

simple
prayers

POWERFUL RESULTS

A Six-Week Bible Study
on Discovering God's
Wisdom and Will

LEADER'S GUIDE

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The *Simple Prayers, Powerful Results* Bible study will take you and your group on a journey through the mountains and valleys and the ins and outs of interacting with the Lord in prayer. As you delve deep into Scripture and learn practical tips on prayer, you will discover how to access God's wisdom and will for your life and take the guesswork out of making decisions.

This leader's guide provides a list of questions to choose from to initiate discussion for each of the thirty lessons. Feel free to use your own questions as well.

Here are some other helpful tips to consider:

- Decide whether you want to meet as a small group in a home or a larger group at church. If you are meeting at a church, arrange for childcare if needed. Expect each meeting to last approximately one and a half hours. Be sure to pray before each meeting for teachable hearts and a spirit of unity and fellowship in the group.
- At the first meeting have participants sign an attendance sheet and provide their contact information in order to inform members of any meeting cancellations or rescheduling. Use name tags if the members do not already know each other. Keep the list of participants' names handy so that you can lift participants up in prayer during the week.
- Begin the first session with prayer. Then have each member share their name and what drew them to this particular study. In future sessions feel free to ask for a volunteer to open the meeting in prayer, but be ready to jump in if no one steps up.
- Encourage the members to pray before reading each lesson, asking the Holy Spirit to open their minds to understanding the Scriptures and to show them personal applications from the teachings.
- If your group is slow to warm up, be prepared to answer some of the questions provided for each lesson to help get the conversation going. Your transparency will encourage others to contribute to the discussions. A good starter question is simply to ask, "Which lesson this week spoke to you the most?" or "Of the five lessons this week, which was the most challenging for you?"
- Be sure to emphasize the need to keep all discussions in the meetings confidential.
- At the end of the session, jot down prayer requests that are mentioned. Encourage the others to be in prayer for each other and to share any testimonies of answered prayers at future meetings.
- Close each session in prayer before dismissing the group.
- After each meeting, make note of anything that you might want to do differently at the next meeting. What worked and what needed tweaking?

WEEK ONE

Day 1

- God used a malpractice lawsuit to draw Jane into a deeper, more personal relationship with God. Does anyone want to share a difficult time of testing that God used for good in your life?
- At times it seems like God is nowhere to be found. What have you learned from times like that?
- How do you usually respond when you pray and pray, and it doesn't seem like God is answering your prayers?
- In this first day's lesson, what stuck out the most to you?

Day 2

- Would anyone like to summarize the difference between the Old and New Testaments regarding how God deals with sin?
- If your prayer is not answered immediately, do you give up or do you keep on praying?
- What makes Jesus a better mediator than the priests of the Old Testament?
- Are there times when you are afraid to ask God for what you need? Why do you think that is?

Day 3

- Have you experienced any hardships that taught you valuable lessons about God?
- Do you ever struggle with whether or not God loves you? Does God seem close or far away?
- What are some times you have experienced lack and then seen God supply your need?
- When you feel negative emotions, like fear or anxiety, how does prayer help you?

Day 4

- How did you react when you read about the professor who said, "Prayer doesn't do any good?" Have you ever felt that way?
- Do you sometimes find it hard to stay connected to Jesus like a branch is connected to a vine? Why or why not?
- What have you found to be your most productive time of the day to pray and why?
- Have you been praying for something and waiting a long time for an answer? How have you encouraged yourself to persevere and not give up until you receive an answer?

Day 5

- Do you look forward to reading Scripture like panning for gold, or is it a real struggle?
- Jesus tells His disciples that the Holy Spirit will tell them of “things to come.” Have you ever had a thought or impression that revealed something that occurred later? Tell us about that.
- When have you experienced the Holy Spirit reminding you of something you read in Scripture that helped you at that moment?
- Do you feel closest to the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit? Why?

WEEK TWO

Day 1

- Can someone tell us about a time you prayed for something with almost no faith, yet your prayer was answered?
- Do you struggle with having faith versus figuring most things out with logic and reasoning?
- What are some “battles” you recall where the Lord did the fighting for you?
- When your faith wavers, what have you done or what could you do to increase your faith?

Day 2

- Jesus taught that we should not be anxious about what to eat or wear. Is that easy or hard for you?
- During your wilderness times, how have you seen the Lord provide for your needs?
- Do you feel you know God in your head only or in your heart as well? If only in your head, do you have plans to seek Him with your heart too?
- Is prayer a top priority or a second thought?

Day 3

- Do you feel like God always hears your prayers, or are you reluctant to seek Him for your needs?
- What are some of your favorite promises in Scripture that you rely on regularly?
- Have you ever seen what seemed impossible become possible through prayer? Please give an example.
- When going through a testing, do you draw closer to God or find yourself drifting further away?

Day 4

- Have you ever lost a friendship as a result of your relationship with the Lord? How did you deal with/handle that?
- Can you recall a time where you experienced God in an interruption of what you were doing? What were the circumstances?
- Have you ever obeyed God when it didn't make sense, and then later found out that it did actually make sense?
- Prayer has its costs. Which one do you struggle with the most? (time, money, interruptions, not knowing why, etc.)

Day 5

- Why is it hard to be thankful during trying times?
- When things aren't going well, are you an optimist or a pessimist? How do you encourage yourself?
- Which type of prayer do you engage in the most? (praise and thanksgiving, agreement, protection, petition)
- Are your prayers mostly monologues or dialogues?

WEEK THREE

Day 1

- What would you like to improve in your relationship with God—more head knowledge or more heart knowledge? Why?
- What do you plan to pursue this week: more passion for His Word, consecration, or reverence?
- Is it hard to quiet your mind and eliminate distractions when you pray? What do you find most distracting?
- What is your favorite verse to recite when things seem impossible?

Day 2

- Have you ever felt the Lord was speaking to you in a dream? Please share your experience.
- Have you ever had an impression, or knowing, that turned out to be a direction from God? Describe that for us.
- Has God ever spoken to you through a song? What happened?
- What ways have you experienced God speaking to you?

Day 3

- Have you ever been stretched out of your comfort zone with something the Lord asked you to do? What happened?
- Why do we find it hard to pray for our enemies?
- Do you find it difficult to share your needs with others? Why or why not?
- How do you remind yourself to pray for others?

Day 4

- Have you ever needed to seek wise counsel? Who do you usually go to?
- Would anyone like to share their experience with fasting?
- What does abiding in Christ look like for you?
- Which fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 has become more evident in your life as you have matured spiritually?

Day 5

- What are ways you can remind yourself of God's blessings in your life?
- Testimonies are powerful faith builders. Does anyone want to share a testimony of something God has done for you or your family?
- Have you ever found yourself treating God like a vending machine? How did you recognize it, and what did you do to correct it?
- During Christian holy days, do you and your family have special traditions that remind you of what God has done for you?

WEEK FOUR

Day 1

- Do you have trouble praying for your loved one's salvation because of past hurts between the two of you? How can you overcome that barrier?
- Does anyone want to share how they came to Christ? Did someone you know share the gospel with you?
- What barriers kept you from becoming a Christian at first?
- What are some of the issues in today's culture that make it hard for someone to accept Jesus?

Day 2

- What were you surprised by in today's lesson on healing?
- Would anyone like to share a personal testimony of healing?
- Why do you think the New Testament has so many accounts of healing in it?
- Have you ever prayed for someone to be healed? What is your experience?

Day 3

- Have you ever prayed about what gift to buy someone? How did that turn out?
- Has the Lord ever directed you to do something financially that did not make sense at first? How did you or your family respond to that?
- Is it hard to pray about finances and trust God with your money? Why?
- Have you ever been blessed by someone else's generosity? If you feel comfortable, share your story.

Day 4

- Have you ever felt inadequate for a task that you believed God called you to do? Describe your experience.
- Do you struggle with time management? In what areas do you need to be more efficient?
- Have you ever prayed about your entertainment choices? What was the result?
- Have you ever thrown a movie or book away because of offensive content? If your family was involved, how did they react?

Day 5

- Do you pray for our nation, or has that not been on your radar?
- Why do you think it's difficult to find time to include prayers for leaders, pastors, and those in authority?
- What are some ways we as the body of Christ could better represent Him on earth?
- Is it easy or difficult for you to meditate on Scripture? Describe your experience.

WEEK FIVE

Day 1

- Have you ever experienced a time when you felt God calling you to do something, and you, like Gideon, felt like the least of these and unable to do what He was asking?

- Can you describe a time when you saw the Lord exercise His authority and power in your life when your situation seemed impossible?
- Are you comfortable exercising Christ's authority over evil in your life? Is this something you are interested in learning?
- What Scripture in today's lesson spoke to you the most?

Day 2

- If you had lived during Jesus' time on earth, how do you think you might have responded to the signs and wonders He performed?
- Does it excite you or intimidate you to be thought of as a representative of Christ on earth?
- Do you ever wonder what the "greater works" might be that Jesus talked about?
- Which sign or wonder that Jesus demonstrated excites you the most?

Day 3

- Have you ever felt like God has given you assignments in your life? Please describe.
- Have you ever prayed for assignments from God? What happened?
- Do you feel confident that when you pray the Holy Spirit will empower your prayers? Why or why not?
- Would anyone like to share certain issues or people you feel a burden to pray for?

Day 4

- When have you felt like you were in a spiritual battle?
- What scriptures do you use to pray for God's protection?
- What piece of the armor stood out to you?
- Have you ever used the keys of binding and loosing to thwart attacks of evil?

Day 5

- How do you discern the difference between a difficult circumstance and a spiritual battle?
- Have you ever prayed over something that seemed broken and it was restored? Tell us about that.
- Do some things seem too small to pray about? How has this lesson changed your mind about that?
- Have you ever paid attention to your thoughts? Are they mostly negative or positive?

WEEK SIX

Day 1

- Have you ever felt like God was too busy to answer your prayers?
- Do you struggle with persevering in prayer? What motivates you to keep praying?
- Which Scripture verses do you rely on when you feel like quitting?
- What are some things you do to stay thankful in tough times?

DAY 2

- Have you ever experienced a trial that actually turned out to be a blessing in disguise?
- How do you encourage yourself when you are waiting for an answer to your prayers?
- Have you ever felt like Joseph, betrayed by someone and suffering unjustly? Did God bring good out of that situation?
- How do you encourage yourself during dry seasons when God seems far away?

DAY 3

- What are you more comfortable with: making pros and cons lists or asking God open-ended questions?
- When has God directed you to do something that you had not thought of before you prayed?
- Do you ever find yourself putting limits on how God can answer your prayers, or are you comfortable giving Him free rein?
- Is it hard for you to let go of strong opinions and be open to anything God might direct you to do? Why or why not?

DAY 4

- Have you ever asked the Lord to reveal your motives when you pray?
- When you confess your sins to the Lord, do you still struggle with guilt? How does Romans 8:1 help you with that?
- When have you found yourself praying for something, then contradicting that prayer with negative words?
- Do you struggle with impatience when your prayers are not answered quickly? How can you overcome that?

DAY 5

- Have you ever thought that an ache or symptom was due to spiritual warfare? If so, what did you do?
- What negative emotions do you struggle with the most? Are you able to discern the thoughts behind them?
- Of all the lessons in this study, which one spoke to you the most?
- What changes do you plan to implement in your prayer life as a result of this study?