



Living for God's Glory

7th-12th Grade Guide Book
Vol.5—Homeschool Edition

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts
to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6



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Contributors: Steve Barnhart, Megan Hickman, Katherine Robinson, and the LifeStone Ministries staff

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CURRICULUM OVERVIEW



What Is the *Illuminate Bible Series*?

Do you want your student(s) to gain a firm knowledge of Scripture? The Bible exposition veterans at LifeStone Ministries want to help. *Illuminate Bible Series* has a unique approach that will enrich their studies with intelligent, reliable, and stimulating Bible knowledge. Your student(s) will genuinely enjoy these engaging Bible lessons in their exploration of God's truth.

“They received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11).

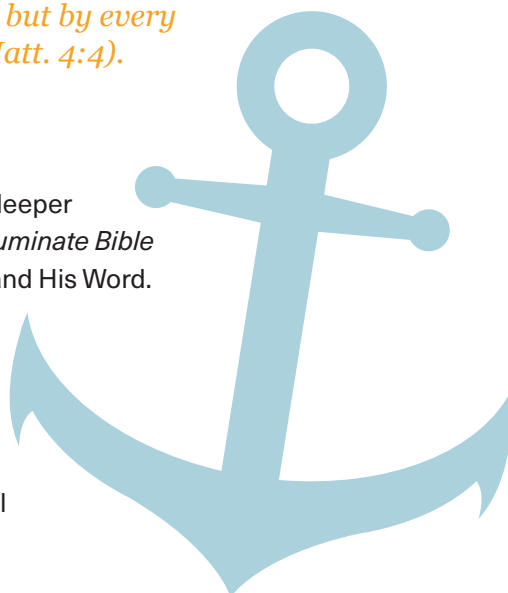
The Most Important Class of the Day!

Science, math, and spelling are necessary and valuable topics of study, but nothing can surpass the value of consistent time devoted to learning God's Word. Numerous studies paint a painful picture of the state of biblical literacy and Christian conduct among “churched” teens and college students. “Good kids” who attend church regularly all their lives are reaching college with minimal knowledge of Bible basics, having no serious interest in Bible study or prayer and lacking the spiritual discipline to live in accordance with biblical truth. If Scripture truly is the only source for authoritative truth, then our students need to study it and know it well. No other study or pursuit of knowledge can have the eternal impact that Bible study does. It should never be ignored or treated as a matter of secondary importance.

“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matt. 4:4).

Going Deep

Some scriptural truths seem simple on the surface, yet the deeper you explore, the more spiritual riches are brought to light. *Illuminate Bible Series* is intended to help students think deeply about God and His Word. The number of Bible learning aids available for students today is enormous. Yet, on average, teens today know less about the Bible than teens a generation ago. The best way to combat this uncomfortable reality is to draw students into meaningful engagement with Scripture. Our robust Bible study materials help teens wrestle with vital Bible teachings and solid doctrine.



How Does the *Illuminate Bible Series* Work?

A Dependence on God's Word

Our approach is simple. We want to cultivate a love for and dependence on God and His Word.

The *7th-12th Grade Guide Book* is a Christ-focused, worldview-oriented, expository Bible curriculum that we pray will nurture students' desire to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10:27).

Each weekly lesson provides several articles. Students read a key passage of Scripture to begin each week, followed by related passages to help them better grasp the concepts being taught. The lessons are designed to be read by the student(s) and then used by an instructor (if applicable).

A Typical Week

Each day of study should include the following elements:

- **Bible**—Read the Scripture text for the day.
- **Daily Lesson**—Read/teach an article from the *7th-12th Grade Guide Book*.
- **Student Workbook**—The student(s) will answer the questions in the *Student Workbook* that correspond to the article they read in the *7th-12th Grade Guide Book*. The *Student Workbook* questions can also be answered at the end of the week if preferred.

There are multiple ways to teach each lesson. If you have fewer than five days of Bible class, you may want to combine multiple articles on certain days, or you may omit some and let the student(s) read them on their own in self-guided study. Here is a sample of how a week can be structured:

MondayRead the **Introduction** and **Story Elements** article.

TuesdayRead **The Bible & ...** feature and the **Context** article.

WednesdayRead the **Connections** article and the **Christ Focus** feature.

ThursdayRead the **Doctrine** article and the **Worldview** feature.

FridayRead the **Application** article.

How to Use the *7th-12th Grade Guide Book*

The *7th-12th Grade Guide Book* is the learning manual for older students, beginning with grade 7. It is a two-semester study that includes eight units spread over thirty-two weeks, plus a four-week seasonal unit.

Each week of the *7th-12th Grade Guide Book* focuses on a prominent **Bible passage** to be read the first day. Four additional key articles provide **supplemental passages** and different perspectives that encourage a deeper understanding of the main Bible passage in light of other Scripture truths.

STORY ELEMENTS—a thought-provoking treatment of elements within *the featured Bible story*

CONTEXT—noteworthy information about the featured story's *context and background*

CONNECTIONS—significant connections between the featured Bible story and other *related Scriptures and biblical concepts*

DOCTRINE—an engaging discussion of *doctrinal truth* related to the featured Bible story

APPLICATION—a *review* of the week's lessons and meaningful ways to *put truth into practice*

Other features are included in each week to enrich understanding of the unit's concept and equip the student(s) to apply it to their lives.

THE BIBLE & . . . —a study of how great Bible truths impact the world in a variety of ways, including the arts, people, and culture

CHRIST FOCUS—a look at how the Scripture passage and lesson point to Jesus and the gospel

WORLDVIEW—a comparison between the Christian worldview and specific aspects of other worldviews, including various world religions and unorthodox teachings in the church

7th-12th Grade Guide Book Extras!

Each week is not only packed with Bible-rich lessons but also offers additional rewarding insights and helpful learning aids.

- A weekly **key concept** and **key verse** are provided to sum up the main point of the weekly lesson. You may wish to treat the key verse as a memory verse as well.
- **Callout boxes** offer unique and valuable ideas to consider that aid in understanding the lesson.
- Important **vocabulary words** are highlighted throughout these lessons; definitions are in the glossary at the back of this book.

A **Unit Project** is suggested at the end of each unit. If you wish to incorporate these projects, assign the student(s) to begin working on a project at the start of its respective unit. For example, assign the Unit 1 Project the day you start teaching unit 1.

Look at the **Lesson Chronology** on pages 437–438 to see how each lesson fits into the history of the events in the Bible.

WRITERS

Weekly articles: Steve Barnhart (Units 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7), Megan Hickman (Unit 3), Katherine Robinson (Lesson 2 of Seasonal Unit), LifeStone Ministries editorial staff (Unit 8, Lessons 1 and 3-4 of Seasonal Unit)

The Bible & . . . features: LifeStone Ministries editorial staff

Worldview features: LifeStone Ministries editorial staff

See more information on page 439.

Each day focuses on a specific **Scripture passage**.

Each week drives toward **theological and personal application**, which are emphasized in the last two main sections.

DOCTRINE

Believers Are
God's Temple

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Let's explore the truth.

Society tirelessly promotes the notion that individuals have the right to do whatever they desire to their own bodies. The Bible's message is quite the opposite. Followers of Christ are not free to declare their bodies are their own or treat them however they wish. They are to yield their whole being to God, because Christ purchased their lives, using His own blood as currency (1 Cor. 6:20; cf. Acts 20:28). All believers belong to Him. He directs what they are to do with their bodies.

This is not bad news! Christians belong to God, and their lives have security, purpose, and the prospect of joy for all eternity. We are not speaking of cruel bondage but the true and lasting freedom that comes from a relationship with God.

What a privilege God's people enjoy when they are given new life through Christ! In the Old Testament, God promised to make His presence evident in the temple, a building in Jerusalem. It was a glorious structure that King Solomon built to replace the tabernacle that had served this function previously. But this temple was a picture of a more glorious reality to come. Through faith in Jesus, believers become the temple of God.

How does this happen? **Every believer in Christ is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who takes up residence within them.** God's people no longer need to go to a certain place to be in His presence. He is with them wherever they go.

Along with the great privilege and blessing believers have been given, however, there comes great responsibility. Just prior to the verses in our Scripture passage, Paul was urging the believers in Corinth to turn away from the immoral practices that pervaded the cosmopolitan atmosphere of their city (1 Cor. 6:15-18). These practices were not only dangerous for individual believers; they were dangerous for the entire church. Paul explains that the reason sexual sin is so dangerous is that

Christians' individual bodies are members of the one "body" of Christ (the church), which is the temple of God (vss. 15, 19). Since sexual sin joins a person to another person's body in an unlawful way (vs. 16), it is not merely a personal sin. It affects the entire body of Christ. When believers commit sexual sin, they mutilate Christ's body by tearing off one of its "members" (themselves) to become part of another person's body.

Paul puts it bluntly: Christians are not their own (vs. 19). This is a life-changing statement. They belong to God, and they are to serve Him with their whole being. **When Christians acknowledge they are not their own, they experience the blessedness of belonging to God alone.**

Verse 20 reinforces and applies the point Paul has just made. Redemption involves payment. When believers declare that Christ is the Redeemer, they mean that He has bought His people out of slavery to sin. The cost for Him was high. He bore the wrath of God through an agonizing death on a cross. Remembering that cost helps believers know that their bodies are valuable—too valuable to use for any lesser purpose than as a living sacrifice for serving Jesus.

"Those who take Scripture seriously are not prudes or legalists . . . rather, they recognize that God has purchased us for higher things. . . . Part of the reason that Christians flee sexual immorality is that their bodies are for the Lord, who is to be honored in the deeds of the body, as well as in all other behavior."
—Gordon Fee*

SUMMARIZE

Use an activity from page 407 to summarize the lesson together.

*Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Eerdmans).

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WEEK 4 - UNIT 1 - LESSON 4

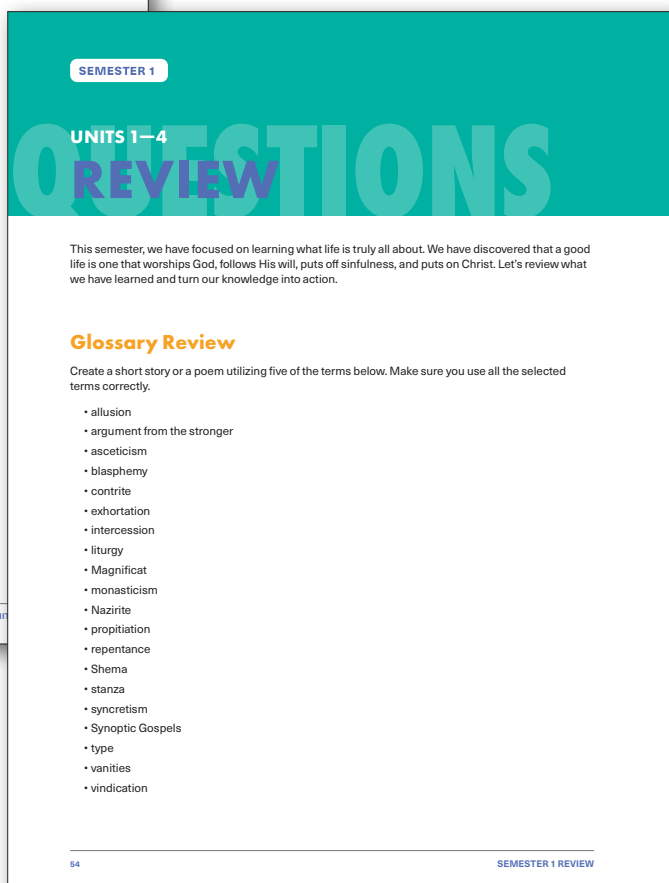
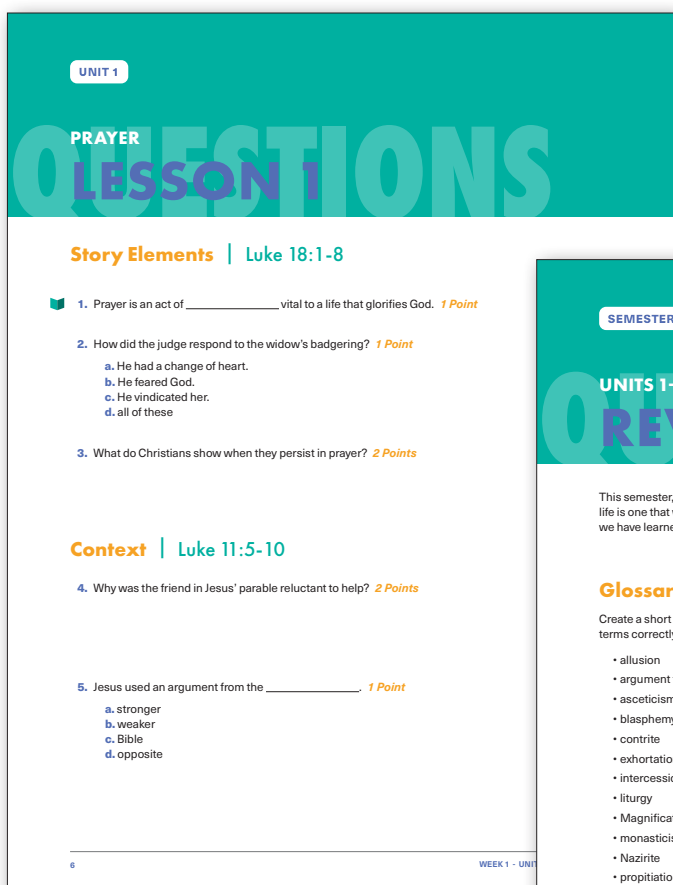
Callout boxes provide additional theological insights or quotes from key theologians or figures from church history.

Suggestions for **summarizing the lesson** through fun activities are provided at the end of the book.

7th-12th Grade Student Workbook

A separate *Student Workbook* makes it possible to measure students' learning progress. This resource was created to challenge students in their walks with Christ. The questions will help the student(s) to review, meditate on, and apply the material studied within each week's lesson. It is our prayer that students will gain a firm understanding of Scripture and thus be equipped to explain and defend the truth about what they believe (2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1 Pet. 3:15). **Weekly Review Questions** and **Unit Tests** are provided. The weekly review questions for each week are worth 30 points. You will find the answers to the weekly review questions in the back of the *7th-12th Grade Guide Book*. The workbook also includes cumulative, creative review activities at the end of each semester.

Unit tests are at the end of each unit in the *Student Workbook*, and unit test answers are in the back of this book. The unit tests are worth 100 points.



The Logic of the Scope & Sequence

There are a couple of common pitfalls regarding God's Word that we wanted to avoid in creating our overall plan for *Illuminate Bible Series*:

Pitfall #1: seeing the Bible as merely a collection of heroic stories, miracles, and principles

Pitfall #2: treating the Bible primarily as a history book by using a strictly chronological approach

We believe the best way to study the Bible is through a careful presentation of its central message—the story of God's grace and glory, which is ultimately expressed in Jesus Christ.

Realities to Remember

- God is at the center of the Bible. He superintended and empowered the exciting lives of the people in the Bible.
- Each book of the Bible is tied to the great central theme of God's grace and glory, even though we seek to understand each book in its historical context.
- Seeing Jesus is essential. Instead of wading through nearly five years of chronological studies to finally get to Jesus, our curriculum features Him prominently in all six years of study.

What Is the Plan?

The six volumes may be used in any order, but the first three are geared more toward a basic understanding of the Bible's message while the final three consider how God's kingdom is at work.

1. **God's Glory: The Reason for Everything**—an exploration of the greatness of God
2. **The Glory of Christ: The Center of History**—a concentrated focus on Christ
3. **Faith: The Response to God's Glory**—a study of God's relationship with His people
4. **God's Glory as He Builds His Kingdom**—a discussion of how God's kingdom grows
5. **Living for God's Glory**—a survey of the ways Christians are to live for God's glory
6. **The Triumph of God's Glory**—a review of how God prevails for all eternity

But I Want a Chronological Study!

Each year is designed to thoroughly explore a major theme of Scripture through all major sections of the Bible. For example, the first year of study, **God's Glory: The Reason for Everything**, presents the unfolding of God's glory through biblical history. The first semester takes a historical survey and locates this theme within the four major time periods in Scripture:

1. CREATION

2. THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

3. THE LIFE OF CHRIST

4. THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

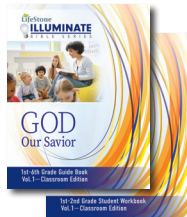
The second semester then dials into key moments that highlighted God's character throughout that history. This pattern of historical progression can be seen repeatedly throughout the six-year scope and sequence as key themes are pursued. So, far from ignoring the chronology of Scripture, we believe the regular repetition of these main eras of Bible history is actually a better way of mastering chronology!

A Great Reward!

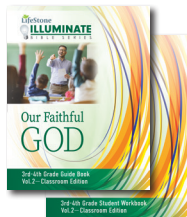
This will so equip the student(s) that at the end of these studies, they will possess invaluable skills to continue their lifelong study of the Bible and its great truths. But besides mastering academic content and historical facts, hopefully the student(s) will also have a close relationship with our glorious God!

Volumes through the Years

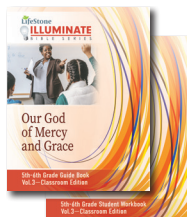
Illuminate was created with flexibility in mind, so every volume of the 7th-12th grade curriculum can be used in any order for any grade in that range. This means you have the freedom either to have all your students in 7th-12th study the same volume at the same time or to assign each volume to a particular grade level. The curriculum is non-cumulative, so it may be studied in any order. The following is only a suggestion for the order in which the volumes may be studied (preK-6th on the left, 7th-12th on the right).



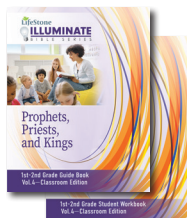
God Our Savior



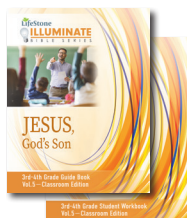
Our Faithful God



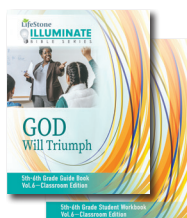
Our God of Mercy and Grace



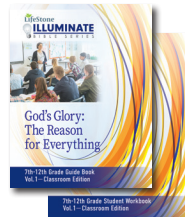
Prophets, Priests, and Kings



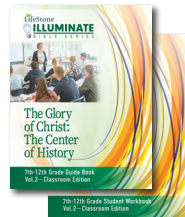
Jesus, God's Son



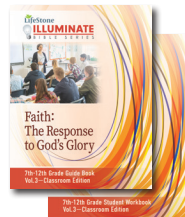
God Will Triumph



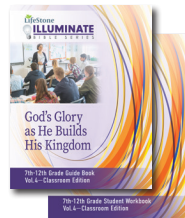
God's Glory: The Reason for Everything



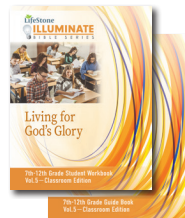
The Glory of Christ: The Center of History



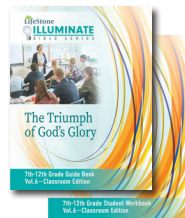
Faith: The Response to God's Glory



God's Glory as He Builds His Kingdom



Living for God's Glory



The Triumph of God's Glory

Seasonal Unit Overview

What Is the Seasonal Unit?

Illuminate's scope and sequence is designed to explore themes in Scripture that point to God's character. Because academic calendars vary from year to year, important religious holidays are not built into the regular sequence of lessons. Rather, we have included a supplemental unit in the back of this book and the workbooks to observe religious holidays and key events. This seasonal unit contains four weeks of content to be used at your discretion throughout the school year.

How to Use

Each lesson in the seasonal unit functions like an ordinary lesson of *Illuminate*. When you choose to do a lesson from this unit, read the daily Scripture from the appropriate step first, then read the step's article. The student(s) should complete any questions or activities given in their workbooks. The seasonal unit does not have a test.

Seasonal lessons are designed to be completed a week or two at a time, not all at once. When you are ready to use a lesson from the seasonal unit, pause your regular study until the lesson is completed. Resume your regular study the following week.

Seasonal Unit Content

Christmas | 2 lessons

We suggest using these lessons the last two weeks of school before Christmas. Pause your regular study for two weeks to explore and appreciate the story of Jesus' advent. The lessons and activities will help your student(s) focus their mind(s) and heart(s) on Jesus during this season.

Resurrection | 1 lesson

We suggest using this lesson during the week preceding Easter. This lesson focuses on both the physical resurrection of Christ and the resurrection's implications for believers' death to sin and life in Christ.

Second Coming | 1 lesson

This lesson can go anywhere in the year, but we suggest placing it sometime after Easter. Alternatively, it could be paired with the Christmas lessons to study the first and second comings of Christ back to back. Use this lesson to remind your student(s) that Jesus will return to rule and reign forever. Note that volume 6 provides a lesson on the Trinity instead of the Second Coming.

First Semester Suggested Daily Schedule

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 1	Day 1	Unit 1, LS 1 – Prayer • Read Luke 18:1-8 and pages 30-33 • <i>7th-12th Grade Guide Book</i> (GB) Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 5-7 • <i>7th-12th Grade Workbook</i> (WB)		
	Day 2	Read Luke 11:5-10 and pages 34-35 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 5-7 • WB		
	Day 3	Read Luke 11:11-13 and pages 36-37 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 5-7 • WB		
	Day 4	Read Psalm 42:1-8 and pages 38-39 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 5-7 • WB		
	Day 5	Read Psalm 145:18-19 and page 40 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 5-7 • WB		
Week 2	Day 6	Unit 1, LS 2 – Praise • Read Psalm 9:1-2, 7-11 and pages 41-43 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 8-10 • WB		
	Day 7	Read 2 Samuel 22:1-4, 47 and pages 44-45 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 8-10 • WB		
	Day 8	Read Luke 1:67-75 and pages 46-47 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 8-10 • WB		
	Day 9	Read Psalm 113:1-9 and pages 48-49 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 8-10 • WB		
	Day 10	Read Isaiah 25:1 and page 50 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 8-10 • WB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 3	Day 11	Unit 1, LS 3 – Thanksgiving • Read Psalm 30:1-5, 11-12 and pages 51-53 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 11-13 • WB		
	Day 12	Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10 and pages 54-55 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 11-13 • WB		
	Day 13	Read Luke 1:46-55 and pages 56-57 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 11-13 • WB		
	Day 14	Read James 3:13-18 and pages 58-59 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 11-13 • WB		
	Day 15	Read Psalm 105:1-5 and page 60 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 11-13 • WB		
Week 4	Day 16	Unit 1, LS 4 – A Living Sacrifice • Read Romans 12:1-2 and pages 61-63 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 14-16 • WB		
	Day 17	Read 1 Samuel 1:1-20 and pages 64-65 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 14-16 • WB		
	Day 18	Read Matthew 10:37-39 and pages 66-67 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 14-16 • WB		
	Day 19	Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and pages 68-69 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 14-16 • WB		
	Day 20	Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 and page 70 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 14-16 • WB Present Unit 1 Project • page 71 • GB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 5	Day 21	Unit 2, LS 1 – A Failure to Do God's Will • Read 1 Samuel 13:8-14 and pages 72-75 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 23-25 • WB		
	Day 22	Read 1 Samuel 10:1-8 and pages 76-77 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 23-25 • WB		
	Day 23	Read Genesis 16:1-6 and pages 78-79 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 23-25 • WB		
	Day 24	Read Isaiah 40:27-31 and pages 80-81 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 23-25 • WB		
	Day 25	Read Lamentations 3:21-27 and page 82 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 23-25 • WB		
Week 6	Day 26	Unit 2, LS 2 – The Heart of God's Will • Read Micah 6:6-8 and pages 83-85 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 26-28 • WB		
	Day 27	Read Micah 6:1-5 and pages 86-87 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 26-28 • WB		
	Day 28	Read Deuteronomy 10:12-13 and pages 88-89 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 26-28 • WB		
	Day 29	Read Zechariah 7:8-10 and pages 90-91 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 26-28 • WB		
	Day 30	Read Psalm 51:15-17 and page 92 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 26-28 • WB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 7	Day 31	Unit 2, LS 3 – The Two Great Commands • Read Mark 12:28-34 and pages 93-95 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 29-31 • WB		
	Day 32	Read Luke 10:25-37 and pages 96-97 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 29-31 • WB		
	Day 33	Read 1 Corinthians 12:13—13:13 and pages 98-99 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 29-31 • WB		
	Day 34	Read 1 John 4:7-12 and pages 100-101 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 29-31 • WB		
	Day 35	Read 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 and page 102 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 29-31 • WB		
Week 8	Day 36	Unit 2, LS 4 – A Passion to Do God's Will • Read John 4:31-34 and pages 103-105 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 32-34 • WB		
	Day 37	Read John 5:19-30 and pages 106-107 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 32-34 • WB		
	Day 38	Read John 12:44-50 and pages 108-109 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 32-34 • WB		
	Day 39	Read Hebrews 3:1-6 and pages 110-111 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 32-34 • WB		
	Day 40	Read 2 John 1:4-6 and page 112 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 32-34 • WB Present Unit 2 Project • page 113 • GB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 9	Day 41	Unit 3, LS 1 - The Surprising Case of Manasseh • Read 2 Chronicles 33:10-20 and pages 114-117 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 41-43 • WB		
	Day 42	Read 2 Chronicles 33:1-9 and pages 118-119 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 41-43 • WB		
	Day 43	Read Matthew 21:28-32 and pages 120-121 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 41-43 • WB		
	Day 44	Read 1 Kings 11:1-13 and pages 122-123 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 41-43 • WB		
	Day 45	Read Proverbs 28:13-14 and page 124 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 41-43 • WB		
Week 10	Day 46	Unit 3, LS 2 – John the Baptist's Teaching • Read Luke 3:7-18 and pages 125-127 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 44-46 • WB		
	Day 47	Read Matthew 3:1-12 and pages 128-129 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 44-46 • WB		
	Day 48	Read Acts 20:17-21 and pages 130-131 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 44-46 • WB		
	Day 49	Read 2 Corinthians 7:8-13 and pages 132-133 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 44-46 • WB		
	Day 50	Read 2 Timothy 2:22-26 and page 134 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 44-46 • WB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 11	Day 51	Unit 3, LS 3 – Peter’s Reinstatement • Read John 21:15-19 and pages 135-137 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 47-49 • WB		
	Day 52	Read Mark 14:27-31, 66-72 and pages 138-139 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 47-49 • WB		
	Day 53	Read 2 Samuel 12:1-14 and pages 140-141 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 47-49 • WB		
	Day 54	Read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 and pages 142-143 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 47-49 • WB		
	Day 55	Read Psalm 51:1-6 and page 144 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 47-49 • WB		
Week 12	Day 56	Unit 3, LS 4 – Jesus’ Power to Forgive • Read Matthew 9:1-8 and pages 145-147 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 50-52 • WB		
	Day 57	Read John 3:9-15 and pages 148-149 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 50-52 • WB		
	Day 58	Read Numbers 21:4-9 and pages 150-151 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 50-52 • WB		
	Day 59	Read 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 and pages 152-153 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 50-52 • WB		
	Day 60	Read Titus 2:11-14 and page 154 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 50-52 • WB Present Unit 3 Project • page 155 • GB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 13	Day 61	Unit 4, LS 1 – A Servant's Heart • Read John 13:1-17 and pages 156-159 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 59-61 • WB		
	Day 62	Read Luke 22:24-30 and pages 160-161 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 59-61 • WB		
	Day 63	Read Matthew 20:20-28 and pages 162-163 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 59-61 • WB		
	Day 64	Read Mark 9:33-37 and pages 164-165 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 59-61 • WB		
	Day 65	Read Proverbs 15:33 and page 166 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 59-61 • WB		
Week 14	Day 66	Unit 4, LS 2 – Taking Up Our Cross • Read Luke 9:23-27 and pages 167-169 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 62-64 • WB		
	Day 67	Read Matthew 16:21-27 and pages 170-171 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 62-64 • WB		
	Day 68	Read Romans 6:5-8 and pages 172-173 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 62-64 • WB		
	Day 69	Read 1 John 3:1-3 and pages 174-175 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 62-64 • WB		
	Day 70	Read 1 Peter 4:1-2 and page 176 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 62-64 • WB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 15	Day 71	Unit 4, LS 3 – Christ's Gentle Yoke • Read Matthew 11:25-30 and pages 177-179 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 65-67 • WB		
	Day 72	Read 1 John 5:1-5 and pages 180-181 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 65-67 • WB		
	Day 73	Read Hosea 11:1-4 and pages 182-183 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 65-67 • WB		
	Day 74	Read Mark 10:13-16 and pages 184-185 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 65-67 • WB		
	Day 75	Read 2 Corinthians 10:1-2 and page 186 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 65-67 • WB		
Week 16	Day 76	Unit 4, LS 4 – Christ the Source of Life • Read John 15:1-8 and pages 187-189 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 68-70 • WB		
	Day 77	Read John 3:31-36 and pages 190-191 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 68-70 • WB		
	Day 78	Read John 6:53-59 and pages 192-193 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 68-70 • WB		
	Day 79	Read John 8:54-59 and pages 194-195 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 68-70 • WB		
	Day 80	Read John 8:31-32 and page 196 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 68-70 • WB Present Unit 4 Project • page 197 • GB		

Second Semester Suggested Daily Schedule

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 17	Day 81	Unit 5, LS 1 – The Spirit in the Old Testament • Read Ezekiel 39:25-29 and pages 198-201 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 79-81 • WB		
	Day 82	Read Isaiah 63:10-14 and pages 202-203 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 79-81 • WB		
	Day 83	Read Nehemiah 9:19-21 and pages 204-205 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 79-81 • WB		
	Day 84	Read Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4; 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 and pages 206-207 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 79-81 • WB		
	Day 85	Read Zechariah 4:6 and page 208 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 79-81 • WB		
Week 18	Day 86	Unit 5, LS 2 – The Spirit of Truth • Read John 16:5-15 and pages 209-211 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 82-84 • WB		
	Day 87	Read John 15:26—16:4 and pages 212-213 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 82-84 • WB		
	Day 88	Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 and pages 214-215 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 82-84 • WB		
	Day 89	Read 2 Peter 1:19-21 and pages 216-217 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 82-84 • WB		
	Day 90	Read 2 Timothy 2:15 and page 218 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 82-84 • WB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 19	Day 91	Unit 5, LS 3 – The Spirit of Authority and Power • Read John 20:19-22 and pages 219-221 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 85-87 • WB		
	Day 92	Read Acts 8:14-17 and pages 222-223 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 85-87 • WB		
	Day 93	Read Romans 8:12-17 and pages 224-225 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 85-87 • WB		
	Day 94	Read Ephesians 1:11-14 and pages 226-227 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 85-87 • WB		
	Day 95	Read Ephesians 4:30 and page 228 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 85-87 • WB		
Week 20	Day 96	Unit 5, LS 4 – The Spirit of Life • Read John 7:37-39 and pages 229-231 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 88-90 • WB		
	Day 97	Read Romans 8:9-11 and pages 232-233 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 88-90 • WB		
	Day 98	Read Galatians 5:22-25 and pages 234-235 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 88-90 • WB		
	Day 99	Read Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Revelation 1:4-6 and pages 236-237 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 88-90 • WB		
	Day 100	Read Galatians 5:16-18 and page 238 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 88-90 • WB Present Unit 5 Project • page 239 • GB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 21	Day 101	Unit 6, LS 1 – A Book of Worship • Read Psalm 103:1-6 and pages 240-243 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 97-99 • WB		
	Day 102	Read Psalm 121:1-8 and pages 244-245 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 97-99 • WB		
	Day 103	Read Psalm 135:1-21 and pages 246-247 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 97-99 • WB		
	Day 104	Read Psalm 91:1-16 and pages 248-249 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 97-99 • WB		
	Day 105	Read Psalm 92:1-2 and page 250 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 97-99 • WB		
Week 22	Day 106	Unit 6, LS 2 – A Book of Wisdom • Read Job 1:8-12, 20-22 and pages 251-253 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 100-102 • WB		
	Day 107	Read Job 38:1-4; 42:1-6 and pages 254-255 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 100-102 • WB		
	Day 108	Read Proverbs 8:12, 22-31 and pages 256-257 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 100-102 • WB		
	Day 109	Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-9; 3:9-15 and pages 258-259 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 100-102 • WB		
	Day 110	Read Proverbs 8:1-11 and page 260 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 100-102 • WB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 23	Day 111	Unit 6, LS 3 – A Christ-Centered Book • Read Luke 24:13-27 and pages 261-263 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 103-105 • WB		
	Day 112	Read Luke 24:28-35 and pages 264-265 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 103-105 • WB		
	Day 113	Read Luke 24:36-49 and pages 266-267 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 103-105 • WB		
	Day 114	Read John 1:15-18 and pages 268-269 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 103-105 • WB		
	Day 115	Read Luke 8:19-21 and page 270 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 103-105 • WB		
Week 24	Day 116	Unit 6, LS 4 – A Sure Word of Testimony • Read John 14:22-31 and pages 271-273 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 106-108 • WB		
	Day 117	Read 1 Timothy 6:3-5, 11, 20-21 and pages 274-275 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 106-108 • WB		
	Day 118	Read 1 Timothy 4:7-16 and pages 276-277 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 106-108 • WB		
	Day 119	Read 1 John 2:20-23 and pages 278-279 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 106-108 • WB		
	Day 120	Read 1 John 2:3-6 and page 280 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 106-108 • WB Present Unit 6 Project • page 281 • GB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 25	Day 121	Unit 7, LS 1 – The Church United in Purpose • Read Acts 2:42-47 and pages 282-285 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 115-117 • WB		
	Day 122	Read Ephesians 4:11-16 and pages 286-287 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 115-117 • WB		
	Day 123	Read Romans 12:3-8 and pages 288-289 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 115-117 • WB		
	Day 124	Read Romans 15:1-6 and pages 290-291 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 115-117 • WB		
	Day 125	Read Romans 12:9-13 and page 292 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 115-117 • WB		
Week 26	Day 126	Unit 7, LS 2 – The Family in God's Plan • Read Ephesians 5:22—6:4 and pages 293-295 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 118-120 • WB		
	Day 127	Read Colossians 3:18—4:1 and pages 296-297 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 118-120 • WB		
	Day 128	Read Deuteronomy 11:18-21 and pages 298-299 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 118-120 • WB		
	Day 129	Read Proverbs 4:1-11 and pages 300-301 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 118-120 • WB		
	Day 130	Read Proverbs 15:20 and page 302 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 118-120 • WB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 27	Day 131	Unit 7, LS 3 – Spiritual Signposts • Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and pages 303-305 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 121-123 • WB		
	Day 132	Read Luke 3:1-6 and pages 306-307 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 121-123 • WB		
	Day 133	Read John 6:41-51 and pages 308-309 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 121-123 • WB		
	Day 134	Read 1 Peter 3:18-22 and pages 310-311 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 121-123 • WB		
	Day 135	Read Hebrews 3:12-14 and page 312 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 121-123 • WB		
Week 28	Day 136	Unit 7, LS 4 – Serving One Another • Read Acts 9:32-43 and pages 313-315 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 124-126 • WB		
	Day 137	Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 and pages 316-317 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 124-126 • WB		
	Day 138	Read Titus 2:1-10 and pages 318-319 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 124-126 • WB		
	Day 139	Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and pages 320-321 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 124-126 • WB		
	Day 140	Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 and page 322 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 124-126 • WB Present Unit 7 Project • page 323 • GB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 29	Day 141	Unit 8, LS 1 – Joseph • Read Genesis 50:15-21 and pages 324-327 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 133-135 • WB		
	Day 142	Read Genesis 49:29—50:14 and pages 328-329 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 133-135 • WB		
	Day 143	Read Genesis 50:22-26 and pages 330-331 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 133-135 • WB		
	Day 144	Read Joshua 2:1-20; Matthew 1:1, 5-6 and pages 332-333 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 133-135 • WB		
	Day 145	Read Proverbs 16:9 and page 334 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 133-135 • WB		
Week 30	Day 146	Unit 8, LS 2 – Ruth • Read Ruth 2:1-23 and pages 335-337 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 136-138 • WB		
	Day 147	Read Ruth 1:1-18 and pages 338-339 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 136-138 • WB		
	Day 148	Read Ruth 4:9-17 and pages 340-341 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 136-138 • WB		
	Day 149	Read Ruth 3:1-13, 18 and pages 342-343 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 136-138 • WB		
	Day 150	Read Psalm 37:3-6 and page 344 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 136-138 • WB		

Week	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓
Week 31	Day 151	Unit 8, LS 3 – Esther • Read Esther 3:8-11; 4:1-16 and pages 345-347 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 139-141 • WB		
	Day 152	Read Esther 1:1-3, 9-12, 19; 2:1-3 and pages 348-349 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 139-141 • WB		
	Day 153	Read Esther 7:1-10; 10:1-3 and pages 350-351 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 139-141 • WB		
	Day 154	Read Esther 5:9—6:14 and pages 352-353 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 139-141 • WB		
	Day 155	Read Psalm 37:7-11 and page 354 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 139-141 • WB		
Week 32	Day 156	Unit 8, LS 4 – God's Providence Guides the Church • Read Acts 8:1-8 and pages 355-357 • GB Quiz questions (Story Elements) • pages 142-144 • WB		
	Day 157	Read Acts 9:19-25, 31 and pages 358-359 • GB Quiz questions (Context) • pages 142-144 • WB		
	Day 158	Read 2 Timothy 4:16-18 and pages 360-361 • GB Quiz questions (Connections) • pages 142-144 • WB		
	Day 159	Read Acts 4:23-31 and pages 362-363 • GB Quiz questions (Doctrine/Worldview) • pages 142-144 • WB		
	Day 160	Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 and page 364 • GB Quiz questions (Application) • pages 142-144 • WB Present Unit 8 Project • page 365 • GB		

PLAN FOR THE YEAR

LIVING FOR GOD'S GLORY

If you could do anything you wanted for the next year without any chance of negative repercussions, what kinds of things would you most want to do? If we answer that question honestly, some of our answers probably include things we would normally get in trouble for doing. A lot of people treat their first year of college as a real-life answer to that question. And a lot of middle and high school-aged students look forward to that year when they will finally be able to break free from all the constraints put on them by parents and strict schedules.

In reality, however, most people who truly do whatever they want for an extended period of time end up regretting it. They feel like their lives have become meaningless and purposeless. One secular movie star, for example, is reported as saying, "I think everybody should get rich and famous and everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that that's not the answer." This highlights something important: having fun and entertaining yourself is not nearly as satisfying as having an overarching purpose in life that shapes everything you do.

Thankfully, we will spend this year exploring the biblical answer to the question, "What gives life purpose and meaning?" By the end of this year, we hope you will see that the purpose of life is to live for God's glory and that a relationship with Him gives life its meaning.

In the first semester, we will examine what it means to live for God's glory. Although that sounds like a simple concept, it is actually quite challenging to implement. We will explore how glorifying God involves not only worshipping Him but also living according to His will. We will also look at the challenge posed by our own sinful nature. Finally, we will discover the power we gain when we adopt the mindset of Christ. Through Jesus' leadership and example, we can truly glorify God.

In the second semester, we will focus on God's specific gifts to believers that help them work toward the grand purpose of bringing Him glory. We will recognize God's provision of the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and the community of believers in families and in the church. In our final unit, we will explore examples of God's providential care throughout Scripture. Through all of this, we will better understand how God has given us everything we need to live with great purpose.

Let us commit together to making this a year in which we give God all the glory He is due.



Semester 1: *What Life Is About*

UNIT 1

WORSHIPPING GOD

Doctrines

- The Purpose of Prayer
- The Centrality of God
- Every Good Thing Comes from God
- Believers Are God's Temple

The world was created for God's glory, and Jesus Christ is the greatest expression of that glory. Christians live through faith in Him, trusting that He will lead and guide His people as He grows His kingdom. God's shaping of history is how He expresses His glory from day to day, and He invites His people to be part of that. Since God's glory is the reason for everything, worshipping Him is one of the chief activities and joys of the Christian life. In this unit we will examine some of the key elements of a life of worship.

PRAYER

LUKE 18:1-8

KEY CONCEPT

Christians live to worship.

Key Verses: Psalm 145:18-19

LESSON 1 INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER OUTLINE

1. Story Elements

Luke 18:1-8

2. Context

Luke 11:5-10

3. Connections

Luke 11:11-13

4. Doctrine

Psalm 42:1-8

5. Application

Psalm 145:18-19

Many young Christians know that dreaded moment when their youth pastor asks, “Who wants to pray?” Prayer can seem daunting, especially when praying in front of others. But it does not have to be that way. Prayer is simply communication with God. When we want to have a good relationship with a friend or family member, we know we have to actually talk to that person. The same is true for a relationship with God.

Even if we know this, however, we might still struggle to pray. Some believers grow discouraged when God seems slow to reply. One remedy to that is to treat fellowship with God as the main purpose of prayer. Other believers fear they are not good Christians if they ask God to do things for them. Christians should not ask for things to satisfy selfish desires (cf. Jas. 4:3), but God invites us to bring all our requests to Him. He is like a good father waiting to give good things to His children when they ask (Matt. 7:7-11).



STORY ELEMENTS

📖 Luke 18:1-8

What happened, and why is it important?

We all know the frustration of being ignored, especially if we are bursting with something important that must be said. What a blessing that God not only wants to speak to us; He also wants to listen to us! This lesson concentrates on the primary means by which we can talk with God—prayer.

Prayer is more than chitchat or a way to get what we ask for. It is an act of worship vital to a life that glorifies God. In prayer, Christians grow in their relationship with God and demonstrate their faith in Him to take care of their needs.

The parable of the persistent widow fits into a series of events and teachings that emphasize the importance of faith. In the previous chapter, the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith (Luke 17:5). In verse 19, He told a former leper that his faith was instrumental to his healing. Jesus then explained that His kingdom would come in a mysterious and unexpected way (vss. 20-37). The apostles would need faith in Christ to serve in such an unexpected kingdom.

Now Jesus continued His teaching by sharing a parable with His disciples. Jesus was a master storyteller, using illustrations from daily life to illuminate His teachings. According to Luke, Jesus told this parable so that His followers would always pray and not lose heart. He knew that His disciples would frequently be mistreated for His sake. They would also endure many injustices simply because they lived in a world full of sinful people. In those times, He wanted them to depend on God, not their own strength. He wanted them to know they could cry out to God for justice and expect an answer (18:7-8).

Jesus opened the parable by describing a corrupt, evil judge. One would not expect any justice from him. He did not revere God or respect humans. Jesus then introduced a widow—a vulnerable person in the ancient world. She had been wronged by an enemy and sought justice from that unjust judge. This was not a hopeful situation.

As in many of the Lord's parables, however, there was a surprise ending. The judge vindicated the woman and helped her. Did he have a change of heart? No. In fact, the judge described himself the same way as the beginning of the parable did—he did not fear God or respect humans (vs. 4; cf. vs. 2). He helped the woman because she would not stop badgering him for justice.

After completing the parable, Jesus offered its application. Surprisingly, He drew attention to the judge's words (vs. 6). Rather than dismiss the judge's concluding remark, Jesus built His lesson upon it.

Jesus developed an **argument from the stronger**. This type of argument proves a stronger claim than is necessary in order to

There are around a hundred references to widows in the Bible, and in many cases they are pictured as classic examples of distress and helplessness. Widows in ancient times did not have the safety net of charitable and governmental programs that are present in many societies today. The extended family was important in providing help. The Old Testament demonstrates this through the lives of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. But in many cases, widows were very vulnerable to fraud and wrongdoing, as the listeners to this parable would certainly know. By using the example of a widow, Jesus was assuring us that He will help all His followers, including those whom society disregards.

show that a claim less difficult to prove is also correct. For example, if you are trying to prove that you did not rob a bank in Atlanta, Georgia, you could prove that you were not even in Atlanta on the date in question (stronger claim). If that is true, it is even more certain that you did not rob a bank there (weaker claim). Similarly, Jesus is saying that if a wicked judge would grant the request of a petitioner he cared nothing about, how much more will the just God avenge the wrongs committed against His beloved people?

God's troubled people call upon Him day and night (vs. 7). As the widow approached the unjust judge and pled for her cause, so God's people draw near to His throne with their prayers. Jesus' assurance that God will respond to believers' requests contradicts our expectations when requesting things from other people. If we ask most people for something a number of times and they do not immediately give us what we are asking for, we give up. But God is more powerful and faithful than the people we interact with on earth. When Christians persist in prayer, they glorify Him because they are showing they trust Him enough to know their requests are not a burden to Him. The just Judge longs to hear His people's pleas and grant their requests. Christians should call upon God with faith that He will respond in His timing.



Have you prayed for something, then stopped when it didn't happen? Why did you stop?

According to the final two verses of the passage, God does not delay. He will answer quickly. Of course, it may not seem to Christians that God is answering their prayers speedily, but they can trust that He will act consistently with His kingdom purposes and their ultimate good (cf. Rom. 8:28). Ultimately, believers' hope for justice rests in the final resurrection and judgment. When Jesus returns, the Judge will vindicate every wrong thing (cf. John 5:25-29).

This passage closes with Jesus challenging His disciples. In the previous chapter, the Pharisees had asked when God's kingdom would come (Luke 17:20). Now Jesus identified an even more pertinent question: When the kingdom does come, will there be any believers in this wicked world? Persistent prayer is one of the key methods God uses to preserve the faith of His followers.

*Perpetua and Felicitas, two Christian martyrs around AD 200, prayed as the Roman authorities prepared to throw them to wild beasts. But they were not saved from that death. Did God fail to answer their prayers? No! In fact, the surviving account of their martyrdom identifies several specific prayers that were answered. Instead of portraying their deaths as unanswered prayer, the narrative calls it "their victory"! These two brave women considered it a better answer to prayer for God to give them strength to endure suffering for His sake than for Him to deliver them from death.**

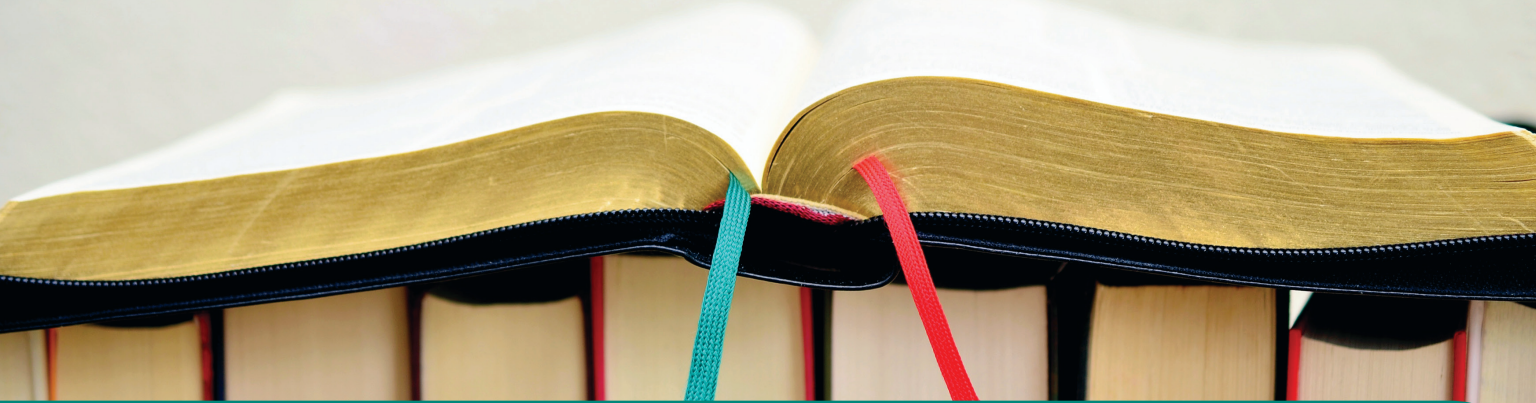


How can Christians avoid losing heart when their prayers are not answered immediately?

**The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas," translated by Herbert Musurillo, in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford).

SUMMARIZE

Use an activity from page 407 to summarize the lesson together.



THE BIBLE & ITS RICHES

The “Spark” of Jesus’ Parables

In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus’ lesson about prayer didn’t say very much about prayer. He spent seven verses talking, but only one verse mentions prayer at all (vs. 7). Why was He so slow to get to the main point?

Jesus loved to use parables when He was teaching, especially when He taught crowds (Matt. 13:34). You might be familiar with them as stories told to help teach a lesson. While this is correct, parables are more complicated than simple narratives.

“Parable” comes from a Greek word that denotes the act of setting one thing beside another. The word was used to describe two boats coming up next to each other, a person walking sideways, and even different functions in math. (The parabola, a U-shaped geometric curve, gets its name from this Greek word.)

When a teacher or philosopher used a parable, he was usually constructing an analogy. In other words, he told a story about something else to explain an idea. While the details of the story were very different, they shared a key quality with the concept he wished to explain.

So Jesus used parables to make things more understandable, right? Actually, no. In fact, Jesus said that He used parables to make things more difficult to understand (vss. 10-17). Wait, what? But didn’t Jesus want people to follow Him? Shouldn’t He have made things easier, not harder?

Here’s the thing about parables: they work like an electric arc. When two charged points (e.g., wires) are set beside each other, electricity jumps through the air between them, forming the arc. Both points, however, must be active. If one is not, the electric arc will not form.

In the same way, understanding a parable requires a connection between the symbols of the analogy and the spiritual reality it conveys. The symbols in Jesus’ parables were so common to life that nearly everybody was familiar with them. But the spiritual spark lit up in their minds only if they understood the kingdom of heaven (vs. 11).

Most people didn’t have this understanding, even though they thought they did (cf. Luke 18:8). That’s why they didn’t get the spark. Jesus used parables to expose the inner darkness inside people, especially the hypocritical religious leaders. This was yet another way He fulfilled prophecy (Matt. 13:14-15). Beyond being simple stories to teach an audience, parables reveal people’s hearts.*

*D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Volume 8* (Zondervan).

CONTEXT

📖 Luke 11:5-10

Who, what, where, when?

Imagine you are looking forward to a nice, restful time on the couch after working hard all day. You have just sat down with a sigh of contentment when suddenly your mom or dad says they need you for something. Would your response be a cheerful one? Probably not!

Today's Scripture passage, which covers Jesus' parable of the midnight visitor, presents a similar situation. A person came to his friend who had gone to bed, and he asked for three loaves of bread so he could feed a traveler who had just arrived at his house. The friend asking for help was trying to be kind to a traveler. But that did nothing to appease the irritation and reluctance of the man trying to sleep. Nevertheless, the man continued asking his weary friend to help him.

Is there something you are persistently asking God for?

To understand better the friend's reluctance to help, we must realize that many homes in the ancient world had just one room. Families used the single room in their homes for multiple purposes. When it came time to sleep, the whole family would pull out their mats and sleep in it. With a big enough family, things could get pretty crowded! How do you think you would like an arrangement like that? It is clear that his friend's request was a hassle for him. He must get up and disrupt everything to fetch the bread. His family probably wasn't too happy about it either!

Jesus said that although the man wanting to sleep would not give the bread out of friendship, he would give the food just to be rid of him (Luke 11:8)! This is another instance of Jesus using an argument from the stronger. Instead of an unjust judge, we encounter a weary homeowner. But the driving principle is the same. If an irritated man would grant a persistent request, imagine what the perfect and gracious God will do for the people He loves who come to Him day after day with their petitions.

How can Christians be encouraged in prayer when it feels like God will not answer them?

Verses 9-10 contain precious promises. Those who will seek God and come to Him with their worries and needs will find their requests granted. The Lord repeats the thought for emphasis in a memorably poetic way. However, we should bear in mind the context of this passage. It comes right after Luke's record of the Lord's Prayer (vss. 2-4), and in that prayer Jesus tells us what believers should ask for. First and foremost, Christians should pray for God's will and kingdom to be accomplished. They should also pray for their daily needs, for forgiveness, and to be kept from the paths of sin.

In other words, the prayers of God's people should acknowledge His purposes are what really matter and express dependence on Him. In this way, believers' prayers are not self-serving; they bring glory to the Lord.

SUMMARIZE

Use an activity from page 407 to summarize the lesson together.

CONNECTIONS

📖 Luke 11:11-13

Let's take a look at some other passages and themes in Scripture.

Math problems are famous for their use of creative—if not outlandish—examples. They provide illustrations about abounding fruit or other common items: Imagine you purchased forty-five apples, and your friend ate twenty-seven of them. How many are left?

Although the illustrations are often more comedic than practical, they reveal a fundamental feature of human learning. We can grasp abstract principles better when they are explained through down-to-earth illustrations. This principle applies to spiritual truths too. A lot of deep thinkers, including Christians, have explained spiritual realities by way of analogy or through things that we experience in this world.

Analogies are found all through Scripture. In Isaiah 49:15, God declares, “Can a woman forget her nursing child? . . . Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.” Here, God expresses His love for His people with the analogy of a mother. This shows that His people can take comfort in God’s trustworthy faithfulness to them. Likewise, in John 15, Jesus compares Christians’ relationship to Him and the Father with an agricultural analogy. He explains that the Father is the vine grower, He is the vine, and believers are branches (vss. 1-2). If they abide in Him like a branch attached to a vine, they will bear much fruit as disciples and glorify God as a result (vs. 8).

Throughout the week, we have seen Jesus employ arguments from the stronger in the form of parables. Underlying these passages is His use of analogies. If the weaker analogue—like the wicked judge or grumpy friend—will finally grant requests out of exasperation, how much more will the perfect, loving God answer the prayers of His people?

In today’s Scripture verses, Jesus builds an analogy between wicked fathers and the loving Father. This passage follows the parable of the midnight visitor (see Context feature) and drives home Christ’s presentation of God’s faithfulness. Unlike the previous passages, which feature reluctant characters, this analogy attends to a parent’s natural desire to do what is caring and right. If a child asks his or her father for food, he will not give something harmful instead. Jesus repeats this fact multiple times: a father will not give a snake instead of a fish nor a scorpion instead of an egg. This does not require a grand act of morality on the father’s part. It is the way God has made us to care for our offspring.

Maybe it is a surprise to you that Jesus would refer to his audience as evil in Luke 11:13. Yet Jesus’ assessment of humanity is accurate. Since the fall into sin in the Garden of Eden, all men and women have been sinners (cf. Rom. 3:23). Human crimes against God, one another, and themselves are evil. We are in need of God’s grace. One day, when we see Christ face-to-face, those who trust in Him will be completely freed from the grip of sin. Until then, Christians must battle against evil with the Spirit’s help.

After considering the behavior of sinful parents, Jesus spells out the point of His analogy. If fathers take care to provide what is good for their children, how much more will God take care of His children? This is another example of an argument from the stronger. Jesus makes this clear when He states that His listeners are evil. If fathers characterized in this way do what is right for their children, it is more certain that the loving Father will take care of His children.

Underlying today’s and yesterday’s Scripture passages is Jesus’ encouragement to persevere in prayer. Now Jesus tells us what to persistently pray for—receiving the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). Jesus says the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. The Spirit draws people to Christ, empowers Christians to live lives of increasing holiness, and equips them with spiritual gifts to glorify God. The Spirit is also the one who enables Christians to pray according to the will of God (cf. Rom. 8:26-27).

Matthew 7:7-11 parallels our Scripture passage (Luke 11:9-13). Here, Jesus promises that the Father will give “good things” to whoever asks Him (Matt. 7:11). Matthew’s version of Jesus’ teaching accentuates His point in today’s passage. Certainly, the Holy Spirit is the greatest thing the Father could offer His children. But more than that, God gives them good things through His Spirit. The gifts of God’s Spirit can take the form of daily sustenance, loving relationships, and Christian community.

Our Scripture passages this week teach us that Christians cannot effectively worship God apart from prayer. Prayer is their lifeline to the Father. As they pray, they acknowledge their dependence on Him and trust that He will provide everything they need. As Jesus’ parables demonstrate, if sinful people grant others’ requests, the God of love certainly will too. For these reasons, prayer is perhaps the most fundamental act of worship.

CHRIST FOCUS



The most important part of being a Christian is a growing relationship with Jesus. And one of the best ways to get to know Him is to read about His life and teachings. What a blessing it is that we have four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—to learn about Him from different angles. Perhaps you noticed that while Luke 11:9-13 has a parallel in Matthew, the parable of the persistent widow from earlier this week does not. Each of the Gospel writers presents the works and teachings of Jesus. Some choose to include, omit, or emphasize certain themes and stories. As we will see with Luke’s Gospel, we can learn much about Jesus from the authors’ unique approaches.

Luke was a Gentile, so it is not surprising that one of his main themes is that Jesus is the Savior of all peoples, Gentiles as well as Jews. Unlike Matthew, who traces Jesus’ genealogy back to Abraham, the father of Israel (Matt. 1:1-2), Luke takes His lineage all the way back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38). Luke records Simeon praising the infant Jesus as the one who would be “a light for revelation to the Gentiles” (2:32).

Luke was a historian (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3). He gives us the most detailed account of Jesus’ birth and the events surrounding it (Luke 1:5—2:40). He is the only Gospel writer who included an event from Jesus’ boyhood. According to Luke 2:41-50, Jesus amazed the Jewish leaders in the temple when He was twelve. In this passage and elsewhere, Luke paints a vivid picture of Christ’s humanity (vs. 52).

Many incidents exclusive to the Gospel of Luke emphasize Christ’s love for repentant sinners. Especially noteworthy are Jesus’ response to Zacchaeus’s desire to see Him (19:1-10) and the contrast between the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9-14). There are fifteen parables unique to Luke, one of which is the well-known parable of the prodigal son (15:11-32). Luke recorded many of these parables and events to emphasize that Jesus “came to seek and to save the lost” (19:10; cf. 15:32).

Lastly, Luke is careful to show how Jesus is the fulfillment of biblical history. He alone recounts the appearance of the resurrected Lord to a pair of disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35). Jesus taught them how all Scripture, including Moses and the Prophets, points to Him (vs. 27). Next time you read through Luke’s Gospel on your own, see what other key themes and emphases you can identify.

SUMMARIZE

Use an activity from page 407 to summarize the lesson together.

DOCTRINE

The Purpose of Prayer

Psalm 42:1-8

Let's explore the truth.

When we have good friends and family in our lives, we rarely hesitate to spend time with them. Being in their company brings us joy. This is especially true in our relationship with God. If we truly know God, there is no one with whom we would rather be. His presence is the source of joy, and we spend time with Him whenever we enter into prayer. The author of Psalm 42 understood this well. In today's passage, he invites us into the inner reflection of his heart. In the face of doubt and despair, he draws near to God in prayer.

This is not always a natural response. The presence of sin in our lives can be like a barrier that distracts and dissuades us from pursuing God in prayer. We believe the instant gratification sin offers is greater than God. But the Holy Spirit lives inside of all believers, enabling Christians to look beyond their sins. Like the psalmist in verse 1, believers' hearts yearn for God. In the following verses, the psalmist divulges his circumstances. While we do not know the details, it is clear he does not sense God's presence with him. Wishing he could join God's people as they go into the temple, he weeps and pours out his soul (vss. 2-4). Something grave has occurred. Just like the widow and the midnight visitor of Jesus' parables, he needs help (cf. Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8). He wisely realizes that only God can help him.

When our situations seem daunting, we can seek God. In Psalm 42:5, the psalmist encourages himself to do so. Although he is downcast, he knows that God is faithful. God's presence is his salvation. We should realize the same in our lives. **Regardless of our present circumstances, God gives hope. By drawing near to Him in prayer, we enjoy His ever-present help.** Our worship will grow out of this assurance.

The psalmist next declares that he will remember the Lord (vs. 6). In our self-absorbed concentration, we often fail to focus on our relationship with God. Even Christians forget about Him and neglect prayer, their communication with God. As a result, they feel that they are cut off from Him, but remembering God and drawing near to Him is essential.

Biblical scholars have posed various explanations for the references to the Jordan, Hermon, and Mizar. Hermon is the source of the Jordan River, and it is distant from the center of worship in Jerusalem, the place the psalmist recalls in verse 4. (The location of "Mount Mizar" in verse 6 remains uncertain.) Here, the psalmist may be emphasizing that he will remember the Lord even from places seemingly remote from Him.

Verse 7 further develops the psalmist's location in remote, dangerous places. The picture here is of roaring waterfalls and turbulent seas. In the midst of these difficulties, he will remember the Lord. Although he is far from the temple and its joyful celebration, the psalmist recognizes God's presence and His control of the cosmos and his life. He must trust in Him alone.

At the close of our Scripture passage, the psalmist articulates the purpose of prayer. During the day, he meditates on God's love that sustains and guides him. At night, he sings God's praises as he reflects on His faithfulness. **Prayer is a day-and-night part of the Christian life. It draws us into a trusting relationship with God and offers Him the praise He deserves.**

"O Lord my God, my one hope, listen to me lest out of weariness I should stop wanting to seek you, but let me seek your face always, and with ardor. . . . Before you lies my strength and my weakness; preserve the one, heal the other. Before you lies my knowledge and my ignorance; where you have opened to me, receive me as I come in; where you have shut to me, open to me as I knock."

—Augustine of Hippo*

SUMMARIZE

Use an activity from page 407 to summarize the lesson together.

*Augustine, *The Trinity* (New City Press).

WORLDVIEW



WORD OF FAITH MOVEMENT: Prayer is a way to get what you want.

People often think of prayer as a wishing well, whispering a wish into it and then tossing in a coin. They say what they want in a prayer along with a phrase like “in Jesus’ name” and a physical action, like closing their eyes or folding their hands. Then they wait to see if that thing will happen.

Recently, the Word of Faith movement has become popular, teaching that Christians can achieve material prosperity and power through their words of prayer, as long as they believe strongly enough that it will happen. You might identify strands of this teaching in the way someone talks about prayer. For example, instead of saying they believe *in* God’s power to do something, Word of Faith adherents often say they are believing *for* something to happen, like the healing of a sickness or the financial prosperity of their ministry. To defend this view, people might quote a verse like James 4:2: “You do not have, because you do not ask.” So, is prayer actually just a way to get what we want?

As is often the case when quoting the Bible, if people would just keep reading, they would realize they were misusing the verse. According to James 4:3, **God will not grant self-serving prayers for personal gains and desires. Prayer is much more than asking God for stuff and waiting for the delivery.**

Let’s consider how God’s people pray in the Bible. The first books of the Bible are littered with prayers. In Genesis 20, God was punishing Abimelech and his household for taking Sarah from Abraham. In a dream, He told him to ask Abraham to pray for him so that his household would be restored (vs. 7). Later, Isaac prayed and God enabled Rebekah to have children (25:21). Moses prayed both for God’s mercy on Pharaoh’s house during the plagues (Ex. 8:28-30; 10:17-18) and for God’s mercy on the Israelites in the wilderness (Num. 11:2; 21:7).

Did you notice a common theme? A significant part of prayer is **intercession**—asking God to intervene for others in a bad situation. But if people can pray for themselves, as Hannah did in 1 Samuel 1:10-17, why did Abimelech and Pharaoh need someone else to do it for them?

Another key component of prayer in the Bible might help us answer that question. The situations that prompted intercessory prayer in the Bible were usually the result of sin on the part of the people for whom intercession was being made. That’s why in Solomon’s prayer in 1 Kings 8, there is a clear relationship between prayer and repentance (vss. 22-53).

This connection was embodied in the role of the high priest, who interceded for the people of Israel and offered sacrifices for their sins (cf. Heb. 5:1). Nevertheless, these priests sinned and grew weak, hampering their efforts (7:27-28). Jesus, on the other hand, never sinned. He is the eternal High Priest, whose perfect sacrifice forever brings believers close to God (vs. 26). **Thanks to Jesus, anyone can come to God in prayer for any situation (4:16).** He is interceding for His people (Rom. 8:34).

So, we can pray for Him to help our favorite baseball team, right? Sure, we can pray about anything. But that doesn’t mean prayer is just a wish-granting transaction or a good-luck ritual. **Prayer is the act of communicating with the God of the universe, humbly approaching His throne, submitting ourselves to His authority, and presenting our needs to Him.** It is trusting Him to do what is right, good, and just in all things. And it is acknowledging that His will, not ours, should be done in the world.

CHRISTIANS SAY: Prayer is an act of submission to God.

APPLICATION

📖 Psalm 145:18-19

What is the Lord calling us to do?

When people go through difficult circumstances, like sustaining a serious injury or having to leave their home because of a hurricane, their friends may try to be helpful by offering advice and platitudes. More often than not, however, what they really need is a friend to simply spend time with them or listen to them. That's why Psalm 145:18 is so comforting. When we call out to God (pray) during difficult circumstances, this verse says that He is near to us. He is like the perfect friend who knows that the reassurance of His presence is what we need most. He does this not for just anyone who speaks His name in the form of a prayer; He does this for those who call on Him "in truth." Only those who genuinely seek Him will experience His comforting presence.

In verse 19, though, we see that God does more than draw near to those who genuinely seek Him in prayer; He also acts on their behalf. At first, we might be confused why it says He "fulfills the desire" of those who pray. Didn't we see in James 4:3 that God does not grant prayer requests that cater to our own desires? The rest of the line in Psalm 149:19 gives the all-important qualifier. God fulfills the desires of those who fear Him. If someone fears (reveres) and delights in God, that person's desires will align with God's desires (cf. Ps. 37:4).

Next time you genuinely call out to God in prayer, you can be confident that He is near to you and that He will fulfill your desires that are in line with His.



Thinking

What are some of the benefits of prayer?
Are those benefits always obvious?
Why do you think God seems to answer some prayers but not others?



Feeling

How do you feel when God does not answer your prayers right away? Do you sometimes fear He will be annoyed by your persistence?



Doing

What areas of your prayer life could use some improvement? Set aside some time this week to meditate and pray about this, seeking God's help.

TAKEAWAYS

Life's path will not always be clear or easy, so believers must depend on God through every circumstance. Christians cannot expect to be exempt from the pain and trouble of life.

Persisting in prayer glorifies God by demonstrating that we trust in His goodness. No matter how dark the circumstances, believers can know that God will take care of them.

We glorify God when we recognize His grace and our dependence on Him. Gratitude for what we receive from Him is what pleases Him most.

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"For God, who said, 'Let **light** shine out of darkness,' has **shone** in our hearts to **give the light** of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"
(2 Cor. 4:6).

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