Urgent and Dependent
1 Samuel 17:45-47

Introduction:

- Revival is a life or death matter.
- Experience God's path that leads to joy.

Learning from a revival story: David and Goliath

- This story took place about 3,000 years ago in the country of Israel.
- According to 1 Samuel 17, when the Israelite army heard Goliath's words, they and King Saul were dismayed and terrified.
- The Philistines were invading Israel. If the Israelites didn't beat Goliath, they faced certain death.
- **Question:** How do you defeat evil when it surfaces in your life, your family, or your civilization?
- **Answer:** David was prepared to face off with pure evil because David had been reviving his love for God daily.

The core principle:

- **Pursue revival** as if your life depends on it.
- **The Ripples of Revival:** Your choice to pursue revival affects:
  - Your closest friends
  - Your kids and grandkids

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- Your church
- Entire regions
- Entire nations

The posture of revival:

If you want revival, you have to live with a posture of **URGENCY** and **DEPENDENCE**.

- **Urgent Action:** We will do all that is in our control to do as we work for revival.
- **Total Dependence:** We recognize revival is a spiritual thing, and we need God to show up.

The pattern in 1 Samuel 17:

- **God's Part:** David declared, "For the battle is the Lord's, and He will give all of you into our hands."
- **David's Part:** He ran quickly out to meet him in battle, reached into his bag, took out a stone, and slung it.

The Golden Rule of Revival:

- **WORK** for revival like it all depends on you.
- **PRAY** for revival like it all depends on God.

Why does revival matter?

1. **God commands us to pursue it**
   - When asked for the greatest commandment, Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart."

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- If we do not pursue the reviving of our love for God, there will be a cooling off of our love for God. As love cools off, the allure of sin starts to heat up.

2. **The blessing-judgment cycle:** Humanity has a natural propensity to wander away from God through a predictable cycle

    1. People **TURN** to God (1:00 position)

    2. God **BLESSES** (leads to improvement in relationships, freedom, and career)

    3. Blessing leads to **COMFORT**

    4. Comfort leads to **COMPLACENCY**

    5. Out of complacency people start to **WORSHIP** other things (wealth, comfort, family, sexuality, self)

    6. Whenever a person of God starts to worship some other thing, God sends a call to **REPENT** (The Fork in the Road at the 8:00 position)

The three stages for people and nations:

- **Stage One:** The hearts of God's people slowly **HARDEN**, especially in times of prosperity and blessing.
- **Stage Two:** God sends a call to people who have known Him to **RETURN** to your first love.

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- **Stage Three:** God's people choose one of two paths:

  1. The path of **REPENTANCE** – Leads to revival

  2. The path of **COMFORT** – Leads ultimately to death and ruin

Four reasons why you should ask God to revive you:

1. Your **FAMILY** needs it

2. Your **FUTURE** needs it

3. Your **CITIES** need it

4. Our **SOCIETY** needs it

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways does your daily love for God face the most competition from your love for self, comfort, or other things?

2. How can actively reviving your love for God daily prepare you for the moments when you face "Goliaths" of evil, sin, or addiction in your life?

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3. What does it look like practically in your life this week to "work for revival like it all depends on you, but pray for revival like it all depends on God"?

4. When we experience God's blessings, it is easy to slip from comfort into complacency. At the "fork in the road," why is choosing the path of repentance so vital to stopping that downward cycle?

5. Distraction is the greatest enemy of revival. What is a specific, consistent time and place you can set aside each day this week to protect your one-on-one time with God from distractions?

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No Revival Without Repentance
Psalm 51:1-12

Introduction: Second revival practice

- An ongoing repentance for relationships

The damage of sin and shame

- **JOY** gets sucked out of your life by sin and shame.
- The **PASSION** that you have for God gets suffocated by sin and by shame.
- If you don't learn how to deal with those things, you won't recover your joy or your passion. You won't be **REVIVED**.

The example of King David

- David was a sinner, but he was also the king of Israel during a time of incredible prosperity and blessing.
- At the peak of his career, David fell into multiple sins that divided his family and even divided the nation.
- God sent David a messenger to say, “Will you repent?” Repent means to turn from your sin and turn to God.
- When David broke down in tears and repented, he wrote Psalm 51, the chapter to go to anytime you need to be restored to God.

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David's Prayer

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight; so You are right in Your verdict and justified when You judge.

8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones You have crushed rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

Psalm 51:1-4, 8-9

What can you do with your shame, regrets, and mistakes?

- Bring your shame, stains, and regrets to God in a heart of **REPENTANCE**.

- Repentance is not intended to be a once-in-a-lifetime event for a Christian. For salvation, God definitively adopts you into His family. But because we still have an old sin nature, we must learn how to repent daily so that our **RELATIONSHIP** with God has no sin between us and God.

- There is sorrow in repentance because you have to acknowledge what you've done wrong, but the goal of repentance is **RESTORED** relationship.

1 John 1:9

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No Revival Without Repentance
Psalm 51:1-12

Three truths about repentance that leads to revival:

1. **Repentance is about RELATIONSHIP, not PERFECTION.**

   - If you just focus on your perfection, it will lead you to depression because we are not perfect.
   - God doesn't call us to repent so that we become perfect; He calls us to repent so that we can be in unbroken relationship with Him.
   - At its simplest, repentance is telling God, *"God, I'm sorry. I choose You."*

break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord until He comes to rain righteousness on you.

Hosea 10:12b

   - Fallow ground is soil that has been packed down hard by snow, rain, and the spring sun until it is crusted over like concrete. Seeds dropped on it bounce right off.
   - Human hearts get hardened by the cares of this world. When your heart is hard, the perfect scripture or sermon will just bounce right off.
   - Farmers use huge blades to break up the hard soil at the top and stir up the soft soil at the bottom.
   - Biblical Repentance is saying, *"God, I give you permission to break up my hardened heart."* It might hurt or bring tears, but joy always follows because the seeds of scripture can finally take root again.

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

2 Corinthians 7:10

For His anger lasts only a moment, but His favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Psalm 30:5

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2. Repentance ends in JOY, not SHAME.

- Repentance passes through shame, but it ends in joy.

- When repentance is not part of your daily life, you stop experiencing God in a dynamic, personal way because sin blocks your ability to perceive Him.

- Repentance is not about shaming yourself, it's about continually telling God you love Him more than any sin or distraction.

- Ongoing repentance as a lifestyle is a hallmark of a mature Christian.

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Psalm 51:12

3. Repentance is about going out to OBEY God.

- It is not just about trying to avoid sin. If you just try not to sin, you'll fail. If you try to love God, walk with Him, and serve Him, sin starts to look nasty and unappetizing.

- The Athletic Analogy: Great athletes miss more shots than they make. The goal out on the field isn't to make zero mistakes; the goal is to recover quickly and learn from them.

- Do not pretend you are not a sinner. The goal is to live for God, run after Him, go after His kingdom, and be on mission. When the Holy Spirit reveals a sin, treat it as a learning opportunity, get up, and keep going.

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Conclusion

- We run to God with our mistakes because His unconditional **LOVE** is bigger than our **FAILURES**.
- His **RELATIONSHIP** is more powerful than your guilt or shame. So, don't live your life hiding in isolation, cowering in shame.
- Run to the One who always receives you and who wants to **FREE** you from **SIN**.

Discussion Questions:

1. How have you seen shame tempt you to hide from God rather than run to Him?

2. If the goal of our faith isn't to keep rules and avoid mistakes, but rather to maintain an open, unhindered friendship with our Father, how does that change the way you handle your daily failures?

3. In Hosea 10, we are told to "break up your fallow ground." What are the specific distractions or "cares of this world" in your busy schedule that tend to harden the soil of your heart and make you less sensitive to God's Word?

4. John Dickerson uses the analogy of a clogged bathroom sink to show how unconfessed sin blocks the flow of the fruits of the Spirit without taking away your salvation. What "sneaky" daily sins tend to gunk up your spiritual life?

5. When Peter returns to Jesus after failing Him completely, Jesus doesn't ask, *"Why weren't you perfect?"* instead, He repeatedly asks, *"Do you love me?"* How does knowing that God responds to your failures with an invitation to love Him change how quickly you are willing to repent?

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Prayer that Brings Revival
Exodus 17:8-13

Introduction: Is glorious victory possible without pain?

When you step out spiritually in your workplace, your school, your family, or your nation, you will take some hits. There will be demonic opposition.

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus in Matthew 16:18

Will you be found faithful as a Christian? 1 Corinthians 3:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

- This is not a promise for health, wealth, or the American dream. It is a promise to claim as you seek the kingdom dream and put God first.

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Forces bigger than us

- The Amalekites were a fierce, violent nomadic tribe that plundered and killed for pleasure. They attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. Exodus 17:8

- Moses told Joshua to choose men and go out to fight the Amalekites, while he stood on top of the hill with the staff of God in his hands. Exodus 17:9

- As long as Moses held up his hands in prayer, the Israelite army would be winning. Whenever he would lower his hands because his arms grew tired, the Amalekites would start winning. Exodus 17:11

- They put a stone under Moses to sit on and Aaron and Hur held his hands up, one on one side, one on the other, so his hands remained steady until sunset. As a result, Joshua overcame the Amalekite army. Exodus 17:12-13

PRAYER can deliver your loved ones from disaster. PRAYER can even deliver your nation from disaster.

- Moses built an altar to give all the glory to God for the victory and called it, “The Lord is my banner.” Exodus 17:15-16

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Three observations about revival prayer:

1. **Revival prayer is PASSIONATE.**

   Most of us are not currently praying the kinds of prayers that change nations or shake the gates of hell.

   The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. James 5:16b

   Who is "the righteous person?"

   1. The person who's believed in Christ's death for the forgiveness of their sins.
   2. The believer who has confessed the sins they are aware of to maintain practical righteousness or relational righteousness.

   17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

   James 5:17-18

   - One man prayed earnestly and changed both a nation's physical and spiritual climate, and the same power of prayer is available to you.

2. **Revival prayer happens best in GROUPS.**

3. **Revival prayer rises above earthly needs into ETERNAL matters.**

if My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14

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Discussion Questions:

1. What does it look like practically to shift our lifestyle so that seeking the Kingdom of God is the clear priority, and the "American dream" is just the U-Haul trailer tagging behind?

2. In Exodus 17, the fate of the nation hung on Moses' persistence in prayer, but he needed Aaron and Hur to hold his hands up when he grew tired. Who are the people in your life that you can link arms with to maintain persistent, urgent prayer for your family and community?

3. Reflecting on the 1:7 ratio in the Lord's Prayer, how much of your prayer life is dominated by temporary earthly needs versus eternal, supernatural matters? What is one eternal matter you will intentionally commit to praying for this week?

4. We are challenged to graduate our groups from spending most of our time sharing prayer requests to going straight into bold prayer. What is one specific, eternal matter (like a person's salvation or spiritual territory) your group can commit to praying for?

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Introduction: The revival practices

1. Having a posture of urgency and dependence

2. There's ongoing repentance that's about relationship with God.

3. Praying for souls and eternal matters

4. Brokenhearted boldness (Evangelism)

3 Questions about sharing your faith:

1. Why does it matter if you share Jesus' Good News?

2. How can you cultivate a brokenhearted compassion for lost souls?

3. How can you find the courage to be bold and speak up about Jesus?

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Answers:

1. **Why does it matter if you share Jesus' Good News?**

   - People are suffering without hope and dying without eternal life.
   - God commands it as the primary job and purpose of a Christian on earth.
   - It exhibits the heart of God. In other words, it shows you're growing spiritually.

2. **How can you cultivate a brokenhearted compassion for lost souls?**

   - Ask God to give you a heart for others.
   - Become more like Christ through daily obedience, worship, repentance, and prayer.
   - Pray daily for the lost people in your life.

3. **How can you find the courage to be bold and speak up about Jesus?**

   - Grow your courage by calling on the Holy Spirit to empower you.
   - Grow your courage by running with other believers who are also sharing their faith.
   - Grow your courage by stepping out of your comfort zone, then seeing how God shows up.

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Discussion Questions:

1. In what specific ways do the distractions of the American dream act like a "sleepwalking stupor," keeping you from recognizing the deeper spiritual needs of the eternal souls you interact with every day?

2. Think about the practical tool of the *Salvation Prayer List*. Who are 2 or 3 people in your immediate circle (workplace, school, or neighborhood) that you will write down and commit to praying for out loud daily?

3. When you look at the people around you, what signs do you see that they are living like "sheep without a shepherd"? How can recognizing that reality shift your perspective from judgment to compassion?

4. What specific promise or truth about the Holy Spirit's *dunamis* power can help you step out of your comfort zone this week?

5. Who is someone in your life that could be spiritually impacted for years to come if you choose to speak up today? What is your next step to start that conversation?

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Introduction: A new way of life

Jesus launched a whole new way of life and a culture that had never existed before in history. In the Church, as the New Testament states, *"there's neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free."* It was the only place where all those people could come together in total equality under Christ as the head, with each person viewed as made in the image of God.

Question:

When evil and division are destroying your nation, what can you do to point people to the one solution, which is Jesus?

Historical context:

- 600 years before Jesus, Israel had become incredibly wealthy and prosperous. With prosperity came complacency; the people didn't actively reject God, but they got busy with life and slowly drifted into a lifestyle where they valued other things more than God for their security.

- The drift became so broken that the nation was practicing child sacrifice to the pagan idol Molech, engaging with male sex prostitutes, and setting up demonic shrines right outside Solomon's Temple, making spiritual revival look completely impossible.

- Throughout history, when nations turn from God, He always places a faithful remnant. If that remnant stays faithful, their obedience can actually spare the whole nation from judgment.

- This specific remnant was led by Jeremiah, the "weeping prophet," who wept over the destructive trajectory of his nation and his buddy Zephaniah. Together, they stayed faithful and called the nation to return to God despite being mocked and made fun of.

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Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what He commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger. Zephaniah 2:3

- A young man named Josiah was listening to the prophet Zephaniah, and when the king was unexpectedly killed, Josiah was crowned king, followed Zephaniah's plea to return to God, and led the entire nation back to God.

Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him. 2 Kings 23:25

- Revival comes through the next generation… after an older generation has pointed them to God.

3 Ways to ignite the next generation toward lasting revival:

1. **TRAIN, DIRECT, and INSTRUCT toward Christ and Scripture, with love.**

5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

- Revival outlasts us when we train up today's young people to be tomorrow's Christ-centered leaders. We are preparing them to go serve Christ in every corner of culture, industry, and vocation of our nation.

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2. **MODEL "Kingdom first" living.**

   - If you want to be part of nation-changing revival, it starts in your heart, and then you model it out for the next generation.

   Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

   Deuteronomy 4:9

   Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.

   Joel 1:3

3. **SERVE the next generation in your local church.**

Conclusion:

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.

1 Peter 2:12

Discussion Questions:

1. Who is an older believer who intentionally invested in your faith, and what specific values did they pass down to you?

2. John challenged everyone to "get off the sidelines and get on the front lines." What is a specific distraction or media habit you need to limit this week to free up time and energy for things that matter eternally?

3. The next generation does what we *do*, not just what we *say*. If a friend or family member looked exclusively at your calendar and budget from the past month, what would they conclude is the ultimate priority of your life?

4. Who is a young person in your immediate circle that could be spiritually impacted for years to come if you choose to step into a mentoring or supportive role today? What is your very next step to encourage them?

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Introduction: Do you ever get tired spiritually?

How can you keep the revival work growing in your heart and life, over months and years?

[1] And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, [2] fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
[3] Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Hebrews 12:1b-3

Question:

How can you keep going when you're fatigued or discouraged?

Answer:

Lasting revival requires daily perseverance.

How do you ensure that you don't live distracted and how do you keep your focus on God?

- Let us draw near to God… Hebrews 10:22
- Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess… Hebrews 10:23
- Let us consider how to spur one another on… Hebrews 10:24
- Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us… Hebrews 12:1

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4 ways to persevere for revival over decades:

1. **Draw near to God DAILY**

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:22-23

2. **Get yourself to CHURCH and into KINGDOM friendships**

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25

3. **Run the race with ENDURANCE**

Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us Hebrews 12:1b

36 Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

Hebrews 11:36-38

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

Hebrews 12:1

4. **Fix your eyes on ETERNITY, not NOW**

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:2

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Discussion Questions:

1. Satan doesn't need to use the power of hell to stop modern believers; he simply uses distraction. What is one specific good thing in your life that routinely threatens to distract you from the ultimate goal of living for God's kingdom?

2. Since we never plant and harvest in the same season, it is easy to become deeply discouraged when we don't see immediate changes in our families, workplaces, or personal habits. What is one "kingdom seed" you have been planting recently where you need to stop focusing on immediate results and trust God for a future harvest?

3. Hebrews 10:22 encourages us to draw near to God with an authentic, sincere heart. When you spend time in prayer, do you find yourself trying to present a "good" version of yourself to God, or are you entirely open about your current anxieties, messes, and shortcomings? How does knowing your salvation is secure allow you to drop the front?

4. Unconfessed or habitual sin is described as carrying heavy bricks in a backpack while trying to run a marathon. What is a heavy brick or ongoing entanglement you need to confess and drop this week so that you can run your spiritual race with more freedom?

5. Revival work is slow, tedious work. Who is someone in your life that you have been praying for or serving for a long time with very little visible progress? How does the promise in Hebrews 10:35 challenge you to keep your confidence?

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Pray This When You Feel Down and Dejected

Ephesians 1:15-23

Introduction:

When looking at the challenges of our world, there are times when we pray, look around, and honestly wonder, *"Lord, where are You?"*

9 Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am in distress. Tears blur my eyes. My body and soul
are withering away. 10 I am dying from grief; my years are shortened by sadness. Sin
has drained my strength; I am wasting away from within. 11 I am scorned by all my
enemies and despised by my neighbors—even my friends are afraid to come near me.
When they see me on the street, they run the other way. 12 I am ignored as if I were
dead, as if I were a broken pot. 13 I have heard the many rumors about me, and I am
surrounded by terror. My enemies conspire against me, plotting to take my life.

Psalm 31:9-13

Definition of dejected = sad, depressed, and dispirited

Whether:

- Moses – "face down"
- Elijah – "asking to be killed"
- Esther – "completely overwhelmed"

In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence.

Hebrews 5:7

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Pray This When You Feel Down and Dejected
Ephesians 1:15-23

The context – Ephesus

- **A renowned city:** A multicultural port in modern-day Turkey driven by global trade, commerce, and entertainment.
- **Paul's history:** Paul heard about Ephesus on his first journey, visited briefly on his second, and stayed for three years on his third.
- **Cultural Environment:** The city was packed with idols, dominated by the Temple of Artemis, and filled with commerce, trade, multiculturalism, and entertainment.
- **The Lecture Hall Strategy:** After being kicked out of the synagogue, Paul rented a neutral lecture hall for three years, causing the Word of God to multiply dramatically.

The context leading up to Paul's prayer

Ephesians 1:3-14

- **The theological reminder:** Before praying, Paul reminds them that despite persecution and economic pressure:
  - They possess every spiritual blessing in heaven.
  - They are chosen, holy, and blameless in Christ.
  - They are adopted into Christ's family, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and completely forgiven.
  - They have an eternal inheritance and a secure hope.
  - They have been sealed by the Holy Spirit.

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Pray This When You Feel Down and Dejected
Ephesians 1:15-23

Paul's prayer:

15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people, 19 and His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 He exerted when He raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the Church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 1:15-23

1. Remember **WHO** you are and **WHAT** God has done.

2. Grasp that there is a **FUTURE** and there is a **CALLING**.

Request #1: The 18-inch journey Ephesians 1:17

- I pray a spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may **KNOW** Him better.

Request #2: Ephesians 1:18

- Grasp a perspective of **TODAY** through the lens of **TOMORROW**.

How?

and His incomparably great power for us who believe. Ephesians 1:19a

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Pray This When You Feel Down and Dejected
Ephesians 1:15-23

Application:

- Write down verses 17-19.
- When you feel dejected, tell God about it first.
- Believe that prayer is the most powerful force in all creation.
- Choose the attitude that the power that raised Christ from the dead dwells in you.
- Remember there is One who is in control, positioned at the right hand of authority with God, with all things under His feet. You can pray with authority, power, and hope when you feel absolutely overwhelmed and dejected.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what areas of your life or in what circumstances have you recently felt "dejected" (sad, hopeless, or dispirited)? How did it impact your prayer life?

2. Of the three things Paul prays for believers to grasp (the Hope of His calling, His glorious Inheritance/your value, His great Power), which one do you struggle to believe the most when you are going through a hard time?

3. What specific step can you take this week to implement the "eighteen-inch journey" from your head to your heart using Ephesians 1:17-19?

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Pray This When You Suffer A Broken Relationship

Ephesians 3:14-21

Introduction: Few things disrupt our lives and our faith like a broken relationship

Question: What do you pray when you suffer a broken relationship?

Answer: Pray Ephesians 3:14-21

Why: Because it's God's prescription for the pain of a broken relationship.

The context:

Ephesians 2-3

- There's a big broken relationship between God and man, with hostility, death, and evil.
- There's conflict, division, and hatred of Jew and Gentile.
- God made Paul an ambassador for forgiveness to pull these two groups together.
- This happened in a wealthy port city with trade, commerce, power, political pressure, and the Temple of Artemis.
- Brand-new Christians had broken relationships in families, culture, and political persuasions because some Jews followed Jesus and some didn't.
- Many were discouraged because Paul was in prison.

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Pray This When You Suffer
A Broken Relationship
Ephesians 3:14-21

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, 21 to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21

What to do when you suffer a broken relationship:

1. **TALK to the Father.** Ephesians 3:14-15

   PRAYER is our passport into God's perspective. Jeremiah 33:3

2. **Ask God for the inner strength to YIELD rather than RESIST His work in your life.** Ephesians 3:16-17a

3. **Ask God to help you intimately know and EXPERIENCE His love in your life.** Ephesians 3:17b-19

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Pray This When You Suffer
A Broken Relationship
Ephesians 3:14-21

Discussion Questions:

1. What broken relationship has been the most painful in your life?

2. Why is it important to talk honestly and openly with God about the pain of your broken relationships?

3. What does it mean to allow Christ to “be at home” or have dominion in your heart? Why does it take such inner strength to yield control to Him when you are experiencing the pain and anger of a broken relationship?

4. Why is allowing Jesus to have total control over “every room” of your life a prerequisite to truly experiencing the vastness of His love?

5. What hope or promise from God in today’s message was most helpful for you? What would it look like to trust Him in your life and relationships right now?

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Pray This When You Are Ready to Give Up
Philippians 1:9-11

Introduction: We all lose perspective sometimes

Psalm 73

- **Verses 1-2:** Surely God is good, but "my feet almost slipped; I nearly lost my foothold."

- **Verses 3-14:** Envying the arrogant, seeing the prosperity of the wicked, and feeling like "surely in vain I have kept my heart pure."

- **Verses 15-24:** The pivot point when trying to understand troubles you deeply, "until I entered the sanctuary of God" and understood their final destiny and God's justice.

- **Verses 25-28:** Reestablishing perspective at the very end: "God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" and "the nearness of God is my good."

Losing perspective is NORMAL, but it is so DANGEROUS.

Question: What do you pray when you lose perspective?

Answer: Pray Philippians 1:9-11

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Pray This When You Are Ready to Give Up
Philippians 1:9-11

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:9-11

The context – life in Philippi:

- **Philippi was a Roman colony:** A very important city where the government reigns, but the culture is anti-God and anti-Christian with idols everywhere.

- **Strong persecution and a miraculous beginning:** Paul preached by the riverside where Lydia came to faith, and he later sang hymns in jail with Silas before the jailer came to Christ.

- **Division in the community and the church:** There is political division, families are divided, and people have lost perspective.

- **Their spiritual leader is unjustly on trial:** Paul is likely going to be executed, leaving people thinking, "I think I'll give up. I'm done with this."

The context leading up to the prayer: Philippians 1:3-8

- Paul's gratitude and joy Philippians 1:3-5

- Paul's confidence Philippians 1:6

- Paul's reminder of shared experiences Philippians 1:7-8

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Pray This When You Are Ready to Give Up
Philippians 1:9-11

Structure of this prayer:

- The **REQUEST** Philippians 1:9
- The **REASON** Philippians 1:10
- The **RESOURCE** Philippians 1:11

Unpacking this prayer:

- **Abound (v. 9):** A super overflow; bubbling up in your heart rather than changing your circumstances.
- **Real Knowledge (v. 9):** An accurate, clear, intimate relational knowledge of who God really is.
- **All Discernment (v. 9):** A supernatural antennae for "grey issues" to approve the things that are excellent.
- **Sincere (v. 10):** Unmixable; tested by sunlight.
- **Blameless (v. 10):** What you say and who you are telling the same story.
- **Filled with the fruit of righteousness (v. 11):** This is your current standing in Christ, which produces a life lived to the glory and praise of God.

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Pray This When You Are Ready to Give Up
Philippians 1:9-11

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is losing perspective so dangerous, and how does a lapse in our morality eventually begin to change our theology?

2. How does remembering your shared experiences with God and how He has worked in the past protect your mind when new circumstances cause you to doubt Him?

3. The speaker noted that our greatest testimony isn't how we respond to prosperity, but how we handle a raw deal. How can you use a current hardship to reveal who Jesus is to others?

4. How does embracing the reality that "this life really is not about you" completely change your response to disappointments or unfair situations this week?

5. What concrete action step will you take today to guard your mind when discouraging thoughts begin to build up?

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Pray This When You Need God's Direction

Colossians 1:9-12

Introduction: Torn within and without

Question: What do you pray when you need desperately need direction?

Answer: Pray Colossians 1:9-12

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light.

Colossians 1:9-12

The context:

- **Epaphroditus and his hometown:** Epaphroditus came to know the Lord, got to know Paul, and went back to Colossae—a wealthy, affluent town that was very antagonistic to Christians.
- **A mess of bad teaching:** Epaphroditus tells Paul that groups are teaching bad philosophy about levels of angels, a group is saying the body is evil and demanding fasting, and some Jews are trying to get new believers to go back into the law.
- **Paul reminds them of truth:** He gives thanks for their faith and love for other believers, reminds them of the hope stored up in heaven, and notes that the gospel of truth is bearing fruit around the world.
- **A new unity that threatens the status quo:** In a world of slaves and free, Jews and Gentiles, this church brings a slave and master together with a new unity, making them public enemy number one.

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Pray This When You Need God's Direction
Colossians 1:9-12

How to know the will of God

Colossians 1:9-10a

- **Wisdom:** The skill, the practical know-how how to live God's way in a particular situation.
- **Understanding:** Clarity and analysis to make decisions, evaluate conflicting counsel, and apply the truth of God's word.
- **Worthy:** *Axis* (used of scales). Bringing up the balance so how you live is commensurate with what He has done for you.
- **Pleasing to Him in all respects:** Flipping an old word for brown-nosing or kissing up on its head. It means making your main goal to please Jesus over and above anybody else.

What pleasing God looks like

Colossians 1:10b-12

- **Bearing fruit in every good work:** Being a 24/7 Christian who is winsome, loving, truthful, and kind at work, with money, and in relationships.
- **Increasing in the knowledge of God:** A full-circle cycle. When you choose to obey His promptings, He draws near, and you grow in an experiential, intimate knowledge of Him.
- **Strengthened with all power:** *Dunamis* (dynamite). God intervening according to His magnificent excellence because you cannot do this on your own.
- **Great endurance:** *Hupomeno*. Supernatural power to be under an impossible situation and bear up with a wonderful attitude.
- **Great patience:** *Makrothumo*. Having longsuffering with impossible people so that God gets the glory.
- **Joyfully giving thanks to the Father:** Recognizing that He has qualified, rescued, and transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son.

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Pray This When You Need God's Direction
Colossians 1:9-12

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you typically discern which path to trust when you are facing a major decision and receiving conflicting advice?

2. When you pray for direction, do you genuinely want to know God's will, or are you just looking for his approval on a decision you've already made? How does our response to a "no" or a "wait" from God reveal our true motives?

3. Look at Colossians 1:9-10. Why do you think Paul couples knowing the will of God with *wisdom* and *understanding*, rather than just an emotional feeling?

4. How does focusing on your direct relationship with Jesus change your daily choices at work, with money, and in relationships compared to just trying to follow a list of rules?

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Introduction:

1. The PATH is a **PERSON**: **Jesus**

   Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

   John 14:6

2. The PATH is **SIMPLE**: **Love God, Love Others**

   [37]And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' [38]This is the great and foremost commandment. [39]The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' [40]On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

   Matthew 22:37-40

3. The PATH **BEGINS** with: **A Spiritual Birth**

   Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

   John 3:5

4. The PATH **LEADS** to: **Spiritual Maturity**

   We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

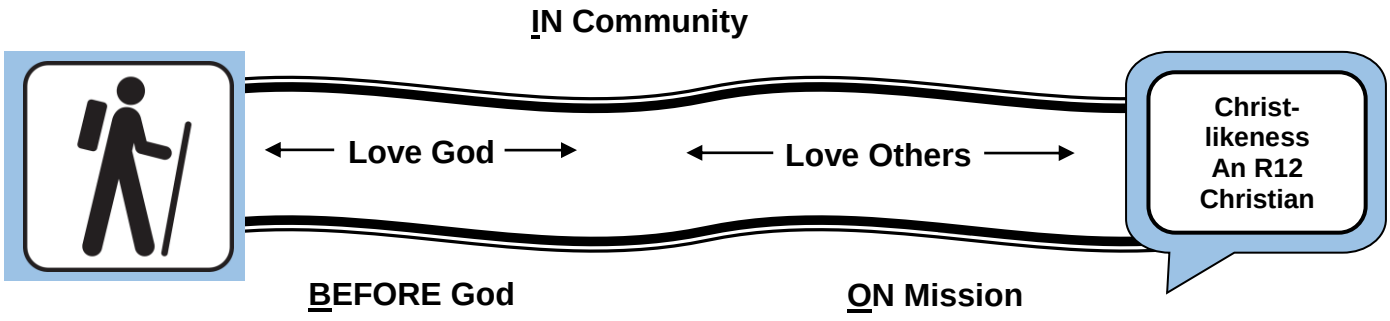
   Colossians 1:28-29

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The PATH **REQUIRES**: **3 Practices**

- B = Coming…… **B**efore God daily
- I = Doing life…. **I**n community weekly
- O = Being…….. **O**n mission 24/7

A picture to remember:



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A profile to pursue:

1. **SURRENDERED** to God

   "… offer your bodies as a living sacrifice…" Romans 12:1

2. **SEPARATE** from the world's values

   "Do not conform to the pattern of this world…" Romans 12:2

3. **SOBER** self-assessment

   "… think of yourself with sober judgment…" Romans 12:3-8

4. **SERVING** in love

   "Be devoted to one another in love…" Romans 12:9-13

5. **SUPERNATURALLY** responding to evil with good

   "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:14-21

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Discussion Questions:

1. Are you on the PATH?

- If yes, where are you along the PATH?

  Are you actively helping others find the PATH?

  Who could you help along the journey?

- If you're not sure, who can help you determine where you are?

- If no, what would need to happen for you to approach the PATH?

  Who can you talk with to walk with you?

2. In light of page 2, what is your next step to the B-I-O practices?

3. In light of page 3, which one is your greatest challenge? Why?

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