prayer. When someone sins against us, they become our debtor—they owe us. We hold power over them through that obligation. Jesus commands us to pray that God bind His grace toward us to the same level of grace we show others. If we refuse to forgive, we step back into prison and slam the door shut on ourselves.

But there's another side to this prayer. All grace comes from God, even the grace we extend to others. When we pray this, we're asking Him to unleash grace into our hearts so we can forgive. We can't manufacture forgiveness on our own—it's always a gift from God. This declaration must become a daily lifestyle, not a one-time event.

It's critical to distinguish forgiveness from trust and reconciliation. Forgiveness is always given; trust is always earned. Forgiveness frees our heart; trust requires changed behavior. Reconciliation requires both. We have authority to declare forgiveness, but trust and reconciliation depend on the other person's choices. The author's personal story of sabbatical burnout and anger (pp. 88-90) shows how God's grace humbles us so completely that we have no standing to hold debts over others. Grace demands grace.

Discussion Questions (35-40 minutes)

SECTION 1 - Understanding Sin as Debt

Facilitator Transition: "Let's start by understanding how sin creates debt."

1. When someone wounds you, how does it feel like they 'owe you'? What kind of repayment do we usually want?
2. Jesus uses the word 'debt' intentionally. How does thinking of unforgiveness as holding someone's promissory note help you understand what you're doing to yourself?

SECTION 2 - The Dangerous Side of This Prayer

Facilitator Transition: "Now let's talk about the dangerous side of this prayer."

3. Jesus commands us to pray that God limit His grace to us at the same level we show others. How does that make you feel?
4. In the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:23-35), what happens when the forgiven servant refuses to forgive? How does this apply to us?

SECTION 3 - Forgiveness, Trust, and Reconciliation

Facilitator Transition: "The chapter distinguishes between forgiveness, trust, and reconciliation."

5. Why is it important to understand that forgiveness is always given, but trust is always earned?
6. Can you think of a situation where forgiveness happened but reconciliation didn't? Why? Was that wrong, or is there grace for that?

SECTION 4 - Personal Application

Facilitator Transition: "Let's make this intensely personal."

7. Is there anyone you're holding captive in your emotional vault? What debt do they owe you?
8. The author says God had to show him how unworthy he was before he could forgive others (pp. 88-90). How does remembering your own forgiven sins help you forgive others?

Closing Prayer/Application (5-10 minutes)

This requires vulnerability. Give people time to silently confess unforgiveness. Provide paper and pens. Have them write down names of people they need to forgive, then lead them in a declaratory prayer:

"Father, I transfer ownership of these debts to You. I release [names] from what they owe me. Pour Your grace into my heart. Bind my demand for repayment. I choose to forgive as You forgave me. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Then have them tear up or burn the papers as a symbolic act.

Homework for Next Week

Read Chapters 9-10 and the Conclusion. These final chapters focus on victory—strength to endure tests and deliverance from evil. Come ready to celebrate what you've learned over these 8 weeks.

WEEK 7: Lead Us Not into Testing - Victory Part 1

Reading Assignment

Chapter 9

Opening Activity: "Pass or Fail" (5-10 minutes)

Ask: "Tell about a test you took (school, driving, job) where you weren't sure you'd pass. How did you feel?" Let 2-3 people share.

Then ask: "How is a test meant to strengthen you different from a test meant to break you?"

Transition: "Today we're learning that Jesus gives us authority to end tests that would destroy our faith, while embracing tests that make us stronger."

Book Content Summary

When Jesus commands us to pray "Lead us not into testing," He's not saying God never tests us—Scripture makes clear He does. Rather, Jesus is speaking about severe spiritual testing driven by God's doubt in our faithfulness, like Israel faced in the wilderness. These are crushing tests where failure vindicates God's distrust. Jesus authorizes us to declare an end to such hope-defeating trials.

Satan accuses us during hard seasons: "You're failing. God's giving up on you." But this prayer gives authority to bind those accusations and declare renewed trust in God's care. We can call on God to let go of any doubt about our faithfulness. We're not like unfaithful Israel—we stand under Christ's authority and victory.

However, there's a difference between tests that crush and tests that train. Hebrews 12:10-11 says God's discipline strengthens us, producing holiness and peace. We have no authority to stop strengthening tests—those are for our good. But we can declare that God limit His testing to fatherly discipline and not allow us into trials that would destroy us. Eric Ward's childhood story (pp. 97-100) beautifully illustrates how even a fifth-grader can declare strength over trials and experience God's deliverance.

Discussion Questions (35-40 minutes)

SECTION 1 - Two Types of Testing

Facilitator Transition: "Let's start by understanding the difference between types of testing."

1. What's the difference between a test designed to prove you'll fail versus a test designed to make you stronger?
2. Have you ever felt like God was testing whether you'd remain faithful? How did that feel? What was the outcome?

SECTION 2 - Authority to End Crushing Tests

Facilitator Transition: "Jesus authorizes us to pray for certain tests to end."

3. When facing a crushing trial, Satan accuses us of failure. What accusations do you hear most often in difficult seasons?
4. The author says we can declare: "Trust what Jesus did in me. Honor His power at work in my soul." How does this prayer shift your perspective during trials?

SECTION 3 - Embracing Strengthening Tests

Facilitator Transition: "Not all tests should be stopped—some strengthen us."

5. Read Hebrews 12:10-11 together. How do you discern whether a test is for your destruction or your development?
6. Can you share a time when God used a difficult test to strengthen your character? What did you learn?

SECTION 4 - Eric Ward's Story

Facilitator Transition: "Let's look at Eric Ward's powerful childhood story."

7. Eric was expelled from kindergarten, third grade, AND fourth grade for his temper. What changed in fifth grade when he started praying?
8. Eric learned: "It's not about the paper. Just pray." How does this encourage you about your own authority in prayer, regardless of your spiritual maturity?

Closing Prayer/Application (5-10 minutes)

Ask: "What test are you facing right now—one that's crushing you or one that's strengthening you?" Give people a moment to identify their test. Then pray:

"Father, we declare confidence in Your faithfulness. End tests aimed at our destruction. Strengthen us through tests meant for our growth. We declare victory in Jesus' name. We will not be defeated. We trust You. Amen."

Homework for Next Week

Read Chapter 10 and the Conclusion. This is our final week—come ready to discuss how we defeat evil within and around us, and to celebrate what God has taught us through this study.

WEEK 8: Deliver Us from Evil - Victory Part 2

Reading Assignment

Chapter 10 + Conclusion

Opening Activity: "Victory Celebration" (5-10 minutes)

Bring a small trophy or ribbon. Pass it around and ask each person: "Share one thing you've learned about prayer authority over these 8 weeks."

After everyone shares, transition: "Today we're finishing strong with the ultimate victory prayer—deliverance from evil within us and evil attacking us."

Book Content Summary

The final declaration—"Deliver us from the evil one"—addresses both our internal sinful nature and external satanic attacks. Evil can flow from Satan himself or through human hearts not surrendered to the Spirit. Whether fighting the evil in our own hearts or confronting evil expressed by others, all evil reeks of Hell.

Internally, we inherit Adam's fallen nature—selfishness, rebellion, destructive appetites. Jesus' death forgives our sins, and the Holy Spirit empowers victory over our sinful bent. We must declare daily: "Spirit, bind my selfishness. Overpower my sinful nature with Your love." This is ongoing spiritual warfare requiring both declaratory prayer and intimacy with the Spirit.

Externally, Satan attacks—sometimes directly, more often through people who don't realize they're being used. Paul reminds us we don't fight people but "evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world" (Ephesians 6:12). We must never pray against people but pray for them while binding the real enemy. The power of our prayers flows from purity of heart (James 4:7-10, 5:16-20). Ongoing unrepented sin weakens us, but humble submission and clean hearts unleash Heaven's authority. We draw near to God while resisting Satan, and he flees.

Discussion Questions (35-40 minutes)

SECTION 1 - Evil Within (Our Sinful Nature)

Facilitator Transition: "Let's start with the evil within—our sinful nature."

1. The apostle Paul calls our sinful nature a "body of death" (Romans 7:24-25). How have you experienced this—selfishness that slowly destroys you or relationships?
2. In the story about young Andrew (pp. 106-107), exhaustion exposed the author's selfishness. What circumstances tend to bring out the worst in you?

SECTION 2 - Evil Without (Satan's Attacks)

Facilitator Transition: "Now let's talk about external evil—Satan's attacks."

3. Paul says we fight spiritual forces, not people (Ephesians 6:12). Why is it so easy to forget this and start fighting people instead?
4. In the story of Chris and the crystal (pp. 108-110), how did God demonstrate His power over false spirituality? What does this teach us about our authority?

SECTION 3 - Purity and Power

Facilitator Transition: "Our authority in prayer is directly connected to our purity."

5. James 4:7-10 says drawing near to God empowers us to resist Satan. Where do you need to draw closer to God right now?
6. The author talks about Harry and Sally (pp. 112-114)—how Sally shifted from being an adversary to an advocate. Are you praying for someone or against someone? How can you shift?

SECTION 4 - Celebration and Commissioning

Facilitator Transition: "Let's celebrate and commission each other."

7. Over these 8 weeks, how has your understanding of prayer changed?
8. What's one declaration you're going to start praying regularly? Who will you pray it over?

Closing Prayer/Application (10-15 minutes)

Read Colossians 1:11-14 aloud as a group.

Then have each person place their hand on the shoulder of the person next to them (forming a circle). Go around and have each person pray a declaratory prayer over the person they're touching—binding Satan's attempts to discourage them and loosing God's grace and peace in their life. Encourage the class to pray in an encouraging way.

End with the facilitator praying:

"Father, we've learned to pray in Your authority. Now send us out as warriors who declare Your will on earth. We will not be victims—we are victors in Christ. Your name be sanctified. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done. Give us daily bread. We forgive as You forgive. Lead us not into testing but deliver us from evil. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen!"

Ongoing Practice

Continue practicing declaratory prayer daily. Consider starting a prayer journal to record what you bind and loose, and watch how God answers. Share testimonies with the group via text or email when God moves!

APPENDIX A- SAMPLE DECLARATORY PRAYERS

Below are sample prayers from the book to help participants get started with declaratory prayer. These are not formulas to be repeated but examples to inspire your own Spirit-led declarations.

Sanctifying God's Name (Week 3)

"God, I am declaring Your presence over [name]. She doesn't believe in You—but I do. She knows nothing of Your authority and power—but I do! I declare Your name be sanctified in her heart. Invade her disbelief with Your presence in such an unmistakable way that she cannot dismiss it as religious exuberance. Bring her face to face with You, not as a vague idea but in the fullness of Your Spirit. Reveal Your glory with such splendor that she cannot ignore You. I declare her mind awakened and her spiritual eyes opened. Awaken her very soul. Shine Your light on her! Show her that You are alive and real!"

Ushering God's Kingdom (Week 4)

"Lord, in Your name, I declare Your Kingdom come into this place. Remove these centers of evil from our community. I bind every spiritual force trying to blind our leaders to truth. I loose Your clarity and justice. Open their eyes to see the evil camouflaged as tolerance. Bring Your Kingdom!"

Daily Bread (Week 5)

"Father, unleash a spirit of absolute dependence over me. Bring me through whatever strips away my need for bounty. Replace my dependence on Your blessing with a dependence on Your presence. Bind the idolatry that tempts me to worship Your gifts. Break my fear of starting without tomorrow's provision. Loosen faith so I rejoice more in Your presence than in Your provision."

Grace and Forgiveness (Week 6)

"Father, I declare grace. I declare grace that demands grace. I declare grace toward others that I might fully embrace Your grace for me. I declare Your grace over me so I can fully express grace toward others. I declare these things, not in my authority, but in Yours. Bind over my heart what You have bound in Heaven. Loose my heart from the chains You've broken. I declare release for those I've held captive. Break the chains I've used to enslave them. I declare these things in Jesus' name!"

Victory Over Testing (Week 7)

"Lord, strengthen me through this test. Don't let this season crush me. Limit Your testing to Fatherly discipline, and I will embrace the transformation it brings. Thank You for trusting me not to abandon the call just because the road is difficult. I declare victory in the test. I declare Your confidence in my faithfulness. I declare victory in Jesus' name!"

Deliverance from Evil (Week 8)

"Father, I claim my authority to call on You for deliverance. Leave me alone, Satan! I bind every desire to flirt with evil. Father, I refuse to reach for You with one hand and cling to sin with the other. Draw me close and deliver me from the evil one!"

APPENDIX B- ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR LEADERS

Creating a Safe Environment

1. **Confidentiality:** Remind participants that what's shared in the group stays in the group
2. **No fixing:** Resist the urge to solve everyone's problems—listen and pray
3. **Equal participation:** Gently encourage quiet members and lovingly redirect those who dominate
4. **Vulnerability:** Model openness about your own struggles and growth
5. **Grace:** Remember that learning to pray with authority is a journey, not a destination

Handling Difficult Situations

If someone dominates the discussion: "Thank you for sharing. Let's hear from someone who hasn't had a chance yet."

If the conversation gets off track: "That's an interesting point. Let's bookmark that for after class and get back to our question about..."

If someone shares something very personal/traumatic: "Thank you for trusting us with that. Would it be okay if we prayed for you right now?" (Then continue with the lesson)

If someone challenges the concept of declaratory prayer: "I appreciate your honesty. This is a new concept for many people. Let's look at what Scripture says and let the Holy Spirit guide us."

Following Up After the Study

Consider these next steps for your group:

1. **Continue Meeting:** Form a prayer group that meets monthly to practice declaratory prayer together
2. **Accountability Partners:** Pair up participants to check in weekly about their prayer lives
3. **Testimony Sharing:** Create a group text or email chain where people can share answered prayers
4. **Advanced Study:** Consider reading Dr. Stirratt's other book "Manna: The Call to Daily Dependence on God" as a follow-up
5. **Multiplication:** Encourage mature participants to lead their own 8-week groups using this guide

Final Encouragement to Facilitators

You've undertaken an important ministry by leading this study. Declaratory prayer is not just theology to ponder but power to wield. As you guide your group through these 8 weeks, remember:

- **You don't have to be an expert**—just be faithful to lead your group through the material.
- **The Holy Spirit is the real teacher**—trust Him to work in hearts.
- **Transformation takes time**—some will grasp this immediately, others will need months or years.
- **Your vulnerability matters**—share your own journey of learning to pray with authority.
- **Celebrate progress**—even small steps toward bolder prayer are victories worth celebrating.

Thank you for investing in people's prayer lives. The fruit of this study will extend far beyond these 8 weeks as participants learn to pray: "Dad said!"

May God bless you richly as you lead.

End of Study Guide

For more resources associated with *"Dad Said! Praying in Our Father's Authority"* by Dr. Kevin Stirratt, contact Boundless Ministries. Paperback and e-book copies of the book can be purchased on *Amazon*.