

# 40 DAYS of PRAYER

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## Week Three

### DAY 15

**GOD'S NATURE AND OUR PRAYERS** – In order to develop a clear idea of prayer, we must first have a clear idea of God. Biblically speaking, God is a personal being. This is critical to prayer because it means that God is a person we can interact with, that He has a will and that we are able to relate to Him on a meaningful level. If He were impersonal, then prayer would not be meaningful. If He were personal, but uncaring and distant, prayer wouldn't serve a purpose.

Not only is God personal, He is also loving (1 **John 4:8, 16; John 3:16**). This is also important in relation to prayer. If God were personal, but uncaring or unkind, then prayer might do us more harm than good! But God is not only loving, He is all loving. In relation to prayer, this means that God always desires the best for us because He loves us.

### PRAYER REQUEST

**“MOST PROBLEMS IN ANY CHURCH CAN BE OVERCOME BY LOVE . . . LOVE IS THE GREATEST MOTIVATOR”**. Love is the greatest “magnet” to draw people to Christ. In fact, Jesus said that it is “by our LOVE for one another” that the world (those who don't know God) will be impacted by our message. Churches should be the most loving place on earth. The Joshua Church should be the most loving place in our entire community. As you pray today, ask God's love to flow through us in such a way that everyone around us will be drawn to Christ. Ask God to cause us to love Him and love each other more and more. **“LOVE REALLY DOES CHANGE EVERYTHING AND IS A REAL KEY TO CHURCH REVITALIZATION”**. Let's pray for the Joshua Church to be revolutionized by love and motivated to reach out more than ever.

### PRAISE AND THANKS

*“The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; you save me from violence. I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.” — 2 Samuel 22:2-4*

**Make this your prayer today:** Father, let me continually give You unrestrained praise. I thank You that I am alive to serve You today; I praise Your name because You have counted me as Your own. Though Satan has attempted to destroy me, You have protected me and delivered me from his grasp. I bless You because Your promises are ever with me. And Your presence is above me, beneath me, and on all sides. I affirm that there is no circumstance that I must endure alone; by Your grace I want to give thanks in all things.

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### DAY 16

**GOD'S NATURE AND OUR PRAYERS** – God is all powerful (omnipotent), meaning that no prayer is beyond His ability to answer, *“For nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37)*. If God were less than all powerful, then we would have no assurance that He could answer or even hear our prayers.

The fact that God is all-knowing (omniscient) is also significant to the concept of prayer. If God were limited, then He would not know all that is happening in His creation. If this were the case, He might overlook our prayers because they might be beyond His knowledge. Fortunately, the Bible is clear that God knows everything (see *Psalm 139:2-4; 147: 4-5; Isaiah 46:10*). In relation to God's omniscience, Jesus said, *“Your Father knows what you need before you ask him” (Matthew 6:8)*.

### **PRAYER REQUEST**

There is nothing more important than for a church to have unity among it's people. **Psalm 133:1** says, *“How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”*

*“When conflict happens inside the church, the only winner is Satan.”* The antidote to conflict is unity and unity happens when each of us become PEACEMAKERS. In every church, there are people who are “peacebreakers” and those who are “peacemakers”. Today as you pray, ask God for two things: 1. Ask God to make our church filled with true Biblical unity and peace among our people – so that **Psalm 133:1** is a reality here and 2. Ask God to use YOU to be a peacemaker and help promote peace and unity within our church. Pray that God would show you specific ways you can promote peace.

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### DAY 17

**GOD'S NATURE AND OUR PRAYERS** – God is wise and holy. He knows what is best for us, as well as what will lead us to holiness rather than sin. He is also active in His creation in a personal way, not only directing greater matters of history, but also involved in the life of everyone. This means that no prayer is too great for Him, but also that no prayer is too small for Him.

Another important attribute to note, especially in connection to prayer, is God's sovereignty. God is supremely in charge of everything that happens in His universe. Nothing takes Him by surprise and nothing happens in our lives without the knowledge of God, even though we may not always understand His actions: *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isaiah 55:8-9).*

### **PRAYER REQUEST**

In God's sight, true greatness comes as we serve. Jesus said in **Mark 10:43**, *“Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant.”* And Jesus modeled this for us when he stooped down to wash the disciples' feet. Why? Because He wanted to teach us that servanthood is one of the best things we can do as Christians.

***“FOR CHURCH REVITALIZATION TO BECOME PART OF OUR CHURCH, SERVANTS ARE NEEDED.”*** If we are going to be a church that truly makes an impact, we must have a church culture that encourages sacrifice, selflessness and servanthood. When you read the Bible you discover EVERYONE who is a Christian is part of the body of Christ and every part of the body is important, necessary and has a job to do. **THAT INCLUDES YOU!!** **Ephesians 4:16** says, *“Under Christ's direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly, and each part in its own special way helps the other parts, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”* This is what Biblical servanthood is all about.

Make this your prayer today: **ASK:** What ways do you serve others in your church?  
**PRAY:** Ask God to show you can serve the Body of Christ through our church. As you pray, ask God to give you the best understanding of where you are to serve. Also, pray that our church would find ways to serve our community as the “hands and feet” of Christ.

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### DAY 18

**GOD'S ATTRIBUTES AND OUR PRAYERS** – Hannah from the Old Testament was unable to have children. She was desperate and wanted a child with all her heart. God answered her prayer and gave her a son who she named Samuel. After he was born and was weaned, Hannah presented Samuel to Eli the priest and dedicated him to the LORD. After she dedicated him, she prayed to God and praised Him for His blessings. (1 Sam. 1:9-18; 2:1-10).

Notice how many attributes of God are mentioned in her prayer.

***God is holy. God is unchanging. God is all-knowing. God is all-powerful. God is loving. God is sovereign. God is gracious.***

**The greater our knowledge of God, the greater will be our capacity to pray to God.**

### **PRAYER REQUEST**

Broken people are desperate people. Broken people get real with God and stop playing “church”. Broken people pray from the depth of a broken heart and contrite spirit.

In the book, “*The Power of Crying Out*”, Bill Gothard draws our attention to how many times in the Scripture we’re told to call to the Lord, to cry out to the Lord, to lift-up our voices. God invites us to cry out, to call out, lift-up our voices, to pour out our hearts to Him. We know that ***“the fervent prayer of a righteous man results in much” (James 5:16)***. The word FERVENT literally means, “*having or displaying a passionate intensity*”. Most of the time, that doesn’t describe how we pray. Too often our prayers are neat little requests made with little expectation or passion. God is calling us to pray desperately and fervently as if our life and our church depended on it. When is the last time you truly prayed this way? When is the last time you truly cried out to God about anything in your life or for our church?

God calls us to ***“come BOLDLY to the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16)***. Simply put, we are to max out our own capacity for fervency. What we see in the Bible isn’t, “Whisper something to Me in passing; I know you’re busy. Just throw a couple of thoughts My direction, a couple of quick requests over your shoulder while you’re on your way to the grocery store. That’s all I desire.” Instead, I wonder if God’s Word on prayer isn’t summarized “How much does this matter to you? If you would turn your intensity dial to full, I would like to meet you at the place where you express your heart fully.”

- ***Isaiah 40:9 says, “Lift up your voice with strength...lift it up, fear not.”***
- ***Psalms 116:1 reports, “I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice.”***

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- ***Romans 8:15 teaches, “You have received the Spirit...by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”***

Something wonderful happens in the heart of God when His children get themselves out on a limb and say from the depth of their souls, “God, if it’s not You, it’s nothing. We don’t have another plan. We don’t have another hope. All our eggs are in Your basket; there is no plan B. We believe this is Your will as revealed in Your Word, and we are staying right here until You act on our behalf.” Weak praying has no place in the Joshua Church.

Today, let us all stop EVERYTHING and take time to CRY OUT to God in desperate passion. Pray, plead, beg God to move in our lives and in our church. Pray, plead and beg God to help us reach people for Jesus. Pray, plead and beg God to raise up an army of totally committed servants. Pray, plead and beg God to move everyone at Joshua with a spirit of genuine generosity as we give to Him. Pray, plead and beg God to do miracles in our lives, church and community, Pray, plead and beg God for “OGCDT” (ONLY GOD CAN DO THAT) kind of blessings.

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### DAY 19

Now that we have a clearer understanding of God's nature, what how it impacts our prayer life, we need to clearly understand what prayer IS, but also what prayer IS NOT.

***Prayer is not magic.** We cannot summon God as though He were a genie, waiting to grant our wishes without regard for our circumstances or the consequences.*

***Prayer does not make demands.** While we can make requests of God in prayer, we dare not make demands. God is the Creator of the universe and does not take orders from us.*

***Prayer is for our benefit, not God's.** We need a relationship with God, available to us through Jesus Christ and engaged primarily through prayer, because we were made to function best when we are in a proper relationship with our Creator.*

***Prayer is not a guarantee against suffering.** "In this world you will have trouble" (**John 16:33**); "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed" (**1 Peter 4:12-13**).*

***Prayer is not an opportunity for us to show off.** "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men" (**Matthew 6:5**).*

### PRAYER REQUEST

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot." (**Matthew 5:13**) We are called to be SALT. Salt by its very nature is invasive – it permeates and "influences" everything it touches. Are you an influencer? TODAY'S PRAYER: Pray that God would give you the strength and wisdom to be a good influence for Him. Pray that your life and witness would impact others.

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### DAY 20

**Congratulations. It's Day 20. You are halfway through the prayer challenge. DON'T STOP NOW!!**

Since we are halfway through this journey, let's look at 6 other reasons why we need to make prayer an ongoing priority in our lives.

#### **Prayer is Always Available**

Prayer is always available to us. Nothing can keep us from approaching God in prayer except our own choices (**Psalm 139:7; Romans 8:38-39**).

#### **Prayer Keeps us Humble**

Humility is a virtue God desires in us (**Proverbs 11:2; 22:4; Micah 6:8; Ephesians 4:2; James 4:10**). Prayer reminds us that we are not in control, but God is, thus keeping us from pride. *"Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."*—**Matthew 18:4**

#### **Answered Prayer is a Powerful Witness**

If our prayer is answered, it can serve as a witness for those who doubt or who don't know God yet.

#### **Prayer Strengthens Our Connection with Other Believers**

Prayer not only strengthens our relationship with God, but when we pray with other believers, it also strengthens the bonds between our fellow Christians.

#### **Prayer Can Succeed Where Other Means Have Failed**

Have all your options been exhausted? Prayer can succeed where other means have failed. Prayer should not be a last resort, but our first response.

#### **Prayer Fulfills Emotional Needs**

Do we need God through prayer? Yes! We were made to function best, emotionally, in a prayerful relationship with God. As C.S. Lewis put it, *"God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other."*

### **PRAYER REQUEST**

Our church (or any church for that matter) cannot accomplish anything of eternal significance without the POWER OF GOD flowing in and through us.

*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty—you will succeed because of my Spirit, though you are few and weak. (Zechariah 4:6)*

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses. (Acts 1:8)*

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*And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. (1 Corinthians 6:14)*

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us. (Ephesians 3:20)*

As you pray today, make a fresh commitment to being in God's Word every day and to continuing this habit of prayer even after this 40 days ends. Pray – cry out to God – ask that his Spirit would move in and through our church in a powerful way. Ask that His Spirit truly empowers each person and each ministry. Ask that we will have His power to reach more and more people for Christ.



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### DAY 21

There is nothing like starting your day with prayer. Spend time with your Father today.

*“Prayer is an open door which none can shut,” wrote Charles Spurgeon in “Morning and Evening.” “Devils may surround you on all sides,” he continued, “but the way upward is always open, and as long as that road is unobstructed, you will not fall into the enemy’s hand.”*

Is there anywhere we can go where God is not present? Not according to the Bible. **Psalm 139:7** asks, *“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?”*

In **Jeremiah 23:23-24** we read, *“Am I only a God nearby,’ declares the LORD, “and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?’ declares the LORD. ‘Do not I fill heaven and earth?’ declares the LORD (NIV).”*

The fact that God is everywhere is known as omnipresence, meaning that He is present everywhere throughout His creation. This does not mean that God is creation, a worldview known as pantheism, but that God is ever-present in His creation. C.S. Lewis likened this relationship between God and His creation to that of a painter to a painting: *“A painter is not a picture, and he does not die if his picture is destroyed. You may say, ‘He’s put a lot of himself into it,’ but you only mean that all its beauty and interest has come out of his head. His skill is not in the picture in the same way that it is in his head, or even in his hands.”*

As a result of the reality of God’s omnipresence, we are assured that no matter where we are, God will hear our prayers—even from the belly of a fish: *“From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God” (Jonah 2:1 NIV)*. While not the most comfortable place to pray, we know that God heard the prayers of the prophet, even while Jonah was in the ocean depths.

But do we really believe that prayer is always available? If so, we must act on this truth. Nothing, then, can keep a believer from coming before God in prayer, except our own choices: *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39 NIV)*.

Prayer will always connect us to God.

### PRAYER REQUEST

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God transported Ezekiel—probably not literally, but in a vision—to a valley full of dry bones and directed him to speak to the bones. Ezekiel was to tell the bones that God would make breath enter the bones and they would come to life, just as in the creation of man when He breathed life into Adam (**Genesis 2:7**). Ezekiel obeyed, the bones came together, flesh developed, skin covered the flesh, breath entered the bodies, and they stood up in a vast army. This vision symbolized the nation of Israel that was then in captivity. Like unburied skeletons, the people were in a state of living death, without hope because there was no end to their judgment in sight. They thought God had forgotten them and they were cut off forever.

The reviving of the dry bones signified God's plan for Israel's restoration. The vision also, and most importantly, showed that Israel's new life depended on God's power and not the circumstances of the people. Putting "breath" by God's Spirit into the bones showed that God would not only restore them physically but also spiritually.

***“THERE IS A LESSON WE NEED TO LEARN. GOD DELIGHTS HIMSELF IN REVITALIZING THAT WHICH SEEMS TO BE DRY AND LIFELESS. DO YOU BELIEVE BY FAITH THAT WHAT GOD DID IN EZEKIEL'S VISION AND FOR ISRAEL HE CAN DO FOR OUR CHURCH?”***

Today as you pray, cry out to God and ask Him to bring true revival, revitalization and renewal to our church. As God to do something so big, so huge, so powerful and so miraculous that it can only be explained as a “GOD THING”.

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