

HEAVEN



& EARTH



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About “Heaven and Earth” 02

Sermon Notes + Discussion & Application Guides

Part 1 - All Authority in Heaven and on Earth 06

Part 2 - I Am With You Always 12

Part 3 - Go Therefore and Make Disciples 18

Part 4 - Ask, Seek, Knock 24

Part 5 - You Will Receive Power 30

Part 6 - And They Devoted Themselves 36

Prayer Guides

How to Prayerfully Develop Your Own “Witness” 44

How to Pray for Guidance 46

How to Pray for a Friend to Know God 48

How to Pray for Strengthening or Renewal 50

How to Pray with a Group 52

Prayer Journal 56

WHAT *HEAVEN* AND *EARTH* IS ALL ABOUT



EARLY THIS YEAR IN THE COLD DAYS OF WINTER, I BEGAN ASKING THE LORD MORE INTENTLY WHERE HE WANTS TO LEAD OUR CHURCH NEXT.

As part of this prayer focus, I started meditating on the so-called “Great Commission,” from Matthew 28:16-20. This is the famous passage after Jesus’ resurrection where he tells the astonished disciples, still trying to make sense of this new reality, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

I’ve heard this passage so many times - memorized it - that I hardly thought I needed to study it more. But in time, I started to see this “great commission” with fresh eyes. “Go and make disciples” booms from the mouth of Jesus, and I had always understood the commission as something we are called to do. I still believe that. But...I hadn’t seen the rest of it as clearly.

On either side of the commission are two astounding promises: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” and “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” These promises tie together themes that run throughout Scripture. They take my breath away. And they help me see the command in a new light. The great commission is not simply something we do. It’s something Jesus has promised us. As we grasp the breadth of what he’s promised us, obedience doesn’t seem so big or burdensome anymore. It starts to feel exciting - the place where Jesus has promised that “heaven and

earth” will meet. As I shared all of this with our elder team, we decided that these promises should be a year-long focus for our church.

Here are my three hopes for the upcoming year:

EXPECTATION - I hope that when we hear what Jesus means by “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” that we will expect him to do things through us that we previously haven’t expected.

PRAYER - With raised expectations, I hope to see us pray more intentionally together. We’re going to be organizing some specific ways to do that (see “*Pursuit Nights*” on back cover).

OBEDIENCE - I’m asking the Lord to give each of us specific steps of obedience he wants us to take *and* to give us confidence to take them because of what he’s promised.

You’ll hear all of this unpacked during our fall sermon series at both congregations! And this book will serve as a guide to help us put what we’re learning into practice.

I’m thrilled to be embarking on this journey with you and I’m expecting the Lord to do more than I can ask or think!

With love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hunter Beaumont". The script is fluid and cursive.

Hunter Beaumont
Lead Pastor





GIRL
ATHLETIC
LEADERSHIP
SCHOOLS



SERMON NOTES

+

***GROUP DISCUSSION &
APPLICATION GUIDES***

PART ONE
SERMON NOTES

ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH

Matthew 28:16-20

[illegible]

ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH

Matthew 28:16-20

OPENING DISCUSSION

In recent times, Americans have become increasingly suspicious of authority - government, churches, media and medical professionals just to name a few.

1. Why do you think Americans are struggling to trust authority?
2. Have you experienced any situations that made it difficult for you to trust authority?

EXPECTATION: WHAT HAS GOD SAID?

To start this series, we are reflecting on the Great Commission, Jesus' command to go and make disciples of all nations. But before we focus on the command to "go," and before we flesh out the details of what it looks like practically to "make disciples", we first want to draw our attention to Jesus' staggering claim: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt 28:19).

By invoking the language of "heaven and earth" Jesus is situating his claim in the larger biblical story. In the beginning God created the *heavens and the earth* as a unity (Gen 1). Then "heaven and earth" were fractured by sin and death (Gen 3), and God withdrew

his presence to heaven while evil reigned on earth. But now, Jesus is claiming that through his sin-defeating death and death-defeating resurrection, he has been enthroned as the rightful King who is bringing heaven and earth back together. He is doing this by sending his people to all the nations, calling them to bow to King Jesus, receive his salvation, and become citizens of God's kingdom.

The big idea could be summarized like this: When we make disciples of all nations, we are living at the intersection of heaven and earth and we experience the good authority of Jesus.

▲ Read Matthew 28:16-20

1. In the Great Commission, Jesus claims to possess authority in heaven and on earth. This is a staggering claim of absolute authority and ultimate kingship over every sphere of life. Yet all of us are in a different place in our spiritual journey. Some are unaware of Jesus' authority. Others are hostile to the idea. Still others are curious and open-minded, but ultimately hesitant to hand over every part of their life to Jesus. And others are on the long journey of imperfectly, yet steadily, learning to surrender to the good authority of King Jesus. Which of these best describes where you are in your spiritual journey? Explain.

3. Dutch statesman Abraham Kuyper famously said, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!" What parts of your life do you most struggle to surrender to

the kingly authority of Jesus? And what areas of life do you most struggle to trust in Jesus' kingly power to do what he has promised?

4. How do you think your life would change if you whole-heartedly believed that Jesus has “all authority in heaven and on earth”?

PRAYER: SEEKING GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER

During this time, pray for one another and for those who don't yet know Jesus. Share one area of your own life that you desire to more fully surrender to the good authority of Jesus. Also, share the name of one person you would like Jesus to powerfully reveal himself to.

Record these prayers in your Prayer Journal at the back of this book

OBEDIENCE: STEPPING OUT IN TRUST

The command to make disciples is not just given to individuals but to “the whole church.” Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a church to make disciples - a church filled with diverse people with different giftings, passions, and experiences.

Some participate in making disciples by teaching children about Jesus. Others participate by writing songs about Jesus for the church to sing. And others participate through foster care, adoption, or mercy ministries to the poor. And all of us have the opportunity to participate in this mission right where God has placed us, in our homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces. **Where is God specifically inviting you to step more deeply into the mission of making disciples of Jesus? And what do you plan to do in the next 30 days to obey in faith?**

Consider praying about these questions and asking the Holy Spirit to show you how he would answer. Use the Prayer Journal to track your prayers and answers.

PART TWO
SERMON NOTES

I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

Matthew 28:16-20

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

Matthew 28:16-20

OPENING DISCUSSION

READ THE STORY BELOW. WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU ABOUT JOHN G. PATON'S EXPERIENCE?

John G. Paton (1824-1907) was a Scottish missionary who moved his family to the New Hebride Islands in 1866. When he landed, he saw the destitution of the islanders, and his heart broke for them to know Jesus. They were in bondage to superstition and were a brutal people, practicing cannibalism, widow sacrifice, and infanticide. Shortly after arriving, Paton tragically lost his wife and daughter to disease and was left all alone on the island.

On one occasion, the islanders staged an attack on Paton and attempted to murder him. Running for his life through the jungle in the middle of the night, Paton climbed a tree to hide. Here is what he later wrote in his journal about that experience:

My heart rose up to the Lord Jesus; I saw Him watching all the scene. My peace came back to me like a wave from God. I realized that I was immortal till my Master's work with me was done. The assurance came to me, as if a voice out of Heaven had spoken, that not a musket would be fired to wound us, not a club prevail to strike us, not a spear leave the hand in which it was held vibrating to be thrown, not an

arrow leave the bow, or a killing stone the fingers, without the permission of Jesus Christ, whose is all power in Heaven and on Earth. He rules all Nature, animate and inanimate, and restrains even the Savage of the South Seas...I climbed into the tree and was left there alone in the bush. The hours I spent there live all before me as if it were but of yesterday. I heard the frequent discharging of muskets, and the yells of the Savages. Yet I sat there among the branches, as safe as in the arms of Jesus. Never, in all my sorrows, did my Lord draw nearer to me, and speak more soothingly in my soul, than when the moonlight flickered among those chestnut leaves, and the night air played on my throbbing brow, as I told all my heart to Jesus. Alone, yet not alone! If it be to glorify my God, I will not grudge to spend many nights alone in such a tree, to feel again my Savior's spiritual presence, to enjoy His consoling fellowship... If thus thrown back upon your own soul, alone, all alone, in the midnight, in the bush, in the very embrace of death itself, have you a Friend that will not fail you then? (Autobiography, 200 & 207)

EXPECTATION: WHAT HAS GOD SAID?

In the Great Commission, Jesus gave his followers a mission to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). In our sermon this week, Jesus makes this promise, “Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (28:20). This means that whether we make disciples in our own neighborhood or venture to the far reaches of the earth, we are never alone. Jesus our great King is always with us! He’s with us to comfort, teach, guide, and protect. The big idea for this week could be summarized like this: *making disciples is one of the key ways we experience the presence of Jesus.*

▲ Read Matthew 28:16-20

1. In this passage, Jesus promises to be with his people always. On a scale of 1-10, how aware are you of the presence of Jesus in your day to day life? Why do you think this is the case?

2. Acts 7 tells the story of the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. As he was preaching the gospel in Jerusalem, a mob seized him and stoned him. Read Acts 7:54-60. How does Jesus fulfill his promise to Stephen? What stands out to you about the way Jesus is present with Stephen?

3. While Stephen was given a vision of the presence of Jesus with him, most of us normally experience the presence of Jesus by faith. In other words, though we cannot see Jesus physically, we learn to trust the promise of his presence in every situation. The apostle Paul famously said, "We walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7). When is it easiest for you to trust that Jesus is with you? When is it hardest?

4. What are the habits that most hinder and most help you experience the presence of Jesus?

PRAYER: SEEKING GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER

Where in your life do you most lack a sense of Jesus' presence with you? As a group, bring these areas before God and ask for an increased awareness of the presence of Jesus in your lives.

Record these prayers in your Prayer Journal

OBEDIENCE: STEPPING OUT IN TRUST

One practice that has historically been used by Christians to increase their awareness of the presence of Jesus is known as the *Daily Examen*. Each night this week before bed, take 5-10 minutes to do the following:

- **CALM YOUR HEART:** Take 10 slow breaths to remember you are in the presence of Jesus. As you breathe in, imagine you are welcoming Jesus into your heart. And as you breathe out, mentally say to Jesus, "You are welcome here."
- **REVIEW YOUR DAY:** Next, take time to review your day as if it were a movie reel in your head. Replay the main events of the day one by one. Take your time and pay attention. How were you feeling? Where was your mind and heart? How was Jesus present in these moments? Where was Jesus inviting you to trust, repent, obey, or step more deeply into the great commission?
- **GRACE AND GRATITUDE:** As you review each event, one by one, mentally give that moment to Jesus. Pray for him to give you any needed grace that moment revealed, and express gratitude for his presence with you in that moment.
- **SLEEP:** Having become aware of the presence of Jesus with you during that day, now sleep in the peace of his presence.

PART THREE
SERMON NOTES

GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES

Matthew 28:16-20

[illegible]

GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES

Matthew 28:16-20

OPENING DISCUSSION

In the beginning pages of the Bible - God tells Adam and Eve that not only are they to live in God's presence and in relationship with him, but they are also mandated to work the earth, to be fruitful and multiply. God's presence with humans is **accompanied with action** to build and add to a thriving world.

1. Do you think this idea - that humans are called to action - is woven into human nature? Where do you see this?
2. What have you seen happen when humans don't step into their design - or - don't have mission along with meaning?

EXPECTATION: WHAT HAS GOD SAID?

In this sermon the big idea is that God has called all followers of Jesus to a mission of working to make disciples all around the world. This doesn't mean we need to travel to the ends of the earth (although some do!), but it does mean that we are called to make disciples of those that God has already surrounded us with. Just like Adam and Eve being created to work the earth, we are saved and promised the ongoing presence of Jesus so that we can do the work of making disciples.

Doing this work means our lives should be filled with “Gospel intentionality.” Gospel intentionality requires real steps of obedience, even when taking those steps is scary or puts a lump in our throats. The great news though, is that even if this feels unnatural, *we can actually expect our work to thrive* because we have Christ’s presence and authority as we “go and make disciples.”

▲ Read: Matthew 28:16-20

1. After examining Jesus' words here, where do you find yourself? Where do you feel that you fit best?

- Are you skilled at bringing up and sharing the gospel with people around you?
- Do you know that you should be working on evangelism but do not feel skilled in it?
- Do you have some hesitations about sharing the gospel or your testimony in general?
- Is sharing the Gospel something that often crosses your mind?

2. On a scale of 1-10, where would you rate yourself in confidence regarding your expectation of someone responding positively if you had the opportunity to share the Gospel?

3. Are there any areas in your life where you recognize opportunity or sense that God is calling you to “Go”? Share them with your group.

Name what you expect vs. what “I am with you” would expect?

PRAYER: SEEKING GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER

Pray in your group around these themes:

1. Pray that God fills us with energy to step into the work of “going and making disciples.”
2. Pray against fears and tension you experience when faced with the work of making disciples.
3. Pray for the people that were mentioned in group discussion - that God creates opportunities for Gospel intentionality.
4. Pray for the confidence and expectation that comes with Jesus’ power and authority to lead you.

5. Pray for new Christians and renewed confidence for existing Christians.

Write the names or descriptions of people you're praying for in your Prayer Journal

OBEDIENCE: STEPPING OUT IN TRUST

Even in the midst of fear, Jesus is with us, and he comes with power and authority when we share the Gospel with those outside the church walls. This should fill us with confidence that it's not just us that is doing this work! Fruitfulness is not just based on our skill but on the authority of Jesus himself.

What new steps of obedience can you take in your daily relationships?

- Do they know you are a Christian?
- Do they know what you believe?
- Do you know how to share your own faith journey in normal words?
- Have you invited them into the proximity of the Gospel (around Christian friends, to your group, to church)?
- Name a new step you could take over the next few weeks.

PART FOUR
SERMON NOTES

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

Luke 11:5-13

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

Luke 11:5-13

OPENING DISCUSSION

The Protestant Reformer Martin Luther, once remarked: "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of God's willingness."

What are your reactions to this statement? Do your prayers reflect this mindset? Why or why not?

EXPECTATION: WHAT HAS GOD SAID?

In the Great Commission, Jesus gave his followers a mission to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19). So far in this series we have explored the authority of King Jesus to give this command, and the promise of his presence with us as we obey this command and its practical meaning for our lives .

This week we are focussing on the necessity of prayer as the first step of obedience to the Great Commission. The big idea for this week could be summarized like this: *Before the Great Commision calls us to go on mission, it first calls us to go to the Father in prayer.* And as we ask, seek, and knock in prayer, we should expect our Father to hear and answer our prayers.

▲ Read Luke 11:1-13

1. How would you describe the role prayer currently plays in your life? (e.g. it's a central priority, it's an occasional practice, it's something I do when I'm desperate, it's not really something I do often, etc). Why do you think that is?

2. In verses 2-4 Jesus gives his disciples a model for prayer known as the Lord's Prayer. Historically the church has used this t, not only as a prayer to recite corporately and privately, but also as a model for the priorities we should have in prayer. As you read Jesus' prayer, what priorities does he tell us to focus on?

3. In verses 5-8 Jesus tells two short stories to illustrate how we should think about prayer. What do we learn about prayer from these two stories? What do we learn about the heart of God?

4. Can you think of a time you have persisted in prayer over a long period of time? What was that experience like? How did you see God respond?

PRAYER: *SEEKING GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER*

In this series, we are thinking about prayer specifically in the context of Jesus' command to go and make disciples. Making disciples includes a wide range of things like: sharing the gospel with a neighbor, teaching our children to know and follow Jesus, serving in a church ministry, meeting with a mentor, mentoring another person and much more.

Take time as a group to name the ways you are involved (or want to be involved) in making disciples, and pray together for God's wisdom and power to be displayed. As you pray, be sure to name specific people and specific opportunities.

OBEDIENCE: *STEPPING OUT IN TRUST*

This week, choose and pray through one of the Prayer Guides in the following section. As you do, make note of your prayers and consider: What am I learning about prayer through this exercise? Come prepared to share what you learned with your group next week.

YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER

Acts 1:6-8

[illegible]

YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER

Acts 1:6-8

OPENING DISCUSSION

Martin Luther King Jr. famously said, “Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”

1. What do you think about King’s statement? Agree or disagree? Why?
2. Have you ever experienced power without love, or love without power? Share your experience.

EXPECTATION: *WHAT HAS GOD SAID?*

In the Great Commission, Jesus gave his followers a mission to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). So far in this series we have explored the authority of Jesus to give this command, the promise of his presence as we obey this command, the practical meaning of this command and the necessity of prayer for the fulfillment of our mission.

This week we are focussing on our need for God's power in order to accomplish this task. The big idea this week can be summarized like this: the Great Commission is an impossible task apart from the empowering presence of God through the gift and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

▲ Read Acts 1:6-8

1. In Acts 1:6-8 Jesus promises his disciples that the Holy Spirit will give them power. In this passage, what is Jesus empowering his disciples to do? And what does this tell us about how we can experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

2. There are other ways that the Holy Spirit gives us power as well. Read the following verses and discuss the ways the Holy Spirit gives us power: John 16:7-11, Romans 8:11, Romans 8:26-27, 1 Corinthians 12:11, Galatians 5:22-25

3. From reading the Bible we also see that the Holy Spirit is not merely a "force" or a "power", but rather a person. A person who teaches (John 14:26), speaks (Acts 8:29), makes decisions (Acts 15:28), can be angered (Hebrews 10:29), can be lied to

(Acts 5:3-4), gives gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11), prays for us (Romans 8:26-27), and glorifies Jesus (John 16:14). What are the implications of the fact that the Holy Spirit is a person?

4. In what ways is God's Spirit specifically working through you and your faith community right now?

PRAYER: SEEKING GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER

Biblically speaking, all Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit the moment they are united to Jesus (John 14:17). However, there is also a biblical category for being “filled” with the Spirit, which speaks to walking in the fullness of the Spirit’s power.

- **EXAMPLE #1** - In Acts after the Spirit is first given at Pentecost (Acts 2), the church is filled with the Spirit again (Acts 4:31) and so are individual disciples (13:9, 52).
- **EXAMPLE #2** - After reminding the Ephesians believers that they had already been “sealed with the promised Holy Spirit” (Eph 1:13), Paul then immediately goes on to pray that the Father would give them “the Spirit” so that they might know Christ more fully, be strengthened in their gospel hope, and be more assured of the powerful working of God (Eph 1:17).

We might summarize it like this: there is *one* indwelling and *multiple* fillings. The Holy Spirit comes to indwell us once, at conversion. And we should also seek the fullness of the Spirit's joy and power.

With this in mind, spend a few minutes as a group asking the Father to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Specifically, pray for the Holy Spirit to teach you, assure you, comfort you, convict you, guide you, and empower you for the mission of Jesus. Pray also for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of specific people around you. Pray for them by name and with expectation that God loves to give good gifts to his children.

OBEDIENCE: STEPPING OUT IN TRUST

As we saw in Acts 1:6-8, one of the key ministries of the Holy Spirit is to empower us to be “witnesses” of Jesus Christ, which is another way of saying that the Holy Spirit empowers us to share the gospel and our own testimony of God's grace with those who don't know Jesus. Who in your life is God calling you to share the gospel with? Who might God want to use your personal story as a witness? Take a step of faith this week, trusting the power of the Holy Spirit, and share the good news of Christ with that person.

PART SIX
SERMON NOTES

AND THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES

Acts 2:42-47

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

AND THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES

Acts 2:42-47

OPENING DISCUSSION

Michael Phelps is the most successful and decorated Olympian of all time, with an astounding 28 medals, 23 of which were gold medals. When asked about the road he traveled to achieve such greatness, Phelps said this: *"I wanted to do something that nobody had ever done before and that started with a dream and a goal. I wanted to be the greatest of all time. I went five straight years without missing a single day of workout. 365 days a year, every single day I was working."*

1. What do you think about this kind of devotion?
2. Who is somebody in your life you would describe as devoted? Why?

EXPECTATION: WHAT HAS GOD SAID?

In the Great Commission, Jesus gave his followers a mission to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19). Throughout this series we have explored the *authority* of Jesus to give this command, the promise of his *presence* as we obey this command, the practical *meaning* of this command, the necessity of *prayer* for the fulfillment of the command, and the *power* needed from the Holy Spirit.

In the final week of this series we are focussing on the “devotion” of the earliest Christian communities. The big idea for this week could be summarized like this: The fulfillment of the Great Commission requires the Church to be deeply devoted to Scripture, Christian Community, Communion, and Prayer.

▲ Read Acts 2:42-47

1. What would you say you are most devoted to in your life right now?

2. In these verses we read about the “devotion” of the earliest Christians to Scripture, Christian Community, Communion, and Prayer. Which of these comes easiest for you? Which is most difficult?

3. As modern Americans, it is easy to read these verses through an “individualistic” lens. How does the vision of the Christian life presented in Acts 2:42-47 challenge our individualistic impulses?

4. From this passage, what role do you see generosity, hospitality, and community playing in our call to reach our neighbors with the gospel? What are some simple ways you could begin employing these evangelistic practices in your life and community?

PRAYER: SEEKING GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER

At this time, gather with your group in prayer. Ask God to search your hearts to reveal obstacles, distraction, and idols standing in the way of “devoting” yourselves to the communal practices of scripture, Christian community, communion, and prayer.

OBEDIENCE: STEPPING OUT IN TRUST

Missiologists often talk about the importance of Christian communities creating “third places.” A third place is characterized by three things. First, it is neutral, which means we are not asking non-Christians to step onto our turf. Rather, we create spaces that are neutral ground for both of us. Second, it’s natural, which means it fits into the natural rhythms of the lives of those we are trying to reach. And finally, it’s regular, which means there is a consistency to it that allows for meaningful gospel relationships to form over time.

When Christian communities can create “third places”, unbelieving friends and neighbors get to see and be folded into Christian community in a non-threatening way. They get to see how

Christians love and serve one another. They get to experience Christian hospitality and grace. And over time, they not only get to see and experience the “fruit” of the gospel, but meaningful opportunities to share the gospel will also arise.

The action step for this week is to begin brainstorming ideas for how your group can create a “third place” in the life of your group that is neutral, natural, and regular. Here are some examples of possible third places:

- Hosting a book club or discussion and inviting folks from your neighborhood
- Leading a Cub Scout pack or something similar
- Hosting consistent neighborhood cookouts to watch NFL games
- Organizing a standing pickleball night 2-4x a months





PRAYER GUIDES



HOW TO PRAYERFULLY DEVELOP YOUR OWN WITNESS

INTRO

Jesus told his first disciples, “you will be my witnesses...” (Acts 1:8). A witness is someone who testifies to what they have seen. Later, peter will say, “we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (acts 4:20).

By using the word “witness,” Jesus is telling us that making disciples involves telling our personal story. Many modern Christians assume that making disciples is primarily about explaining the gospel and biblical truths. While this is important, it’s incomplete. We aren’t just called to explain the gospel; we are also called to bear witness to how it has personally impacted us, what we have seen and heard.

Often your personal story is the most natural starting point. It can be shared in normal conversation. It can be shared in “short” or “long” form. It can be shared with non-Christians to invite them to hear the gospel or it can be shared with other Christians to encourage and build them up!

Knowing your story takes intentional reflection. Many of us will discover that God has done far more than we are aware of. In this guide, we’ll walk through how to *prayerfully* reflect on your own life as a disciple so that you can be a witness.

PRAYER

Start by reading Philippians 3. Notice how Paul describes both his former life and what he is currently learning as a disciple of Jesus. Think about how Paul's story might be helpful in both sharing the gospel with non-Christians *and* building up other believers.

Reflect on the following questions. As you reflect, pray and ask the Father to show you His work in your life. Resist the urge to craft an "ideal Christian testimony." Trust that God can use your story as it has actually unfolded.

- How did I come to faith in Jesus?
- What has been the most life giving part of following Christ? What has been the hardest or most costly part?
- Where do I most experience the Lord's grace for my sin?
- How has my understanding of God and truth changed as I've followed Jesus ("I used to believe/assume _____ but now I believe _____")?
- What seasons of difficulty, disappointment and confusion have I experienced as a follower of Jesus? What have I learned about the Lord through them?
- What am I currently learning as a disciple?
- Where am I asking the Lord to meet me right now, today?
- What am I most thankful to the Lord for?
- If I were to describe the gospel in my own words, what would I say?

Finally, share the results of your reflection with someone. You can start anywhere (with a Christian friend, a spouse, a small group, or with a non-Christian friend). Ask the Lord to show you who to share with.

HOW TO PRAY FOR GUIDANCE

INTRO

In Scripture, “wisdom” describes the capacity to make decisions, with the Lord’s help, for the vast majority of circumstances we face everyday. James encourages us, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him” (James 1:5). This means that wisdom for all kinds of situations, relationships and decisions should be one of our primary prayer focuses.

PRAYER

Read these passages...

- [Psalm 119:33-40](#)
- [Galatians 5:16-26](#)

Pray through these themes...

- [Ask the Lord to help you see the situation accurately and keep watch for what he wants to show you \(Ps 119:34\).](#)
- [Ask the Lord to lead you in a path that is consistent with his commandments \(Ps 119:35\).](#)

- Ask him to make your heart willing to receive his guidance; ask him to show you if there's any way that your heart is trying to justify or rationalize something that is contrary to his will and wisdom (Ps 119:36-37, 39).
- Ask him to show you promises from his word that would give you confidence in your decision and would help you trust him with the outcome (Ps 119:38).
- Confess where you have been tempted by "desires of the flesh" in this situation and need to surrender to the Spirit (Gal 5:17-21).
- Ask the Spirit to show you where he is trying to use this situation to cultivate his fruit in you (Gal 5:22-24).
- Ask the Spirit to show you a way forward that would be consistent with his fruit. Are there specific "fruit of the Spirit" that are applicable to this situation (Gal 5:22-24)?

HOW TO PRAY FOR A FRIEND TO KNOW GOD

INTRO

If we've received life in Christ, it's good and holy to want our friends and loved ones to have the same thing! This desire should grow even stronger when we meditate on the fact that we will *all* give an account for our lives to God and that the kingdom of God is eternal. We are *all* his creatures and we *all* owe him worship.

This means that interceding for people to hear the gospel and respond in faith is a holy work, one of the best ways we can honor God and love our neighbors. This guide will help you pray for people for what God's word says he wants for them. The good news is that Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful" (Matt 9:35-38). We can pray with expectation that the Lord has *many people* he will call to himself.

PRAYER

Read these passages...

■ [Matthew 9:35-38](#)

■ [Romans 10:1-4, 14-17](#)

■ [Romans 1:16 - 2:11](#)

■ [2 Corinthians 4:1-6](#)

Pray through these themes for people by name...

- That they will long to know God and respond to the “Good Shepherd’s” voice (Matt 9:36)
- That the Lord will send them a gospel messenger (Matt 9:37-38, Rom 10:14-15)
- That they will not be satisfied with God’s creation in place of God himself (Rom 1:24-25)
- That they will be struck by the reality that they were created by God and will give him an account for their lives (Rom 2:6-11)
- That they will be convicted of their own unrighteousness, whether of the idolatrous “Romans 1” kind or the “religious” Romans 2 kind (Rom 1:18-2:5)
- That they will not confuse religious zeal for knowing God (Rom 10:1-2)
- That they will not base their confidence before God on their own righteousness (Rom 10:3-4)
- That God will shine light in their hearts to enable them to see and believe (2 Cor 4:6)
- That they will see Jesus Christ as the beautiful and good “glory of God” (2 Cor 4:4-6)

HOW TO PRAY FOR STRENGTHENING OR RENEWAL

INTRO

In Christ, our eternal life with God is secure because we are justified by faith (Romans 8:1). However, our appreciation for all that we have in Christ and our experience of the Spirit's work can wax and wane. There will be seasons when life in Christ feels vital and exciting, and there will be seasons when it feels dry or burdened.

For this reason, you'll notice two themes in the New Testament epistles: First, we are often reassured of our standing in Christ. Second, there are prayers for further or renewed work of the Spirit. Prayers for *already Christians* to be "enlightened," "rooted and grounded," "strengthened with power" and "to find grace to help in time of need" were a normal part of the Apostles' ministry. Learning to pray like this should be part of every Christian's prayer life - especially in seasons where we are dry or discouraged. And we should expect that our Lord *wants* to renew and strengthen us when we seek him for it.

PRAYER

Read these passages...

■ [Ephesians 1:3-22](#)

■ [Hebrews 4:11-13](#)

■ [Ephesians 3:7-21](#)

Pray through these themes ...

- Ask the Father to give you an increased work of the Holy Spirit in your heart and mind (Eph 1:17; 3:14-16).
- Ask the Spirit to show you your hope (future) in Christ and the riches that are yours in Christ (Eph 1:18-19).
- Ask Christ to reassure you of his sovereign reign over all things and all circumstances, including the things you're facing right now (Eph 1:20-22).
- Ask Christ to give you gifts through his body and to show you your beautiful place in his body (Eph 1:23).
- Meditate on all that is yours "in Christ" according to Eph 1:3-14 and ask the Spirit to show you which of these gifts you need to be reminded of today.
- Ask the Spirit to give you boldness and confidence before your Heavenly Father because of the work of Jesus Christ (Eph 3:11-12).
- Ask the Father for a fresh knowledge his love for you; Tell him that you don't just want to know about his love but to experience it (Eph 3:17-19).
- Name the ways that you feel weak right now (Heb 4:14-15). What do you imagine Jesus saying to you in your weakness?
- Ask Jesus to give you more grace to help in time of need (Heb 4:16).

HOW TO PRAY IN A GROUP

INTRO

Have you ever experienced a group “prayer” time that was actually more like a group share time? As the “prayer requests” pile up, you hope someone can remember all of them - or at least remember yours - until the praying finally starts. Then once the praying does start, you’re pressed for time and end up praying a few quick prayers or you pray through all the requests but it seems to drag on and on. You leave thinking, “Prayer is long and boring.”

With the help of this prayer guide, we’re going to try another way. We’ll be working from these assumptions:

1. We don’t have to share or explain all prayer requests to each other in advance. We can go into the Lord’s presence together and trust the Spirit to guide our time in prayer.
2. Scripture is one of the best fuels for prayer. The Spirit will use the communal reading of Scripture to stir up prayer.
3. Each person can pray outloud for things that are burdening or concerning them and for things that the Spirit brings to mind.
4. Others can join that prayer by offering a simple “amen” or by adding the irown prayers to it.
5. This kind of prayer can be exciting and engaging and can last as short or as long as the Spirit leads.

PRAYER FLOW

If the group isn't accustomed to praying together, appoint someone who will conclude the prayer time once they sense that it's time to finish.

Begin by having a passage of Scripture read out loud. This could be a passage the group has been studying or a passage that someone suggests. If you need ideas, consider Psalm 1, 8, 9, 19, 23, 42, 103 or 111.

Take turns praying out loud for what is on your heart and mind - these could be prayers for yourself or for other people. Also, be sure to name and praise God's attributes as you pray.

Listen to people's prayers and add your own prayer to them. For example, if someone prays for a friend, add your own prayer for that friend to theirs.

If the Lord brings another verse or passage to mind, read it over the group.

Keep going like this until the prayer time is closed.

TIP: *Don't be afraid to change physical postures if this helps you stay engaged - close and open your eyes, stand, sit, kneel, move around, open your hands.*

TIP: *If your prayer needs an explanation so others can understand and engage, it's OK to stop and briefly describe it before continuing on in prayer.*





PRAYER JOURNAL



PRAYER JOURNAL

USE THIS SECTION TO KEEP TRACK OF PEOPLE AND THINGS YOU'RE PRAYING FOR.

Tips for tracking your prayers:

- *Write brief descriptions of who and what you're pray for.*
- *Add to or develop your prayers over time; leave some room to update the descriptions as you do this.*
- *Date each prayer.*
- *Leave room to write down when and how the Lord answers.*

[illegible]

IMPORTANT DATES

PURSUIT NIGHTS

- October 20, 2023
- November 17, 2023
- January 26, 2024
- February 23, 2024
- April 19, 2024
- May 17, 2024
- June 21, 2024

Pursuit Nights are Friday nights when we will gather to pursue the Lord in prayer and worship for the things we're learning about through "Heaven and Earth."

BAPTISM SUNDAYS

- October 29, 2023
- February 25, 2024
- April 28, 2024
- June 23, 2024





FELLOWSHIP
DENVER CHURCH

303-862-4082

FELLOWSHIPDENVER.ORG

1990 S BROADWAY, DENVER, CO 80210