

SOAR

Discipleship Study

Seek God

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33



How to SOAR

S eek God	Know God Intimately
O btain Truth	Find Freedom in God's Word
A bide	Live from the Spirit of God
R each Out	Share the Good News

Welcome to SOAR!

Spiritual growth begins and is maintained with intimate fellowship with the Living God through Jesus Christ. **SOAR** is designed to foster that relationship through discipleship. Soaring in Christ is the outcome of seeking God, obtaining and abiding in His Truth and reaching out.

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27



A Note From Amy Groeschel

To the beloved in Christ,

Suffering, failure, frustration, weariness, worldliness, selfishness, and disappointment...most of us can relate to these experiences. Life can be so hard at times. Praise be to our Lord Jesus Christ; He is our Rock, Refuge and Comforter! Our Heavenly Father has told us to come to Him when we are weary and heavy-laden and He will give us *rest*. He wants us to learn to walk with Him so He can speak to us through His Word and His Spirit. He wants us to run with perseverance the race He's marked out before us. He wants us to be renewed and **SOAR** with Him!

The **SOAR** Study that you are about to begin was born out of a vision from God, a call to disciple, and a LOVE for you. That's right. My love, Sheri's love, but infinitely greater, God's love for *you*!

Sheri and I believe that the SOAR study will take you to a deeper level with God. Our prayer is that you'll be on fire and madly in love with your God. This study is simple. It is going to get you in the Word of God. The Holy Spirit will be the ultimate teacher. If you give yourself to this journey, you will never be the same! We are honored to be a part of building you up to a fuller maturity in Christ Jesus.

"The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:28-31

Loving you and Loving Him,

Amy Groeschel

A Note From Sheri Yates

Dear friends,

As an abused child, my desperate mission was to try to find my worth and value in anything—excelling in school, working hard at my job, friends, boys/men, parents, family, college, and my career. It was like there was a hole in the bottom of my heart! All things fell short. Nothing—no job—no person—no possession—no amount of money or vindication can bring peace into our lives!

God is in the redemption business.

Today, I am healed and restored in every way. I am free! I am alive! The redemption of Christ is also available to you. He wants you to be well, to prosper you, and not to harm you in anyway.

Amy and I pray for you to know God and His will for your life so intimately that you see His fingerprints all over your life, live by the Spirit in every way, and burn with passion for Him, ...to SOAR with Him all the days of your life.

And, in return, change the world one life at a time!

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." 2 Corinthians 3:17

Love in Christ,

Sheri



Seek God Week 1

“Know and Love God”

Objective: To turn your burdens over to God and to seek to know and love Him with all your heart.

Key Verse: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

The eagle is such a beautiful creature! Did you know that its body is approximately four feet long, its wingspan is eight feet wide, but it only weighs about eight pounds? It’s no wonder the eagle SOARS with such grace and magnificence. It is hardly carrying any weight at all!

I want to **SOAR** with God like that eagle! Soaring with God allows us to see everything from a new perspective.

My daughter was seven years old when she took her first airplane ride. She said,

"Mommy, from up here, all those things that we think are such a big deal seem so small. You can't even see them from up here."

It's all about perspective. Soaring with God gives us life that is truly life!

-Sheri

It's time to lay down the past. Lay down all those things that burden you and all the distractions that keep you from seeking God. Throw off everything that keeps you from soaring with God!

- Begin each day turning your mind and heart to God.
- Enter into your time in the Word with a hunger and thirst for His presence.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth.

John 16:13

Do not rush the lessons or feel the need to complete a task.

This is your time to spend with “Daddy.” Enjoy, delight and savor the Word.



*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
John 1:1*

Day One

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Matthew 22:34-40

We are going to evaluate where we are today, whether good, bad, ugly or great. Be real with your answers. Set a goal for where you want to be in one year. Remember, *where there is no vision [no redemptive revelation of God], the people perish...Proverbs 29:18a AMP.*

Take some time to answer a few questions.

Based on the way you live your life today, (i.e., spend your time and money) how would you say that you are keeping the first and greatest commandment to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength?

Never
Sometimes
Many Times
Consistently
Always

On an average day, describe your relationship with God? (write your answer in the space below)

In the sentence below, underline where you are today and circle where you would like to be in one year.

Are you cold, lukewarm or hot?
(Take a look at Revelation 3:15-16)

Which of these statements best describes your relationship with Christ?

Losing momentum
Flat
Growing slowly
Growing quickly
Soaring

What do you think is the reason you answered the last question the way you did?

Not seeking

Seeking minimally

Seeking consistently

Clinging to Him for most

Clinging to Him for everything

Spend time today praying and thinking about your answers.

Day Two

Read Psalm 139 & Romans 8:38-39

God knows you! God loves you! He longs to be loved and known by you. In the space provided, write out your favorite verse(s) today and even record some thoughts to God in response to His love for you. Enjoy Him all day long.



“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:17

Day Three

Read Psalm 143

Around nine years ago, Psalm 143 was like a daily medication for me. I was consumed with worry over my health. I became anxious about the possibility of an early death.

After several months of feeling defeated, God convicted me of my lack of faith and trust in Him.

I began to recite and meditate on verse 8 in this Psalm. I overcame my fear with the truth that nothing could separate me from God’s love...not even death! I am free! I now live free of fear!

-Amy

Is your heart heavy? Are you worried and anxious with “what-ifs”? Memorize a favorite verse from this psalm today. Write this verse out, read it aloud (repeat these steps until you know it), and meditate on it continually today.

Read Philippians 4:6-7 to the left.

In case you’re wondering what “anything” and “everything” means, we looked them up for you:

Anything means **anything**!

Everything means **everything**!

What are you anxious about?

Get rid of your fear! “How” you ask? Take all your burdens to God in prayer. Throw them on God and realize that He is completely able to care for you. Trust Him to provide all you need for life and godliness.

Day Four

Read Matthew 6:19-34 and Philippians 3:4-14

When you were born, someone cared for you. You slept, ate, cried and pooped (yes, you did – everyone poops!). You couldn't do *anything*. You could only rest and be nurtured. As you spent time with your family, you connected with them and built a relationship.

Some of us had wonderful relationships and others had painful ones. My family life had some hard challenges. However, there is good news for those of us that had painful family experiences...when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are adopted into His family! You are now born of God. Read *John 1:13*. This verse means so much to me because it clarifies that I am in God's family and that my adoption cannot be annulled! - Sheri

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33

What does seeking God look like in your life?

Feelings of guilt used to sometimes drive my desire to spend time with God in prayer and Scripture reading. I guess I thought I was letting God down.

Honestly, I think God must feel disappointed when we neglect Him. After all, He tells us in the Word that He is a jealous God. I'm jealous for time with the people I love too.

Here's the deal: **God doesn't want us to come to Him out of obligation.**

When you and I see God for who He really is, we desire Him, period.

Oh, Father, open our eyes to who you are.

Write, pray, or just think about this today. Tell God that you want to know Him and love Him more. Cry out to Him for more of His presence in your life.

Ask God for a greater measure of faith in Him and His Word.

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."
Hebrews 11:6

The word earnest means serious and sincere.

Day Five

Read and meditate on this:

"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me." Psalm 63:1-8

Crave!

Go the extra mile.

Read *Isaiah 40* and soar with God!

Read *Psalms 42* and seek God's help in your trials.





Seek God Week 2

“Know God’s Character”

Objective: To Seek to know God’s character through the Word

Key Verse: *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:21*

Begin each day by turning your mind, heart, and eyes to God. Enter into your time in the Word with a hunger and thirst for His presence. *“Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth.” John 16:13*

Do not rush the lessons or feel the need to complete them as a task on your “to-do” list. This is your time to spend with “Father.”

Enjoy, delight, and savor the Word.



Day One

Read Psalm 23

It is God's will that you seek Him. To know God, our hearts must intentionally look for Him.

I grew up attending church and received Christ Jesus at an early age. But, it was a long time before I understood that God's Word is active and alive, and that the Word has divine power to change me into the image of my Creator.

I often read the Word of God and it caused me to grow in my understanding of who God is. The sad thing, though, is that I neglected my relationship with God. You see, you can know about God and do "Christian" things, but not have or neglect a relationship with Him.

In my teens I got caught up in finding my identity through my peers (many of whom were unbelievers and it corrupted my character). A strong relationship with God would have prevented my compromise!

I have deep regret for my wasted

years. Yet, I praise God for His faithfulness and patience with me!

It is very painful to feel neglected, isn't it? It feels a bit like rejection. God desires a relationship with you! Throw off every distraction and pursue the One and Only—He alone can satisfy.

-Amy

Take a moment to jot down what you sense might be a distraction from desiring God.

Now, read Psalm 23 and use it as a prayer. Write down your own prayer to God.

Finally, establish a regular quiet time, even if it's ten minutes.

Day Two

Read Exodus 33 and 34

Make a "Character Traits of God" list

Read *Exodus 33 and 34* and record His character traits (i.e. loving, merciful, etc.). You might need to finish this assignment tomorrow. If so, that's just fine! Your focus should be on enjoying God and His Word



*“Your attitude
should be the same
as that of Christ
Jesus...”*

Philippians 2:5

Day Three

Finish day two then read through your character traits list. Take some time to quietly reflect on who God is. Read *2 Corinthians 3:7-18*. Spending time in God's presence changes us. What do you sense changing in you? Tell God about it. Maybe tell someone else, too. Try writing about it!

Day Four

Read Philippians 2:1-15

Add to your Character Traits list.

- What does your attitude usually look like?
- Does it resemble the attitude of Christ?
- Spend time meditating on the nature of Jesus.

Ask the Father to increasingly change you into the image of His son.

Day Five

Read Psalm 18:1-3 printed below slowly. Make it your prayer and heart's desire.

“I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.”

Psalm 18:1-3

Consider memorizing this text. Read it repeatedly until the words become deeply personal.

Crave!

Go the extra mile.

- Read the Book of *Colossians*. It is not long yet so rich!
- Read *Psalm 18* – the whole chapter.



Seek God Week 3

“Know God’s Name and Character”

Objective: To search through the Bible to find names and character of God so that you can know Him more intimately.

Key Verse: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:3

Seeking God on your own is a wonderful opportunity to know God. Seeking Him to know Him through the Word is a privilege. About 500 years ago, we didn’t even have access to the written Word. Many people have suffered and died so that we could have a Bible today! May we never take this for granted.

These suggested reading assignments are to help you grow in your knowledge of God. Do not feel guilty if you

can’t complete them. If you have five minutes to spend, spend five. If you have thirty minutes, spend thirty. Ask God to lead you and give you wisdom and insight.

It’s Word Search week! I love word searches. I used to do them often as a child. When I really started reading the Bible, I noticed words everywhere that described God and His character. I began circling them in my Bible. I love to pick up my bible today and see just how awesome God is when I glance at all those circled words! -Sheri

Pick one or more of the following scripture passages to read every day this week. As you read the passages, look for the names of God. Use the Names of God chart (following this section) as a tool to help you find them. You may want to underline or circle God’s character traits in your Bible or keep a growing list in your notebook.

Suggested Daily Readings

Matthew 26:36-56
John 15:1-17
Ephesians 1
Matthew 11:25-29
John 14
John 8:1-11
Jeremiah 1
Luke 15
John 13:1-17
Isaiah 11:1-5
Habakkuk 3:17-19
Colossians 1:15-20
John 11:1-44

Day One

Select and read a scripture passage from the previous page

What character traits of God did you find? Did you already know this about God? If not, renew your mind by writing them out, reading them aloud, or meditating on them throughout the day. Use the space provided for any other thoughts.

One of my favorite attributes of God is from *John 15*. It teaches that God is the Gardner. I love this verse because it is a picture of a Gardner and a garden. The Gardner does all the work; the plants in the garden just have to *receive*. It teaches me that I simply need to learn to be a good receiver. I would write in my notebook: God is the Gardner—He gives me all the nourishment I need. I just have to receive it by yielding my heart to Him!

Day Two

Select and read a scripture passage from page 10

What names or character traits did you find in your reading today? I will share with you one of my favorites from Jeremiah 1. God is relational! He chose me. He is so merciful that picked me out and choose me personally—how awesome! I would write in my notebook: God is intimate. He chose me. Now, write your thoughts and prayers.



For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 ASV

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:17

Day Three

Select and read a passage from page 10

What has been your favorite Bible verse this week? Write it here and commit it to memory today.

Day Four

Select and read a passage from page 10

What name or attribute of God is especially in your mind this week? Thank God for it in prayer today.

Day Five

Select and read a passage from page 10

Take time to rest, be still (even if for just five minutes) and listen. Meditate on the names and character traits of God on the following page. Add to the list. When finances are short, thank God that He is your Provider. When a loved one is lost, thank God that He is your Comfort and that He hears your prayers. Who is God to you right now? Circle any of His names, that He is currently revealing to you, on the chart on page 13.

Crave!

Go the extra mile.

Pick any chapter of the Bible. Search for and underline God's names and character traits in your Bible. This is one of my favorite things to do. It reminds me of how awesome He is!

NAMES OF GOD

MOST HIGH GOD	DELIVERER	FORTRESS
CREATOR	I AM	ABBA FATHER
THE LORD MY BANNER	ALL-KNOWING	ABUNDANT
PROVIDER	ABOVE ALL	THE BEGINNING
RESTORER	BRIDEGROOM	BREAD OF LIFE
THE LORD OF LORDS	JUST	IMMANUEL
KING OF KINGS	JESUS	LAMB OF GOD
EVERLASTING GOD	LOVE	LIVING WATER
SHEPHERD	COMFORTER	PROTECTED
HEALER	DWELLING PLACE	FRIEND
MASTER	REDEEMER	TEACHER
ALL-SUFFICIENT ONE	SHEPHERD	THE WAY
SAVIOR	PROTECTOR	OMNISCIENT (all-knowing)
TRUTH	NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES	NEAR
EQUIPPER	HOLY	GOOD
PRINCE OF PEACE	RIGHTEOUS	MERCIFUL
FAITHFUL	UNCHANGING	OMNIPOTENT (all-powerful)
OMNIPRESENT (all-present)	SOVEREIGN	PURSUER

Challenge: Can you list more names or attributes of God from you reading this week?



Seek God Week 4

“Know God the Creator”

Objective: To seek to know God the Creator

Key Verse: “*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*”
Psalm 19:1

Your time with the Lord this week will be a real adventure if you take on the assignments with your whole heart.

We want to take a fresh look at our Creator. God wants to reveal His glory to you. Look around. You’re going to see glimpses of His majesty!

Suggested Daily Scripture Readings

Genesis 1 & 2; Psalm 8; Psalm 19; Psalm 104; Romans 1:18-32 with Romans 8:18-25; Romans 9:1-8; and Isaiah 44 & 45

Begin each day asking God to reveal Himself through His Word.

For the next five days, read a suggested Bible passage slowly and take in every detail (even though you may have read it numerous times before.) You may want to stop from time to time and reflect on the significance of what you’re reading. As you go along, realize and enjoy the presence of God with you and in you!

Try not to worry or get “hung up” on parts of the Bible that you don’t fully understand. By faith, the Holy Spirit, and persistence in studying the entire Word you will grow in your understanding.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16

After selecting and reading your Bible verses choose an activity from the following suggestions or make up your own.

★Take some time to write down your thoughts in your notebook. Express your heart to God in a prayer of praise.

- Friends and/or family might want to join you for the following:

★Watch the weather and choose the best day to take a walk outside. A nearby park might provide the right atmosphere. Let the Creator capture you as you take in His wonderful creation.

★Watch a nature show on television or video. Your local library or the Internet will have some good selections, too.



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Genesis 1

All I wanted for my last birthday was the Planet Earth video series. I desired excellent sermons. In my opinion, creation preaches the greatest sermon every told!

★Stargazing is great for an awe-inspiring time. If it's cold, gather blankets and hot cocoa! Consider including your family or friends.

★Read a Scripture passage aloud. Write a favorite verse or two and place it in a prominent place in your home or car.

★If you like to dabble in arts and crafts, then create your own nature scene.

★If you encounter a day with good, puffy clouds, then go outside and lie down to watch them. Just don't look directly at the sun!

★Express your love to God the way that best suits your personality. Sing, shout, dance, play an instrument, write poetry or sit in quiet stillness and acknowledge His presence.

Here's a good exercise to get you thinking: Try to describe the character traits of God without using any of your previous knowledge of Him through the Word of God or His people. Try to understand Him from what has been made by Him. (Not through circumstances that have been brought about through sin or the curse of sin.)

An example would be, "God must be Creative" because of the pallet of colors He provided. Keep a growing list of your discoveries. (This may take a while, but it's fascinating!) You may want to share this list with your **SOAR** group.

Seek God Week 5

“Know God Through Prayer”



Objective: To seek to know God through prayer

Key Verse: “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.”
1 Peter 3:12

We can become more intimate with our Heavenly Father by seeking Him through prayer. I used to look at prayer as something you do when you have an important request or a plea for help when tragedy strikes. Years ago, I became aware of my prayerlessness when I realized how much my husband was praying. He would be sitting quietly in a chair and I would ask, “What you are doing?” His response was almost always, “Praying.” I realized then that I didn’t have a prayer life like that!

Thus, I began my prayer journey. I wanted to have an authentic and dynamic relationship with my God through prayer. Now (after many years of focused and habitual practice), prayer is a vital part of my entire life. Do you want this too? You can experience God in such a close way that often it will seem that you’ve just had time with your best friend. Whether you’re a beginner or a prayer warrior, I pray that the next three weeks will move you into a deeper fellowship with God, the Lover of your soul.

Remember, faith is not a feeling, so if you do not feel like you are having an encounter with a close friend, do not worry. Relationships take time. Keep pressing toward the goal of getting to know Him!

-Amy



“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
John 1:1

What is Prayer?

It is communication with God. It is like picking up the phone to call a parent or a friend to share exciting news, or a really painful day. But with God, you never get a busy signal or voicemail. You don't have to wait for Him to call you back. Communication with God can just start with simple, short conversations.

Here are some of the reasons people might fail to pray?

- You can get bored when it feels like you're the only one talking.
- You're not really sure how to pray sometimes.
- You get distracted easily, and sometimes you actually forget that you are praying.
- You think God has more important things to spend His time on.
- You reason that my prayers won't make a difference.

Ask: "Why do I fail to pray?"

Levels of Prayer

There are levels of prayer based on your relationship with the Father. You can relate it to a friendship. When you first meet a friend, you might just talk with them or see them occasionally or talk on the phone, but as your time together increases, the friendship level deepens.

The quantity and quality of your prayer life directly correlates with how intimately you know God. Everyone has a different relationship with God because we are unique individuals. Isn't it cool that God made and loves our individuality?

Day One **Examine the verses below on the importance of prayer below.**

"On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer." Acts 16:13

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Romans 12:11-12

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." Colossians 4:2

"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer." 1 Peter 3:12

God hears our prayers and He wants us to pray. Have you ever thought, "Why do I pray if God already knows what I need before I ask? I've thought this many times! Yet prayer is important to God. He tells us to devote ourselves to it. It may be that you need a new mind-set about prayer. Don't miss this: first and foremost, you must look at prayer as a way to connect in fellowship with your Holy Father.

Too often prayers are just a rote and scheduled part of certain events—mealtime, bedtime, before a sporting event, the start or end of a Christian meeting. Frequently, prayer is just something people do when they or a loved one has a problem or crisis. Oh, how we miss out on the love relationship the Father desires with us when we only come to Him with our needs and rituals! Prayer can and should be the most relationally intimate time you have. Seek Him. Love Him. Know Him—through prayer.

Take some time today (maybe several times today) and go to a quiet place and be still before God. Don't worry about your words until you've quieted your mind and turned your heart fully to Him. Quieting might take a while at first, because you live at such a busy pace.

You might try kneeling or any position that will help you focus and be authentic. Express your love to God. Delight yourself in Him (delight means to find pleasure in).

So many of us find our pleasures in the things of this world, but only God can truly satisfy our thirsty, hungry souls.

Day Two

Read Matthew 6:5-24

Study the *Five P's of Prayer* from the Lord's Prayer.

- **Presence** – Prayer should begin with the acknowledgment of God's presence and an exclamation of who He is. (*Our Father in Heaven, Holy is your name!*).
- **Priorities** – Our hearts need to be aligned with God's will in and for our lives. (*Your will be done on earth...*)
- **Provision** – We can ask God for His provision to meet all of our needs (*Give us our daily bread*).
- **Pardon** – Pardon is living out of the same forgiveness that Christ gave us and applying it to others (*forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors*).
- **Power** – Pray for God's power to protect us from temptation and delivers us from evil (*lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*).

Do your prayers include any of the *Five P's* listed? Our prayers do not need to have formulas for them to be effective and meaningful. God wants prayers to come from the sincerity of our hearts. Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer as a guide. I'm so thankful for this beautiful example of prayer.

Day Three

Read Nehemiah 1

This is a great passage about repentance. Allow God, through the Holy Spirit, to reveal to you areas of rebellion or blind spots that have not yet been transformed by the truth. Consider writing down what God reveals to you. Repent and ask Him to refine you as silver and gold. Keep praying in your quiet place.

Day Four

Read Genesis 32:24-32

Jacob wrestled in prayer: “*There is no one who calls on Your name, who arouses himself to take hold of You;*” *Isaiah 64:7*. May this statement never be true of us! I desperately desire to “take hold of God” in prayer!

Matthew Henry Commentary gives us some more insight about Jacob's night of prayer. It states, “We are told by the prophet Hosea (*Hosea 12:4*) how Jacob wrestled: he wept, and made supplication; prayers and tears were his weapons. It was not only a physical, but a *spiritual wrestling*, by the vigorous acting of faith and holy desire; and thus all the spiritual seed of Jacob (all believers) that pray, in praying, still wrestle with God.”

Jacob's name was changed to Israel that night in battle. Israel means “he who strives with God,” or “he who perseveres.” Also, the name Israel suggests royalty and power. This is not surprising since believers are a royal priesthood and called to persevere in faith with the same power that raised Christ from the dead! Look at this verse in *1 Peter 2:9*: “*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*”

Let's realize today and forever that we can and should strive to “take hold” of God in prayer.



*“The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.”
1 Peter 4:7*

Crave!

Read, pray, or meditate on these passages this week.

Psalm 86:1-13

2 Chronicles 7:13-16

John 17

Day Five Read the following Scriptures

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16

“The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.” 1 Peter 4:7

Today, do God's will and pray.

Different Types of Prayers

- **Just talk to God.** You don't have to pray a wordy, reverent prayer. You can just say “Hi, God. Thank you for today.”
- **Get real.** Be transparent. If you are mad, tell God about it. After I lost my mom, I would say, “I am so sad, God. My heart is just broken. I miss my mom so much. I am sad that I will never have the relationship with her that I always longed to have.”
- **Kneeling prayers.** Get on your knees in reverence.
- **Arrow prayers.** These are just short prayers that lift up what is on your heart at that moment—while driving, thinking, or talking with others.
- **Eat-Carpet prayers** Get to the lowest possible place to pray to the most high God. I ate a lot of carpet when my mom died.
- **Pray always.** I like open conversation with God. When I wake up, I pray and keep the line open all day. It's like when you call a company and they put you on hold for seven minutes and then again for four more. I don't know about you, but I put the phone on speaker while I am waiting. When you finish and just start again, it is like putting God on the speaker button.
- **Fasting prayers.** Withhold food (or something else) for a period of time and use the time you would have normally spent eating (or doing whatever else) in prayer. Or, use your hunger pangs to remind you to pray for something you are really seeking God about. *Matthew 17:21 and Mark 9:29 (KJV)*
- **Scripture prayers.** God's Word never returns void. If you don't know what to pray, pray the Word. Our family loves to pray *Ephesians 1:17-20* together.
- **In Jesus' name prayers.** Ask in Jesus' name and then speak to the mountain in Jesus' name (*Mark 11:20-26*).
- **Spirit prayers.** When you don't know what to pray, ask God for the gift of praying in tongues, and pray ‘in the Spirit.’ *“But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.” Jude 1:20*

Seek God Week 6

“Know God Through Prayer”

Objective: To seek to know God through prayer while resting, listening, and delighting in His presence

Key Verse: *"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Psalm 46:10*

Is your life anything like mine? My life is really busy! I have seven people (spouse included!) to spiritually pour into, provide nutritious meals for, engage in meaningful conversations, and nurse when they are injured or sick.

I manage a home that requires repairs and cleaning. Can anyone say laundry?! I also have the privilege to home educate my six children. It's a wonderful, yet often physically draining life. Regardless of your lifestyle, we all need recharging!

Real rest isn't found in some "chill time" in front of the TV. More than anything else, you need a quiet place to be still and reflect on the God who made you and gave you life.

Many find it hard to spend time in extended prayer. Is it because we are too busy, or because we do not think it is important enough to fit into our plans?

Do you want to know God more intimately? Do you want God to speak to you and show you His path for you? I sure do!

-Amy

This week we're going to learn and practice the skill of resting and listening.

Give your whole self (spirit, soul and body) to knowing and loving your wonderful Savior.



"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
John 1:1

Day One

Read Psalm 37

There's a lot to chew on in this chapter, including thoughts on "delighting" and "being still." What does it say about the Righteous? That's *you*. It's hard to believe, isn't it? It's true! It is Christ in you that makes you righteous.

Ask yourself these questions from your reading and answer honestly.

1. What is your favorite verse? Why? Consider committing it to memory.
2. Which verse was confusing? We all get confused sometimes. Just be real with God and ask Him to help you understand.
3. Does any verse challenge you or bring a deeper understanding of God?

Day Two

Read John 10 today

"It was at this time that He (Jesus) went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God."
Luke 6:12

Ask God to speak to you. Ask God to unclog your spiritual ears. Take time to listen for the Holy Spirit's voice. God wants us to live "as Christ," to always be alert always and spiritually sensitive to His guiding and gentle voice. It would be a great blessing for you write out the most memorable verses to you found in *John 10*.



“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:17

Day Three

Read James 1:19-25

Be quick to listen and slow to speak.

Listening shouldn't always be about thinking, processing information, or preparing a response. Try just receiving. What are you hearing?

If we don't listen well, how can we get our instructions from God? Listening intentionally allows us to receive all that God has for us.

We are called to be totally surrendered to God. Jim Elliot, in his book *Shadow of the Almighty*, said, “One does not surrender a life in an instant; that which is lifelong can only be surrendered in a lifetime.”

Do you fully trust God? I didn't for a long time and there are still areas (today) in which I probably depend on myself more than putting my trust in God. Read these verses and strive with me to surrender and put all your trust in Him.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Read Philippians 4:6-7 one more time in the green box to the left.

Day Four

Read Psalm 5, 130 and 131

As you sit and meditate on this, turn your whole heart and mind to God and be still before Him. Let Him quiet your soul and give you rest, peace, and comfort.

Write how today you will apply one or more of these verses in your life.

Day Five

Ask God for insight as you read Exodus 14

We serve a mighty God! Did verse 14 stand out to you? *“The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”* Our LORD can fight all of our battles! Our job is to pray (ask), wait on Him (be still), and walk in trust and faith (total reliance upon Him). Describe in your own words what verse 14 means to you.

Have you ever fought a battle on your own by defending yourself with others? I don't know about you, but when I have done this, I always end up feeling bad and it never results in changing someone else's opinion of me. My way can seem right and it feels like the most immediate path to resolution, but what's right in my mind is not necessarily God's way.

Remember, God is our defender! If He is for us, who can be against us?

Today, ask God to help you learn to stand firm and rest in God to take care of your battles!

You might consider writing your own prayer to your Father God. Listen. Respond. Rejoice. He is Faithful!

Crave!

Read **Proverbs 8**. This chapter in Proverbs is about Wisdom (which is Christ, according to some commentators). Read **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** and **Hebrews 3** (this text is about Israel's stubborn unbelief and unwillingness to listen).



Seek God Week 7

“Know God Through Prayer”



Objective: Seeking to know God through intercessory prayer, petitions, and faith.

Key Verse: “*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.*” *Ephesians 6:18*

In 2007, my prayer life took a huge turn for the better. I had been walking with God for nearly 20 years; the trouble was that I had become a “professional” Christian. God was in a neat and tidy box that I had made out of “good” theology. Please don’t misunderstand me. If God’s Word could be called “The Box,” then that is “The Box” we all can safely abide in. “My” box forgot, left out, or misplaced the truth that our prayers can, by faith, move mountains! I rediscovered that a person abiding in Christ and living out of His righteousness has a prayer advantage. James 5 tells us, “The prayer of a **righteous** man is powerful and effective.” All Christians are positionally righteous, but not all live out of that righteousness. Therefore, your

prayers can be hindered by your unconfessed and unsundered sin.

God is speaking to the unclogged ears of the righteous! He’s listening, too. Are you listening? Are you making your requests? Are you interceding? Basically, in my life, God blew up my box! I took the limits off God and He became infinitely greater to me. And I am more acutely aware of His power working in and through me.

Prayer is one of the greatest privileges a believer has on this earth. Through prayer we gain access to the greatest power source known to man. You have an opportunity now to read, look closely at, soak in, take seriously, receive and believe the following Scriptures. Do you want to become a person of prayer and great faith? Better yet, do you want to have effective and powerful prayers? If you give yourself to the quest of seeking to better understand prayer, this will be a faith-building, life-changing time for you! Ask the Holy Spirit to teach and guide you as you study.

You may want to order and begin reading a book I highly recommend on prayer: *The Kneeling Christian* by an Unknown Author, published by

Zondervan. My desire is that you will know God intimately through prayer and rest in Him, and believe like you’ve never believed before, that “With God all things are possible!”

Please understand that these verses are not meant to be formulas for us to use to get what we want. I see them as our calling, as believers, to take God at His Word. When we do all that we can (praying in faith) then we must rest with assurance that the end results are in His hands. Sin has brought great suffering into our world. But God, in His love and mercy, works *everything* out for good for the beloved and called.

-Amy

Day One

There are seven days of study assignments this week. You may want to spend the next two weeks studying and meditating on these passages.

Read, read, and re-read the Scriptures and document all that stands out to you. You will see how closely prayer and faith are related.

“Faith comes from hearing and hearing the word of God.” Romans 10:17

“Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.” James 5:13-18

Do you confess your sins to other believers?

All sins were paid for on the cross. However, when you are living in a way that is disobedient and doesn't honor God, the Holy Spirit will convict you of this. Confess your sins to

quickly to God and to one another because a sin in the dark has power over you, but a sin brought into the light can set you free! We are children of the Light.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.” James 1:5-8 KJV

Have you ever felt like “...a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind?”

I know I have! I remember when there was no peace in my life. I would ask God for something, but if I were honest with you, I didn't really believe that He would do it.

Pray the *Ephesians 1:17-23* prayer from week 5 and ask God to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation. I have prayed this prayer for more than four years. I can testify to how God has truly flooded the eyes of my heart to understand and believe His Word. -Sheri

According to the following passage, what do you think your attitude should be like when you pray? Take notes as you read along. This will help reinforce what you are learning.

“Now He (Jesus) was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying, ‘There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God, and did not respect man. And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me legal protection from my opponent.’” And for a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wear me out.’” And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?’”

“And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, ‘God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’” But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his



“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:17

eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!” I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.’ And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He might touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. But Jesus called for them, saying, ‘Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all.’” Luke 18:1-17 NASB

Day Two

Are you ready for another day of seeking God? Pause and prepare your heart to receive from His holy Word.

Faith is paramount for an effective prayer life. The word “faith” is used more than 250 times in the New Testament. The importance of faith is clearly explained in Hebrews 11:6, *“And without faith it is impossible to please God.”* Stop! Read this again. Let its message sink in.

Another powerful verse in Romans 14:23 that *“everything that does not come from faith is sin.”* The Holy Spirit has convicted me several times regarding my lack of faith in different situations. Now, let’s read about Peter’s faith.

“In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, ‘Please come at once!’

“Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, ‘Tabitha, get up.’ She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the

hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.” Acts 9:36-43 KJV

I love this passage! Peter got on his knees to pray and he spoke to Tabitha. He spoke to a dead person believing that God would give him what he had prayed for. He wasn’t shocked at the power of God because He knew God. Do you desire faith in God like Peter? I do! *“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,” Hebrew 12:2*

So, are you stuck with the same measure of faith? Check out these Scriptures and ask God to strengthen and increase your faith in Him.

“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.” 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

Notice that their faith and love increased through persecution and suffering. Your perseverance will allow God to strengthen the parts of your faith that were once weak. So, lean hard on God in the good times and in the midst of painful circumstances. Let’s read more about prayer and faith.

“Then one of the crowd answered and said, ‘Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it

seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.’ He answered him and said, ‘O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.’ Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, ‘How long has this been happening to him?’ And he said, ‘From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.’ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!’ When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, ‘Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!’ Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, ‘He is dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ So He said to them, ‘This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.’” Mark 9:17-29 NKJV

- **Write down your favorite verse from this passage.**
- **Which verse shook you up or challenged you to know and seek God more?**

Day Three

Prepare your heart by asking God to reveal His Truth to you.

“The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, ‘May no one ever eat fruit from you again.’ And his disciples heard him say it. On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written: “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?” But you have made it a den of robbers.’ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

When evening came, they went out of the city. In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!’ ‘Have faith in God,’ Jesus answered. ‘I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, “Go, throw yourself into the sea,” and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”
Mark 11:12-25 KJV

Jesus made some amazing statements about faith and prayer. Is there anything too difficult for God (the One who created

everything)? Recently, a friend of the family was diagnosed with colon cancer. The doctors said he only had six months to live. This friend shared his faith with doctor and told him he believed that God would heal him. He later prayed and told God that he wanted God to be “amazed” by his faith. Guess what? Yep! This dear friend (in a matter of weeks) was totally healed! The doctor was amazed. American Christians do not always experience the miraculous power of God like other believers from around the world. Could it be that we have God in a box? Do we put limits on God? -Amy

What mountains are in your life?

“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend.

You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” James 2:14-3:1

How do you live out your faith? Living in obedience to God is faith in action!

If you say you believe, but your actions don’t match, then maybe you just have knowledge of God. We can have knowledge of God, but not have faith (trust and reliance upon Him). Take a minute and evaluate your faith. Is it active? How?

Now read these Scriptures for an understanding of true salvation.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:8-10 NASB

We are given faith as a gift from God. Yet, take note of this— faith is not stagnant. Faith can be strengthened and weakened. Look at how we soar with faith in the text below.

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17 KJV

Our faith can increase! Isn’t it great that God provided a way for us to increase our faith—from hearing His Word. As you renew your mind with the Word of God, faith will result.

Pray this prayer, “Father, I pray that you transform the inner parts of my mind and heart through the power of your Holy Spirit and renew my mind with Your Word! Strengthen my faith. I want to have great faith in you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Day Four

Stop and spend some time in prayer before you read today. Acknowledge His presence with you.

"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."
Hebrews 4:14-16

I cannot tell you how much of my Christian walk I spent going to the throne of condemnation (or so I thought). I just couldn't seem to get control of my mouth or my behavior. I would drag myself to the throne so full of guilt and pain in my heart for my lack of ability to walk in the truth. I never felt like I was worthy to ask for anything of magnitude. I didn't realize God provide the *throne of grace*. You and I can approach God in prayer with confidence. We are son or daughter of a loving Father and the King of Kings!

-Sheri

Take notes while you read these amazing verses.

"Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to

pray. ...During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.' 'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.' 'Come,' he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?' And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'" Matthew 14:22-33

Has looking at your circumstances been a fire extinguisher to your faith? Faith is not a feeling. We have to keep our eyes on Jesus! And see Him for who He really is!

"Coming to his (Jesus) hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?' they asked. 'Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?' And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, 'Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor.' And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith." Matthew 13:54-58

Well-meaning Christian cultures can become weak-faithed.

Sometimes church and religious disciplines become too common—the norm and just no big deal. That's when we have substituted religion for a dynamic faith relationship with God. Pray this to God, "Father, I pray that I will know and want nothing but you."

Imagine what it felt like to Jesus not being able to fully minister in His hometown. He came and laid down His life for all of us—even those that rejected Him.

"Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.' Jesus turned and saw her. 'Take heart, daughter,' he said, 'your faith has healed you.' And the woman was healed from that moment. When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd, he said, 'Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep.' But they laughed at him. After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. ... As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, 'Have mercy on us, Son of David!' When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?' 'Yes, Lord,' they replied. Then he touched their eyes and said, 'According to your faith will it be done to you;' and their sight was restored..." Matthew 9:20-31

Briefly write the essence of all these verses.

What verse has impacted your life the most this week?

Day Five

“When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ‘Lord,’ he said, ‘my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering.’ Jesus said to him, ‘I will go and heal him.’ The centurion replied, ‘Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, “Go,” and he goes; and that one, “Come,” and he comes. I say to my servant, “Do this,” and he does it.’ When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, ‘I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith... Then Jesus said to the centurion, ‘Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.’ And his servant was healed at that very hour.” Matthew 8:5-13

Do you want Jesus to be astonished by your faith in Him?

“Then he (Jesus) got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!’ He replied, ‘You of little faith, why are you so afraid?’ Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, ‘What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!’” Matthew 8:23-27

Jesus was with them in the

boat, and they were still afraid! What storm is in your life right now? Maybe you are in a financial storm? A marriage storm? The same Jesus that rebuked the storm that the disciples encountered lives in you.

Jesus could have told the disciples to ride out the storm because He was with them, but that is not what He did. He rebuked the storm and there was an immediate perfect peace. He can do the same for you today. Pray and ask! He is the same today as He was in that boat all those years ago.

Now let’s examine what the Bible teaches about intercessory prayer.

“Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.” Colossians 4:12 NASB

“We have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.” Colossians 1:9-12

Wow! Have you ever prayed for the Body of Christ in a similar way? Before you continue, read those verses again and make a list of what Paul asked God to do on behalf of his brothers and sisters in

Christ. Ask God to motivate you to be in intercessory prayer for other believers.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:10-18

Prayer is important because it is how we war in spiritual battle.

How have you been warring in the past? With prayer or with your own strength?

How will you battle differently in the future?

Day Six

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." John 15:1-13 NASB

What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "Apart from me,"? I think He wants us to understand that without Him it's impossible to be spiritually fruitful and our prayers are ineffective. When we are abiding

in the love of God, He enables growth and makes us fruit bearers.

Answered prayer is about God's will and glory being accomplished on earth through us.

Now, let's look at the fruitfulness of a believer who abides in the Vine!

"I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." John 16:23-24

"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." John 14:12-14

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

"Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" Matthew 7:7-11 NASB

"Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they

may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." Matthew 18:18-20 NASB

Do you have someone to pray in agreement with you on a regular basis? If not, consider asking God to show you who He wants to be your prayer partner. I prayed this prayer a few years back. Not long after that, I had a name of an acquaintance pop into my mind. I located her phone number, called her up, and then I stumbled through trying to explain my reason for calling. It was a bit awkward at first.

Do you know what she said in response to my request? Basically, she said, "I have asked God for a prayer partner and He told me to wait, because He would send her to me." Wow! God is so good and faithful. He will surely do the same for you if you will merely ask.

-Amy

Day Seven

Today, as you read the Truth of God's Word, take notes on what each Scripture passage teaches about prayer. Look carefully. Remember the Holy Spirit is your Teacher. Tell God you are hungry to know Him more and ask Him to make you teachable.

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.” 1 Timothy 2:1-4, 8 NASB

“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah

obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. For He who would love life and see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.” 1 Peter 3:1-12 NKJV

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.” Proverbs 15:8 KJV

“Cornelius answered: ‘Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, “Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.”’ Acts 10:30-33

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.” Psalm 145:18-19

“I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue. If I

regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear; But certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer, nor His loving-kindness from me.” Psalm 66:17-20 NASB

“Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 NASB

You are now enriched with an abundance of the alive and active Word of God's teaching about prayer. **You are called.** Enlist yourself on God's prayer warrior team!

CRAVE! THE EXTRA MILE

Challenge: Look up the word “faith” in the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). Record in your notebook the similarities you find whenever the word “faith” is used.

What did God reveal to you through this exercise?

Read Hebrews 11 & 12:1-3. These verses will give you a faith boost.



Seek God Week 8

“Know God Through Praise and Worship”

Objective: To seek to know God intimately so that our lives overflow with worship in all that we do.

Key Verse: “Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his footstool; He is holy.”
Psalm 99:5

This is our last week. Don’t give up—finish the strong!

Worship. We all do it. Every day our affection, adoration, devotion, honor and reference are given to something or someone. Who or what do you worship? All too often my devotion lies with the things of this world. But when we see God for who He really is, worship is true and spontaneous.

Our prayer is that the past seven weeks have strengthened your relationship with God in such a way that you are already in an all-out worship mode with the Only One worthy of your worship.

In this final week of Seek God, you will study what God’s Word says about how we are to worship Him. May you never be the same again.

I (Sheri) was at a professional basketball game the other night. As the players ran onto the court, fireworks were going off (inside the building). My kids were mesmerized and entertained! The MC would say, “Scream!” and

everyone in the place would get louder and louder. The excitement over this team just making one basket was unbelievable. I saw this one man wearing the wildest hat to support his team and others with their faces painted. Whether the basketball team was doing well or not, the fans were sold out! This was *worship*.

Before national championship games, fans prepare for and have watch parties. They get all the right clothing gear, buy the right food and then they explode in cheer and celebration for their team.

My (Amy) kids play sports and so I realized how easily a fan can get a little overboard on the excitement scale. These games and parties can be a lot of fun. It’s fun to be a fan and root for your team. However, I’ve always desired a similar (or even greater) passion towards the All Star Player who made all the stars and knows them by name.

He is the MVP for all time and eternity. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The I Am.

The following verse from the Bible talks about a crowd that gathered to wait for Jesus. They came early—maybe gathering like a parade and then Jesus (the One and Only) appeared, read below what took place:

“As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting: ‘BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.’ But Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!’” Luke 19:37-40 NASB

This is *worship*.

There are two kinds of worship seen in these examples. One is the worshipping of something that is temporal (basketball) and the other is worshipping the Eternal Living God. **What or who do you worship?**

Day One

Romans 12:1-2 states, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

Read 1 Chronicles 29 and look at how worship is a whole-life expression.

In what ways do you respond to God in worship? Meditate on this question. Consider writing down your thoughts here.

and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:20-24 NKJV

The following verse from Isaiah gives us an idea of what worshipping in “spirit and truth” looks like.

“When you cry out for help, let your collection [of idols] save you! The wind will carry all of them off; a mere breath will blow them away. But the man who makes me his refuge will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain.” And it will be said: ‘Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people.’ For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.’” Isaiah 57:13-15

The words contrite and lowly are translated from Hebrew words that mean, “Crushed, bruised, broken, and depressed.”

When I am feeling really down, I like to go to a quiet place and worship God as my Hiding Place and Lover of my soul.

Now, let’s look at two more passages from *Psalms* and *1 Samuel*.

“O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” Psalm 51:15-17

“When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the LORD’s anointed stands here before the LORD.’ But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’” 1 Samuel 16:6-7

True worship comes from a sincere and humble heart. A heart that walks in the truth, obeying God’s laws out of love for Him. A heart that has come to the realization, that apart from God there is no hope. Worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

Day Two

In the following verse, a woman asked Jesus about the right “place” to worship.

“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming,



“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:17

Day Three

Read Psalm 95 through Psalm 100

Make a list of ways to worship as you read these Scriptures. Begin to apply them in your life as a response to Who God is. He is worthy!

God is not interested in where we worship, or in our cultural style of worship as long as it comes from the love and purity of our spirit that has been reborn in the truth. I (Amy) love to play worship music or the Bible on CD and worship God throughout my daily activities.

Day Four

Read Psalm 148 through Psalm 150

If you haven't already, it's time to, “strike up the band!” God loves for His children to, “make a joyful noise” unto Him. Worship Him throughout the day with music, singing, dance, shouts, or whatever suits whom God made you to be. Rejoice in the God of your salvation!

Our family worships with dance and music DVDs. We sing, jump, run, and sometimes we just sit around the table and talk about God. This is all worship. How will you worship God today? -Sheri

Day Five

Read Psalm 5, 130 and 131

A friend of Louie Giglio, Bruce Leafblad, defined worship as “centering our mind’s attention and our heart’s affection on the Lord.” Write out your own definition of worship.

As we conclude our last week of SEEK, let’s turn to the last book of the Bible and get a glimpse of worship in our eternal home.

Read these passages from the book of Revelation.

“The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!’ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ‘You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power;

For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.’” Revelation 4:8-11 NKJV

“And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

‘Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty!

Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.’” Revelations 15:2-4 NKJV

“Now I, John, saw and heard these things... I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.’” Rev

22:8-10 NKJV

And finally from Romans:

“One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”

“For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written: ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’” Romans 14:5-11

Worship God! Hallelujah and Glory to the King of kings! Worthy is the Lamb! He is