

Leader's Guide for *Praying Backwards* by Bryan Chapell

How to Use the Discussion Questions and Study Guide

Discussion questions for the Introduction and each chapter are included at the back of the book. One who is leading a study of the book in a small group or Sunday school setting can use these questions as a guide for what to include in his or her teaching of the material. They could also be used for class discussion as the material is taught.

In addition, study guides for participants and discussion leaders can be obtained online at: www.bryanchapell.com. These study guides are designed for use in a Sunday school or small group setting of 45 minutes to an hour for each session. When printed, each lesson is formatted to one page with questions on front and back.

Each lesson in the study guide includes two questions to answer before reading each chapter, followed by eight to ten questions to answer after reading. There is space after each question for participants to write their answers from their personal study, focusing especially on personal application.

The study guide can be used with many different class formats. For example, if the group is large, it could be divided into small groups for discussion of answers to the questions, followed by a lecture or wrap-up of the material for the large group. Or, because the questions focus on application, a brief lecture of the material could be followed by a discussion of the study questions. Participants will be encouraged to answer all of the questions before class when they see that all of them will be discussed during the class session. The discussion could begin on question #3 in each lesson, the first question under "Think after you read."

The leader's guide gives a general idea of what answers to look for in facilitating the discussion. There are factual, opinion, and applications questions. Generally, one answer is sufficient for a factual question, two for an opinion question, and two or three for an application question. The leader should move the discussion at a lively pace, moving to the next question once the answer has been covered, in order to complete all of the questions in the time allowed. A good facilitator will always give a positive and encouraging response to every answer that is offered. To an obviously wrong answer, rather than embarrassing the person, one could respond, "I can tell that meant a great deal to you. Where in the chapter did you get that thought?" or, "That is an interesting thought. Did anyone else get a different idea?" It is best to ask for volunteers on personal questions.

The final question in each lesson focuses on the prayer at the end of each chapter in *Praying Backwards*. It could be a springboard for group prayer incorporating that particular emphasis.

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Introduction: Praying for Change

Think before you read

1. Do you normally end your prayers with the words “in Jesus name”? If so, why? If not, why not?

Answers may vary.

2. What are some personal questions and frustrations you have about prayer?

Answers may vary, such as: Why doesn't God alleviate suffering? Why should I pray when God is sovereign and His will is going to be accomplished anyway?

Think after you read

3. What sorts of things or situations usually prompt you to pray?

Answers may vary and will be personal, such as: A crisis situation, others' needs or my own, etc.

4. What are to be the motivations or ultimate objectives of our prayers (see p. 13)?

Jesus' honor and purposes; yielding our priorities to Christ's priorities; the glory of Jesus.

5. From personal experience, why are you glad that God is not “obligated to do what we think should happen” (p. 14)? Give examples from your life.

Answers may vary, focusing on specific instances where the wisdom and mercy of God were revealed by His saying “no” to some specific request.

6. What are some more reasons why it is a good thing that God is not obligated to fulfill all of our wishes (p. 14)?

Answers may vary, such as: Our understanding and wisdom are limited; God knows that what we want may not be for our ultimate good and His glory; our wishes often deny the realities of our fallen world, such as suffering and trouble, etc.

7. What are some things that can and cannot be accomplished through prayer (from p. 15)? How does this encourage you?

Prayer may not help us avoid suffering; cannot bind God; cannot direct the will of God. Prayer can give us peace in the midst of suffering; give us confidence of God's purposes in trials; we can pray according to God's will and rest in the assurance of His love; we can seek the favor of the heavenly Father; approach the throne of grace without the burden of our sin and with the righteousness of our Savior; ask for His blessing based on God's wisdom, etc.

8. Upon honest reflection, to what do your thoughts and desires normally turn for satisfaction of heart?

Personal; answers may vary.

9. What kind of prayers will be “ultimately most satisfying to our hearts” (p.16)?

Offering our prayers for Jesus' sake; His priorities our first concern; motivated by the desire to glorify him.

10. What other thoughts from the Introduction did you find noteworthy or helpful?

Answers may vary.

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**Chapter 1
Praying in Jesus' Name: *In Jesus' Name, Amen Begin***

Think before you read

1. How have you usually interpreted Jesus' words, "my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name"? (John 16:23-24; see also John 14:13-14 and 15:16)

Answers may vary.

2. What sometimes hinders you from coming to God with your daily concerns?

Personal; answers may vary, such as: I don't want to "bother" God with the little details of my life; I feel unworthy; the guilt of my sins; etc.

Think after you read

3. What was encouraging to you on pp. 18-19 concerning your own questions and hesitations about prayer?

Answers may vary, such as: Jesus is patient and does not condemn my questions or lack of understanding, etc.

4. What has to happen before we are eligible to pray "in Jesus' name" (pp. 21-22)?

The work of the Holy Spirit in uniting us to Jesus Christ by faith so that we may be robed in His righteousness and approach God in the mercy and merits of our Savior.

5. What benefits do we receive from Christ's intercession on our behalf (pp. 22-23)? How do they affect your attitude toward prayer?

The ability to have our appeals lovingly heard by the Father; direct access to the Father with the holy status of Jesus Himself. Personal answers may vary.

6. How is the Holy Spirit involved when we pray in Jesus' name (p. 24)?

The Holy Spirit conforms our prayers to Christ's purposes to advance the name of Jesus and conform them to His will. By praying in Jesus' name, we engage the power and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

7. How would you summarize, from pp. 24-25, what it means to pray in Jesus' name?

Answers may vary, such as: It means that we pray for Jesus' purposes, enveloped with concern that He be represented, blessed, and glorified.

8. In which of the ways that children pray (see examples on pp. 26-27) did you identify the way you sometimes pray?

Personal; answers may vary.

9. What instructed and inspired you in Eric's story (pp. 27-28)?

Personal; answers may vary.

10. How is praying in Jesus' name dependent upon knowledge and trust in the character of God (p. 29-30)?

Our trust in God is based on His character and love demonstrated in the cross of Jesus Christ, which assures us of His sovereign and eternal care. Our perception of the greatness and goodness of God transforms our prayers into an offering of ourselves for His purposes, not our own, as our hearts are transformed by His love.

11. When you prayed using the prayer at the end of the chapter, how did it alter your petitions?

Personal; answers may vary.

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**Chapter 2
Praying in Jesus' Way: *Not My Will but Yours***

Think before you read

1. Do you know "The Lord's Prayer" from memory? Can you say it to yourself right now, without the accompaniment of your congregation, while thinking about the meaning of its words? (How did you do?)

Answers may vary.

2. What do you consider the basic necessities of life?

Answers may vary.

Think after you read

3. Using a theological or regular dictionary, give the definitions of "holy" and "hallow."

*Answers may vary, such as: **Holy**—1) exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness; 2) divine: for the Lord our God is holy— Psalms 99:9; 3) devoted entirely to God. **Hallow**—1) to make holy or set apart for holy use; 2) to respect greatly: venerate. (Encyclopedia Britannica Dictionary)*

4. How might your day have been different yesterday had you approached everything with the prayer, "Hallowed be your name" (pp. 35-36)?

Personal; answers may vary.

5. Since God is sovereign, why should we pray, "Your Kingdom come" (pp. 36-37)?

The petition acknowledges God's sovereignty and asks that God's priorities determine the desires and acts of everyone in the world. It places God's purposes as the highest priority of our petitions.

6. Summarize what it means to pray, “Give us each day our daily bread” (pp. 37-41).

Answers will vary, such as: It is praying that God will provide all that is best for us and in so doing sustain our faith. It is a petition for spiritual vitality to do heaven’s work on earth. It is asking God to supply everything we need to nourish the desire and ability to please Him.

7. According to p. 42, what is the key to whether a circumstance is a trial or a temptation? How have you found this to be true in your own life?

The key is found in our own heart, whether we receive the situation as a call to spiritual commitment or an excuse to abandon it. Personal answers will vary.

8. What was encouraging to you about “Forgive us our sins” (pp. 43-45)?

Answers may vary.

9. What is the ultimate reason for and meaning of praying in Jesus’ name (p. 46)?

It is prayer offered to further the purposes of the God who loves us and for the glory of the name that we love above all names.

10. When you prayed using the prayer on p. 48, what new insights or different thoughts did you have?

Personal; answers may vary.

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**Chapter 3
Praying without Doubting: *Trusting Our Father, the King***

Think before you read

1. Read Mark 11:11-26 and Matthew 21:21-22. What questions about prayer do these verses prompt in your own mind?

Answers may vary.

2. What are basic answers that God gives to prayer? List as many as you can think of.

Answers may vary, such as: No, yes, not yet, wait, or immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.

Think after you read

3. Read Luke 11:2-4, 9-10 and Matthew 6:31-33. What are the conditions under which we truly pray in Jesus' name (p. 52)?

Those who believe in Him must ask for the will and purpose of God above all things; believing prayer requires seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, with the absolute trust that God will then add all that is best for us.

4. What does it mean to include in our prayers, "Yet, Lord, not my will but your will be done" (pp. 52-54)?

This is not a concession of faith but an affirmation of it. It states that God is able to do what we ask but also concedes that we are totally dependent upon His willingness to help.

5. How can we offer "faithful prayer that heaven delights to answer" (pp. 54-55)?

Answers may vary, such as: When we pray for all that promotes the will and glory of God; by not expecting God's favor if we hold grudges; praying with godly priorities; praying for our Lord's purposes to honor Him; etc.

6. What difference does it make whether or not we believe that the God to whom we pray is sovereign (pp. 55-57)?

Believing that God is sovereign establishes the fact that He is in control and we are not. It encourages us to pray because He is able to accomplish much that is beyond our sight. Failure to believe in God's sovereignty submerges our incentive to pray because if He is not sovereign there is no assurance that He has the will, ability, wisdom, or power to provide what He promises.

7. Has God ever answered a prayer of yours "immeasurably more than all you asked or imagined"? When and how did He do that?

Personal; answers may vary.

8. Summarize the explanation of James 5:15-16 on pp. 58-60, and how it helps you pray for healing for yourself and others.

Personal; answers may vary.

9. What is the difference between asking God for something "if it is His will" and "according to His will" (p. 63)? Which is better and why?

If it is His will implies that maybe God will heal and maybe not. According to His will acknowledges that God will answer and that His blessings will be according to a sovereign plan that is as beautiful and boundless as He.

10. When you prayed using the prayer on pp. 65-66, how was your faith encouraged?

Personal; answers may vary.

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**Chapter 4
Praying in the Spirit: *Power beyond Our Power***

Think before you read

1. Why do you think God wants us to pray, even though He knows what we need before we ask?

Answers may vary.

2. How have you understood the role of the Holy Spirit in your prayer life, if at all?

Answers may vary.

Think after you read

3. How did the explanation of Romans 8:28 in the context of 8:26-29 increase your understanding of how that verse relates to prayer (pp. 69-75)?

Answers may vary, such as: The Holy Spirit takes the prayers of weak, unwise, fallible humans and transforms them into the pistons of the heavenly engines that drive the material and spiritual universe so that all things work together for good.

4. How is the meaning of Romans 8:28 augmented by 8:29, and how does that affect the way you think about it (p.75)?

Answers may vary, such as: The good the Spirit most desires for us is our transformation into Christ's likeness.

5. If you are a Christian, in what ways have you noticed that your "black-and-white" world has been replaced by one of living color since you came to faith in Christ (pp. 76-77)?

Personal; answers may vary.

6. In light of pp. 75-78 and Psalm 37:4, what is your evaluation of the current delight of your heart? For what does that evaluation prompt you to ask God?

Personal; answers may vary.

7. In what ways does the Holy Spirit change the motivations for our prayers (pp. 78-79)?

Answers may vary, such as: He causes us not only to seek Jesus' priorities above our own, but also to actually want to seek them; He overwhelms us with the depth of Christ's love and our heart responds with love for Him and the desire to serve Him, and we most want all that most pleases heaven.

8. What difference does it make in our requests when we approach prayer as a privilege rather than as a bribe (pp. 78-79)?

Rather than praying ritualistically for release from destructive urges in the vain expectation that our labor will bribe God to eradicate our sinful desire, when we pray in the Spirit, we are filled with wanting Christ Himself and delight to speak to the One whom we love, because we have no greater want than to discover and do what He wants.

9. How does this chapter change the way you think about your own failures (pp. 80-83)?

Personal; answers may vary.

10. As you prayed using the prayer on pp. 83-84, what new confidence did you experience because of the Holy Spirit's role in it?

Personal; answers may vary.

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**Chapter 5
Praying Boldly: As a Child of God**

Think before you read

1. What sometimes inhibits you from going to God in prayer with your concerns, both great and small?

Personal; answers may vary.

2. When you do go to God in prayer, what prevents you from praying boldly?

Personal; answers may vary.

Think after you read

3. What part does our union with Christ have in our praying boldly (pp. 86-89)?

Answers may vary, such as: Through our union with Christ we are no longer alienated from God but come to Him in the righteousness of Christ, in His strength and His relationship with the Father. Heaven now receives our prayers on the basis of our having the status of the Father's beloved Son with whom we are united. When we pray in Jesus' name, we pray with His identity.

4. How can your identity as a child of God embolden your prayers (pp. 89-91)?

Answers may vary, such as: Because God is our heavenly Father, He listens to us because we speak to Him with the voice of His child, and with fathers we can be even bolder than we are with friends.

5. What is your normal pattern of prayer—occasional or frequent, by a set pattern (such as A-C-T-S) or conversational, etc.? How do pp. 91-94 encourage you to pray constantly as “the reflexes of your spirit affirm the most basic requests”?

Personal; answers may vary.

6. What concerns of yours did you ever consider too small to “bother” God with, or too great for Him to do anything about? How do pp. 95-97 help your thinking about praying consistently for all things great and small?

Personal; answers may vary.

7. On pp. 98-100, what principles do you find for “harmonizing our expectations with the Bible’s strategy for Christ’s glory”?

There are many that could be noted, such as: Big prayers get out of hand not because we request miracles but because we demand them; it would be contrary to the pattern of Scripture to expect miracles to continue in large numbers when God is not inaugurating a new epoch of His redemptive plan; etc.

8. How does knowing that “our time and space do not limit God” make you bolder in prayer (p. 99)?

Answers may vary.

9. How has this chapter changed the way you think about prayer?

Answers may vary. The leader could ask, “Is there something that stood out to you or was especially helpful that we have not mentioned yet?”

10. When you prayed using the prayer on p. 104, what was enlightening or surprising to you?

Answers may vary.

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**Chapter 6
Praying Expectantly: *For All Things Always***

Think before you read

1. Why is it sometimes difficult for you to pray expectantly?

Personal; answers may vary.

2. What benefits have you witnessed and experienced through corporate prayer?

Answers may vary.

Think after you read

3. What did George Mueller expect in answer to his prayers that we also may expect (pp. 105-108)?

Answers may vary, such as: Mueller expected God to answer as heaven knew was best; he knew that God's responses could be more glorious and wiser than the requests he had made; Mueller used Jesus' name with the expectation that God would answer in the way that most glorified the Savior.

4. Have you ever kept a prayer journal or record of answers to specific prayers? What did you learn from that practice? How do pp. 107-108 encourage you in that way?

Personal; answers may vary.

5. How is specific prayer an act of worship (pp. 108-109)?

Answers may vary, such as: Specific prayer demonstrates that we are willing to submit everything in our lives to God—our smallest desires and greatest aspirations. It opens our lives to the presence and rule of the Lord. It directs our hearts from self-dependence.

6. What unhealthy approaches to prayer are avoided by praying specifically (pp. 108-109)?

Calling on God without truly honoring Him; keeping our prayer so generic and infrequent that we are really only seeking God's blessing on our control of our lives; asking God to bless our own management of our lives rather than depending upon Him; etc.

7. What kinds of answers may we expect from God in the midst of difficulties (pp. 110-113)?

Answers may include: That God will do what is best for us and the ministry of the Gospel; that God can generate the glory of His Son from the seeds of pain or pleasure; that God will sustain us through hard times; that they will prove rather than deny our faith; etc.

8. When has the reality of your faith been proven through hardship?

Personal; answers may vary.

9. How do pp. 114-118 increase your comprehension of the full power and magnitude of prayer?

Answers may vary.

10. When you prayed using the prayer on pp. 199-200, how were your petitions shaped by your expectations?

Personal; answers may vary.

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**Chapter 7
Praying Persistently: *Never, Never Give Up***

Think before you read

1. For what have you been praying for a long time with seemingly no answer? What has made you persist in it, or caused you to give up?

Personal; answers may vary.

2. Why do you think that God, who knows and controls all things, wants us to persist in prayer?

Answers may vary.

Think after you read

3. Why do we sometimes lose heart and fail to persist in prayer (pp. 122-124)?

We grow weary of asking; we grow to doubt that God will answer or has our best interests at heart; we respect God's majesty and are fretful to approach His throne with repeated petitions; etc.

4. Why is it both presumptuous and faithless to pray once and then forget about a request that requires the passing of time to answer (pp. 126-127)?

Praying once and forgetting about it ignores the reality of our perpetual need of God and denies confidence in His continuing work in our lives.

5. How do pp. 125-129 encourage you to persist in prayer "through apparent futility"?

Answers may vary, such as: I must measure God's faithfulness by my understanding of His character rather than by my impressions of my circumstances; I trust my Savior because He works perfectly, not because He works quickly; I can believe that God is yet doing something better than I imagine through my persistent prayer and similar prayers of thousands in decades past, present, and future; etc.

6. According to pp. 130-134, why does God require persistent prayer?

Answers may include: He does so to create Christlikeness in us; that Christ's name might be glorified; to temper our human selfishness and strengthen our divine dependence; to exercise our faith and keep it strong; to deepen our dependence upon Him; and to transform us spiritually.

7. What would be the dangers in being able to “snap our fingers and get God to perform on cue” (p. 132)?

Answers may vary, such as: It would promote self-indulgence rather than holiness; it would merely feed appetites that distract us from God; Christ's glory would not remain our priority; it would circumvent God's process of using trials to provide opportunities to depend on His sufficiency and to teach us to relish His promises for an eternity without tears; etc.

8. What are the three greatest concerns about which you are praying today? Carefully examine them. Are they truly for Christ's glory? If not, how could you think and pray about them in that way (pp. 134-135)?

Personal; answers may vary.

9. What are some of the benefits we receive when God delays His answers and we persist in praying (pp. 135-138)?

Answers will vary, such as: Our spiritual transformation; bringing our will in harmony with His; the opening of our eyes to the changes God wants to make in us to advance our Christlikeness; examining our prayers to make see if they are truly for Christ's glory; consciences sensitized by the Spirit; reordered priorities; transformed hearts, etc.

10. When you prayed using the prayer on pp. 138-139, what was different from how you usually pray?

Personal; answers may vary.

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**Chapter 8
Praying in God's Will: *Within the Fence of Righteousness***

Think before you read

1. Read 1 John 5:14-15. What does it mean to you to pray "according to God's will"?

Answers may vary.

2. When have you sought God's will in a difficult decision? What helped you make that decision?

Personal; answers may vary.

Think after you read

3. What things determine whether or not a prayer request is wrong and outside of God's will (pp. 143-144)?

It is wrong and outside of God's will: if what we ask for is wrong according to God's Word; if we ask God to bless something that is wrong, even to accomplish something right. Any prayer truly offered in Jesus' name requests only what His Word approves.

4. What difference does it make in our prayers when our assessments and feelings determine our priorities (pp. 144-145)?

Praying according to our own assessments and feelings will lead us to pray outside of God's will. They become our authority rather than God and His Word. They will lead us to pray in the name of our own comfort, anger, ambition, or lust rather than according to God's Word and in submission to His authority, which will always determine the proper path.

5. What part does obedience play in praying for God's will (pp. 145-146)?

It is only through obedience to God's Word that we can know His will and pray for it. When we are walking and praying in obedience, we can have confidence in God's fatherly care to perfect His will in and through us. We will see this as

events unfold, even if their significance may not be apparent for years or until we are with the Lord.

6. Why is it scary to pray that our loved ones—or we—become more Christlike? Yet what are the benefits of praying that way (pp. 146-147)?

It is scary because it may involve God bringing pain into our lives to turn us from sin or to prune the wayward branches of our behavior to encourage fresh spiritual growth. Yet praying to become more like Christ is to know spiritual power and to promote His purpose in our life to reflect Him to the world. It ensures that God will do all that His sovereign power determines will most glorify Jesus through us.

7. What practical help do you receive from pp. 147-150 for deciding between multiple righteous options?

Answers may vary, such as: It frees me from choice paralysis to know that as long as I operate with the wisdom God provides and honor the requirements of His Word, I need not fear operating outside of His will; I can know that the Bible is sufficient to provide adequate guidance for me; where faithful prayer and Biblical thought lead me to believe that competing decisions are equally righteous, I should thank God for the bounty of choices and then choose; etc.

8. How can we respond with faithful prayer when God answers with difficulties or a “no” answer (pp. 150-155)?

Answers may vary, such as: We can alter our prayer without doubting God’s goodness to express our submission to His lordship and love; when our prayers reach a dead end, the Bible assures that us God has a better path; we can express our humility and trust regarding God’s will by continuing to pray faithfully in response to distressing answers; we can know that God has no greater desire than for our hearts to be bound to His with nothing of this world between; etc.

9. In what ways are you building the Bible—its truth and teaching—into your thoughts and life?

Personal; answers will vary and should be specific.

10. When you prayed using the prayer on pp. 155-156, what helpful guidance did it give for praying in God’s will?

Personal; answers may vary.

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**Chapter 9
Praying in God's Wisdom: *Within the Fence of Prudence***

Think before you read

1. What priorities or principles does our current society offer us to influence the choices that we make?

Answers may vary, such as: Personal peace and affluence; wealth; prestige; power; beauty and fashion; fame; advanced education; possessions; long life; carefree living; etc.

2. When did you make a decision based on society's values—contrary to God's—and what were the consequences?

Personal; answers may vary.

Think after you read

3. What is involved when our decisions are guided by Christian prudence (p. 160)?

Answers may include: Prayerfully seeking wisdom from God's Word learned through personal study and church instruction; humbly asking mature Christians for their counsel about how they believe God's Word applies to our situation; praying for the Holy Spirit's insight and help to understand the Bible, the situation, and ourselves so that we can make godly decisions.

4. What are some principles that determine whether or not our prayers are loving (pp. 160-162)?

Answers may vary, such as: Others' interests must be considered above our own; we must put God's priorities first and then trust Him to take care of the future; etc.

5. What are some principles that determine whether or not our prayers are legitimate and responsible (pp. 162-165)?

Answers may vary, such as: Legitimate prayers weigh God's interests above our own; they do not agitate for our own gain; they seek Christ's glory; they pursue the best use of the gifts and talents God has given us for the advancement of His

Kingdom; they seek the glory of our Savior's name; they are designed to make us givers rather than takers; etc.

6. How does the Holy Spirit help us determine whether or not our prayers are according to God's will (pp. 165-168)?

Answers will vary, such as: The Holy Spirit does not instruct us to pray in ways contrary to God's Word; He never calls us to do anything that God's Word says is unrighteous or not in keeping with its priorities; He leads us to pray for things that advance the cause of Christ and are consistent with God's Word, etc.

7. When have you felt the Spirit's leading to apply "the accelerator" or "the brakes" to a particular situation (pp. 166-168)?

Personal; answers may vary.

8. How does the Bible help us read our circumstances (pp. 168-171)?

Answers may include: God's Word is the expression of His character; being guided by the Word in our prayers is Christ's primary way of talking with us as we seek His will; as we immerse ourselves in His Word, we are able to walk life's path with Christ informing our thoughts; careful reading of Scripture becomes a form of prayer in which Jesus walks with us to interpret our world, etc.

9. When did you make a decision according to God's priorities—contrary to the world's priorities—and how did God bless that decision?

Personal; answers may vary.

10. When you prayed using the prayer on pp. 172-173, what petitions were new or especially helpful?

Personal; answers may vary and should be specific.

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**Chapter 10
Praying Forward: *Paddle and Pray***

Think before you read

1. When you pray, what difference does it make to know that biblical prayer transforms our world?

Answers may vary.

2. When you pray, what difference does it make to know that God is really listening?

Answers may vary.

Think after you read

3. From pp. 175-181, how is prayer more than conversation with God?

Answers may vary, such as: In Biblical prayer, we think God's thoughts after Him; God speaks to Himself by the thoughts of the believer; it is not so much a conversation as a dynamic monologue in which the Spirit stirs the spirit of the believer to speak to the heavenly Father; prayer changes our world; etc.

4. How does prayer change us (pp. 176-179)?

Answers will vary, such as: God causes the thoughts and inclinations of the believer both to engage the divine will and to inform the human will; God changes us so that we can perceive the world and eternity as they really are; it enables us to perceive God's greater realities; etc.

5. After prayerfully reviewing the specific causes of weakened prayer on pp. 181-182, which ones may currently be limiting your own prayers?

Personal; answers may vary.

6. What is wrong with thinking that the duration, eloquence, or multiplication of our words in prayer will obligate God to act as we wish (pp. 183-185)?

Answers will vary, such as: When we depend on the quantity or quality of our prayer to determine its spiritual effectiveness, we imprison God within the limits of our abilities and shut Him within the confines of our self-effort. God hears our prayers because of His mercy, not because of our mastery of them or of Him. He listens to them not because our prayers bribe Him but because he loves to honor those who depend on Him. When we begin to use prayers as bargaining chips to barter for God's mercy, we actually deny His mercy—implying that He simply needs to be bought by our exertion. God knows the difference between prayers motivated by manipulation and those motivated by love.

7. According to pp. 185-186, what is the essence of humility in prayer?

It is not something we manufacture but something we gain as we confess to God that nothing in us deserves His grace—not our conduct, not our service, not our prayers, not even our humility. It confesses our need of Christ and appeals to the Father in His name, for His sake, and because of His righteousness in our place.

8. What are some habits that you have found helpful in the past to focus your prayers and aid you in maintaining Biblical priorities (pp. 186-189)?

Personal; answers may vary.

9. Which of the habits or patterns on pp. 186-189 would you like to begin to incorporate into your personal prayer life?

Personal, answers may vary.

10. When you prayed using the prayer on pp. 191-192, and also read the Conclusion, how were you encouraged to continue “praying backwards” in Jesus’ name?

Answers may vary.