

# PRAYER





## A NOTE FROM NATHANAEL STEEL

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It is an honor and joy to share with you the outcome of years of study, research, and tears on behalf of my wife, Lacey, and I. The Christian Living curriculum isn't simply a product of our Biblical education, it is the result of Jesus freeing us from our own habitual lifestyles of sin and rebellion and the Holy Spirit equipping us to live joy-filled, life-giving, victorious lives.

The Christian Living curriculum is designed for one purpose, to make disciples of Jesus. Today, the word 'disciple' is generally unfamiliar, especially outside the Christian community. It is often incorrectly defined as an apprentice or student. A disciple is so much more. It is a person who is not only devoted to learning about Jesus but living their life fully submitted to and trusting Him. Being a disciple of Jesus is more than education; it's a transformation. Toward this end, it is highly recommended that you, the student, participate with the curriculum through two primary means.

**First, choose a partner.** You and your partner will work through the curriculum; discuss the questions, and implement the next steps together. Due to the nature of some of the questions, it is recommended that if you're married your partner is your spouse; if not then your partner should be someone of the same sex.

**Second, journal.** Personal journaling through the lessons, the response questions and ensuing discussions, the next steps, and your own struggles with each lesson will help solidify what the Holy Spirit is doing in your heart. It will give you a record of God's work, grace, and transformation in your heart, mind, and life.

Although it is not necessary—and each unit can be done independent of one another—the curriculum was designed as a process; a linear progression of theology and application. To receive the greatest benefit from the Christian Living curriculum we highly recommend going through the units in order.

May you be transformed by the Holy Spirit to live a free and victorious life; equipped to accomplish Jesus' mission to the Father's glory, other's good, and your joy!

Your friend,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nathanael P. Steel', with a stylized, flowing script.

Nathanael P. Steel

# PRAYER

*A Study in Divine Conversation*

*KEY VERSE:*

1 Thessalonians 5:17

*KEY THEME:*

As Christians, we pray in the name of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit to demonstrate our submission, trust, and dependence on the Father.

*KEY TEACHINGS:*

1. Introduction
2. The Lord's Prayer pt. 1
3. The Lord's Prayer pt. 2
4. The Gethsemane Prayer



## BIG IDEA

Jesus had constant, consistent, and committed conversations with the Father to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Q:** *Do you have dialogues or monologues with the Father?*

## WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is a conversation with the personal Triune God.

- Prayer is to the Father

**READ:** *Mt. 6:9*

- Prayer is through Jesus

**READ:** *1 Tm. 2:5*

- Prayer is empowered by the Holy Spirit

**READ:** *Ro. 8:26*

Prayer by its nature reveals God as:  
*Personal, Compassionate, & Loving*

God does not need relationship with us; but desires us to have relationship with Him. God is fully satisfied relationally in Himself.

*“God created man in His own image, in correspondence with His own being and essence... God is in relationship, and too is the man created by Him.”*

*~Karl Barth*

**READ:** *Cn. 1:26-27*

*cf. Ps. 50:12; Ro. 5:11; 2 Co. 5:18*

Have you ever had someone in your life that is in relationship with you only to get something from you?

**READ:** *Je. 23:23*

*cf. Ps. 34:18; 139:7-12; Ro. 10:20-21*

God seeks relationship with us, not just obedience from us. God does not reward or repay our efforts like an employer; rather, He pursues us despite our rebellion.

**READ:** *Is. 65:2*

*cf. Ps. 34:18; 51:16-17; 139:7-12*

**Q:** *Do you desire a personal relationship or a business partnership with God?*

God always responds to the prayers of His people. However, we may not enjoy or agree with His response.

*“Prayer is not monologue, but dialogue; God’s voice is its most essential part.”*

*~Andrew Murray*



God answers prayer through:

1. **Scripture** – God uses His Word by the Holy Spirit to speak to us when we pray.
2. **Circumstance** – In God's sovereignty He answers prayer through people, places, events, and timing.
3. **People** – God uses other's experience and spiritual abilities through the Holy Spirit to speak into our prayers and needs.
4. **The Holy Spirit** – God may speak directly to our heart and mind to address our needs.

God answers our prayers with:

- **"Yes"** – Through studying Scripture we grow in relationship with the Father and familiarity with His character enabling us to pray with knowledge and understanding toward affirmed prayers.
- **"No"** – God denies us our request when it is against His character and purposes or when it will be detrimental to others and ourselves. God may simply tell us "no" when the following may also be true.
- **"Wait"** – Although He may answer affirmatively the timing may not be beneficial.

- **"If..."** – Sometimes God will grant a request but we must first repent and seek Him.

Q: How do you respond when God does not answer your prayers in the affirmative?

## WHAT CAN WE OBSERVE FROM JESUS' PRAYER LIFE?

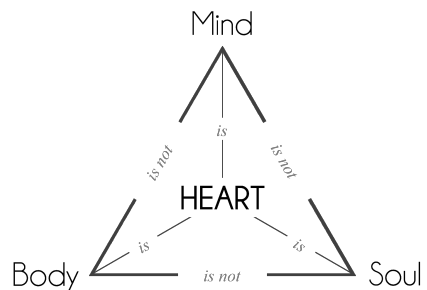
READ: Lk. 5:16

### OBSERVATION #1 ~ JESUS WAS IN EVERY RESPECT HUMAN

READ: He. 2:14-18

cf. Is. 7:10-17; Mt. 26:39,42,44; Jn. 1:1-18; Ph. 2:5-8; 1 Ti. 2:5-6; He. 4:14-16

Jesus was made exactly like us in all aspects of humanity:



READ: Ph. 2:5-8

*"When the Word became flesh—when eternal Son of God took on full humanity—he did not merely become human in part. He fully became truly human."*

~David Mathis



Although he was fully God, he did not rely upon his deity but rather lived fully in his humanity trusting the Father through the Holy Spirit.

**Q:** *Do you believe Jesus can fully identify with you and truly help you when you are suffering or tempted?*

## OBSERVATION #2 ~ JESUS WAS EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

**READ:** *Lk. 4:1, 14*

*cf. Mt. 4:1; Lk. 10:21; Ac. 1:2*

Jesus was empowered for both life and ministry by allowing the Holy Spirit into every facet of his life.

**READ:** *Mt. 4:1; 12:28; Mk. 1:12; Lk. 2:27; 4:1, 14*

There is no difference between Jesus and us in our need for the Holy Spirit to live lives victorious over Satan, his servants, and their works and affects in our lives.

**Q:** *What relationships, circumstances, or struggles are you not allowing the Holy Spirit to have access to?*

## OBSERVATION #3 ~ JESUS PRIORITIZED RELATIONSHIP

**READ:** *Mt. 14:13*

*cf. Lk. 6:12-16; 10:21; 22:39-46; Jn. 5:19*

For Jesus, relationship with the Father was more important than his schedule, emotions, or struggles—Relationship was more important than his reputation or other's expectations.

Prayer took precedence over:

- His Relationships  
*cf. Lk. 6:12-16*
- His Schedule  
*cf. Jn. 5:19*
- His Emotions  
*cf. Mt. 14:13; Lk. 10:21*
- His Suffering  
*cf. Mt. 4:1-11; 26:36-46*

**Q:** *Who's opinion, time, or recognition makes you feel valuable, successful, or important?*

## HOW DID JESUS PRAY?

### 1. HE PRAYED WITH FASTING

To be empowered by the Holy Spirit for ministry, Jesus lived a lifestyle of fasting.

*“If you say ‘I will fast when God lays it on my heart,’ you never will. You are too cold and indifferent to take the yoke upon you.”*

*~D.L. Moody*

**READ:** *Mk. 9:29*

*cf. Mt. 4:1-4; Dt. 8:3*

Fasting submits our God-given desires and needs to the Father and forces our flesh and soul to be nourished by the Holy Spirit.

**Q:** *When do you fast? Why do you fast? What do you fast?*





## 2. HE PRAYED IN SOLITUDE

To minimize distraction, Jesus removed himself from life to pray.

**READ:** Lk. 5:16

*cf. Mk. 6:32; Mt. 14:13*

Solitude purposefully removes distractions from our thoughts so that we can share our hearts with the Father—enabling us to receive His encouragement, comfort, and conviction.

**Q:** *When is your time of solitude?*

## 3. HE PRAYED IN COMMUNITY

Praying in community with others allowed Jesus to both receive and extend grace.

**READ:** Lk. 9:18

*cf. Mt. 26:36-46*

Prayer with other Christians allows the Holy Spirit to work through others on our behalf and allows us to serve, encourage, and equip others through the Holy Spirit.

*“Nothing tends more to cement the hearts of Christians than praying together. Never do they love one another so well as when they witness the outpouring of each other’s hearts in prayer.”*

*~Charles Finney*

**Q:** *Do you purposefully pray with those you are in relationship with?*

## 4. HE PRAYED IN SCRIPTURE

Jesus references Scripture for both the content and answers to his prayers.

**READ:** Jn. 17:1-26

*v.3 = Ho. 2:20; v.5 = Pr. 8:23;*

*v.6 = Ps. 22:22; v. 12 = Ps. 109:8;*

*v.17 = 2 Sa. 7:28; Ps. 119:160*

**Q:** *Are you reading Scripture during your prayer time?*

## RESPONSE

**DISCUSSION:** *Pray and discuss the above questions with your partner and journal your responses including additional questions, differing opinions, and additional thoughts that were shared in your conversation.*

**NEXT STEP:** *Determine a time and place where you can set aside a minimum of 10 minutes a day to have conversational/contemplative prayer. Be sure that it is free of distractions.*



## BIG IDEA

Our motivation and desire to pray is reflected and dependent upon our understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done on our behalf.

**Q:** What person or religion do you measure the success of your prayer life by?

## SHOULD CHRISTIANS PRAY?

### "WHEN YOU PRAY..."

**READ:** 1 Th. 5:17

cf. Ro. 12:12; Ph. 4:6; Co. 4:2; Ja. 5:16

Jesus assumes that we will be in constant, consistent, and committed communication with the Father.

*"Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer."*

~John Bunyan

**READ:** Mk. 6:45-46

cf. Mt. 14:23; 19:13; Lk. 5:16; 6:12; 9:28; 11:1

Jesus prayed; he had constant, consistent, and committed conversations with the Father.

*"We tend to use prayer as a last resort, but God wants it to be our first line of defense. We pray when there's nothing else we can do, but God wants us to pray before we do anything at all. Most of us would prefer, however, to spend our time doing something that will get immediate results. We don't*

*want to wait for God to resolve matters in His good time because His idea of 'good time' is seldom in sync with ours.*

~Oswald Chambers

The quality of a relationship is directly affected by the quality of conversation in that relationship.

*"When I lay these questions before God I get no answer. But a rather special sort of 'No answer.' It is not the locked door. It is more like a silent, certainly not uncompassionate, gaze. As though He shook His head not in refusal but waiving the question. Like, 'Peace, child; you don't understand.*

~C.S. Lewis

The content of our conversations reveals what is most important to us so with the content of our prayers.

**Q:** Who or what do you pray for?



## ARE YOU HONEST IN YOUR PRAYERS?

"... YOU MUST NOT BE LIKE THE HYPOCRITES..."

READ: Ps. 51:16-17

cf. Ps. 26:2; 40:6; 139:23-24; Ho. 6:6;  
Mt. 9:13; 1 Co. 14:6-19

Jesus addresses legalistic over-spiritualizing hard-hearted Christians.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Changing of typical conversational style and verbiage when praying.
- Unwillingness to share genuine thoughts and feelings in prayer out of fear of what God will think.
- Being obnoxiously expressive and distracting esp. in public worship – for example speaking in tongues or trending fads of hyped emotions or expressions.
- Prayers that appear to be genuine in content but lack genuine concern or motivation, disingenuously memorized, or methodically prayed.

These prayers, whether consciously or subconsciously, look at God as an employer—based upon earned acceptance or approval—and are more concerned about the judgments and approval of others rather than genuine conversation and relationship with God. This motivation is done out of a heart to manipulate God and others.

*"A true prayer is an inventory of needs, a catalogue of necessities, an exposure of secret wounds, a revelation of hidden poverty."*

~Charles H. Spurgeon

READ: Mk. 9:20-29 (esp. v. 24)

God desires our imperfect, flawed, doubting, and rebellious heart not simply your obedience, devotion, and sacrifice.

*"In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart."*

~John Bunyan

Q: How, why, and when do you pray?

## DO YOU HAVE A TIME OF SOLITUDE?

"... GO INTO YOUR ROOM..."

READ: Lk. 5:16

Jesus addresses our proclivity to be distracted or get caught up with life.

*"Work, work, from early until late. In fact, I have so much to do that I shall have to spend the first three hours in prayer."*

~Martin Luther

Taking time for solitude allows us the opportunity to clearly express our hearts in worship, thanksgiving, and supplication and to clearly hear the heart of the Father for our need.



There are several factors to take into consideration when developing a place and time of solitude:

- Turn off distracting technology.
- As you purpose to make time with God the enemy will bring to mind EVERYTHING you have to do. Simply write it down and return your focus to God.
- Make your time with God personal (e.g. worship music, devotional books, journaling, sermon podcasts, topical studies, theological studies, etc.) Don't try to imitate other's devotional/quiet times—Clean but do not imitate.
- Give yourself grace for busy seasons (mom's this is for you). Things will come up that we can't avoid. But be careful the "season" doesn't become a lifestyle. Your solitude may look different for a season.

***"We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion. Our problem is that we are lazy."***

*~R.C. Sproul*

**Q:** What excuses do you give for not having a time of solitude?

## DO YOU ADMIRE DEMONIC RELIGIONS AND GURUS?

**"...AS THE GENTILES DO..."**

**READ: 1 Ki. 18:20-40**

Jesus addresses our tendency to judge our relationship with God by the requirements of other religions.

***"When the Lord makes it clear you're to follow Him in this new direction, focus fully on Him and refuse to be distracted by comparisons with others."***

*~Charles R. Swindoll*

We can become disheartened when we compare ourselves to the dedication of other's toward their religion—we must recognize that their dedication is based upon an effort-based salvation rather than a grace-based salvation.

Looking at and admiring the dedication and sacrifice of other religions (e.g. Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Judaism, etc.) or Christian Cults (e.g. Mormonism, Jehovah Witness, Catholicism, etc.) will create an idol in our heart and an opportunity for dishonesty in our relationship with the Father.



*"I must take care above all that I cultivate communion with Christ, for though that can never be the basis of my peace - mark that - yet it will be the channel of it."*

*~Charles H. Spurgeon*

Our standard, example, and measure of our prayer life must be dependant upon Christ alone because He accomplished perfect relationship with the Father on our behalf.

**Q:** *Who do you admire or imitate for their dedication or devotion?*

## RESPONSE

**DISCUSSION:** *Pray and discuss the above questions with your partner and journal your responses including additional questions, differing opinions, and additional thoughts that were shared in your conversation.*

**NEXT STEP:** *Spend a minimum of 10 minutes a day in prayer. Be sure that it is, to the best of your ability, distraction free.*



## BIG IDEA

God is both a loving Father and sovereign King to whom we demonstrate our trust in Him by directing our prayers toward Him.

**Q:** *Do you go to the Father in and for all circumstances?*

## IS GOD YOUR FATHER? "OUR FATHER..."

**READ:** Ro. 8:12-17

*cf. Mt. 7:11; Ja. 1:17*

Jesus reminds us that for Christians God is their Father.

"Abba" is both a term of deep intimacy as well as honor and respect—while an English equivalent is absent it is loftier than "daddy" but less formal than "father".

*"The child asks of the Father whom he knows. Thus, the essence of Christian prayer is not general adoration, but definite, concrete petition. The right way to approach God is to stretch out our hands and ask of One who we know has the heart of a Father."*

*~Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

Our view of the Heavenly Father is influenced by our experience with our earthly father.

We should not compare the Heavenly Father by our earthly

father, rather we judge our earthly father by our Heavenly Father.

**Q:** *Do you view God as a trustworthy and loving Father who has good for you?*

## DO YOU VIEW GOD AS HOLY?

"...HOLLOWED (HOLY) BE YOUR NAME."

**READ:** Is. 6:3

*cf. Re. 4:8*

Jesus acknowledges who God is at the deepest level.



God's holiness makes all His attributes and everything He does perfect, separate, and uniquely different.



*“If you don’t delight in the fact that your Father is holy, holy, holy, then you are spiritually dead... But if there is no delight in your soul for the holiness of God, you don’t know God... You’re asleep to his character.”*  
~R.C. Sproul

We limit our view and scope of who God is if we focus only on one of His attributes rather than His holiness.

Our experience influences our view of God, often polarizing His attributes (i.e. we either view Him as loving or wrathful when He is perfectly both).

**Q:** *What attribute of God have you focused on or ignored thereby limiting your understanding of who God is?*

## IS GOD SOVEREIGN IN YOUR LIFE?

**“YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE...”**

**READ:** Jn. 14:12-14

*cf. Mt. 26:36-46*

Jesus reminds us to have God’s perspective and trust His will and purpose for our life.

When we submit to the Father’s will and character we are empowered to pray in Jesus’ name through the Holy Spirit. Asking in Jesus’ name

reveals a working knowledge of God’s character and a submission to His purpose and will.

*“Most Christians solute the sovereignty of God but believe in the sovereignty of man.”*  
~R.C. Sproul

Our disappointment with God’s response to our prayers reveals our true heart—we view Him as a genie denying our wishes rather than a sovereign King extending wisdom.

**Q:** *How do you view God: as a genie or King? Why?*

## WHAT ARE YOUR NEEDS? “GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD...”

**READ:** Mt. 6:25-34

Jesus addresses our proclivity to fear (not trust the Father).

*“The only God-ordained fear is the fear of God, and if we fear Him, we don’t have to fear anyone or anything else.”*  
~Mark Batterson

Fear is an issue of misplaced trust, not a circumstantial issue.

**Q:** *What circumstance, relationship, possession, or status would make you feel comfortable or secure?*



## ARE YOU REPENTING? “...FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS...”

READ: 2 Co. 7:10-11

cf. 2 Co. 7:10-11

Jesus addresses trusting God amidst sin and rebellion.

Repentance is something we do as a response to God's forgiveness; repentance does not earn us God's forgiveness.

Repentance is not simply turning away from sin but it is turning toward God and trusting Him fully.

*“When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said “Repent”, He called for the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.”*

~Martin Luther

There are two types of repentance:

1. **Worldly Repentance** is fear of man based. This is a repentance focused on turning away from sin or feeling bad to appease men. This type of repentance only leads to grief, sorrow, and death.
2. **Godly Repentance** is fear of God based. This is a repentance focused on turning toward God and seeking reconciliation. This type of repentance leads to restoration, redemption, and life.

Q: What rebellion in your heart have you not trusted the Father's forgiveness, Jesus payment, and the Holy Spirit's empowerment?

## ARE YOU FORGIVING? “...FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS...”

READ: Ep. 4:32

cf. Mt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35

Jesus addresses releasing people who have hurt, wounded, or offended us from anything we believe they owe.

*“I firmly believe a great many prayers are not answered because we are not willing to forgive someone.”*

~D.L. Moody

Forgiveness is a two part process:

1. **An Act of the Will**  
*Forgiveness is a choice not a feeling and will most likely cost you something.*
2. **A Process of the Heart**  
*Burying, minimizing, or ignoring an offense does not get rid of it—there is always negative affects.*

True forgiveness should end in the ability to pray real blessing (specific good things) over a person.

Q: Who in my life is it hard for me to pray blessing over?





## WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU SUFFER?

"...LEAD US NOT INTO  
TEMPTATION..."

**READ:** *He. 2:17-18*

*cf. Ja. 1:2-4, 12-15; Ro. 5:1-5*

Jesus exhorts us to seek God amidst trials, tests, and temptations.

*"We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because he was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means."*

~C.S. Lewis

Don't succumb to and believe the lie that you are alone in your suffering. Jesus was truly tempted but trusted and overcame temptation by the Holy Spirit. Jesus identifies with and helps amidst our temptations.

**READ:** *1 Co. 10:12-13*

*cf. Jn. 16:1-15*

God promises to help us in our time of temptation. We often look toward an outward distraction or interruption when we need to be looking toward the Holy Spirit who He has given us.

**Q:** *What common sins do you continually give into or are tempted by?*

## RESPONSE

**DISCUSSION:** *Pray and discuss the above questions with your partner and journal your responses including additional questions, differing opinions, and additional thoughts that were shared in your conversation.*

**NEXT STEP:** *Begin to pray through the Lord's Prayer every morning. Be specific at each point.*



## BIG IDEA

When suffering, we have not merely an example to learn from, we have both an advocate and helper to comfort and strengthen us.

**Q:** *Who, what or where do you go to ease suffering (trials, tests, temptations)?*

**READ:** *He. 2:14-18*

Jesus doesn't simply identify with us in suffering; He empowers us to suffer well.

## DO YOU HAVE A GARDEN?

**READ:** *Mt. 26:36*

*cf. Mt. 14:23; Mk. 1:35; Lk. 6:12; 9:18; 22:40*

Jesus developed a habit of being alone with the Father. Jesus would pray in the Garden of Gethsemane as his place of solitude.

*“No learning can make up for the failure to pray. No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no gifts will supply its lack.”*

*~E.M. Bounds*

In developing a “garden” there are several principles to keep in mind:

- It is a normal place and time. (e.g. bedroom, commute, etc.) There was nothing sacred or mystical about the Garden of Gethsemane other than it provided solitude.

- It may not necessarily be a place of convenience or comfort as they can often lead to functional heavens or places to escape from suffering. A garden can exist wherever you happen to be if you plan for it (i.e. work, school, vacation).

*“We live, in fact, in a world starved for **solitude**, silence, and private: and therefore starved for meditation and true friendship.”*

*~C.S. Lewis*

- It is a time and place that avoids, if at all possible, distractions. Unless technology (i.e. cell phone, computer) is promoting or enhancing (Scripture reading, worship music, etc.) your time of solitude then turn it off. Even in the midst of busy, hectic, or chaotic seasons (for example, mothers with a toddler) a garden may simply consist of a few moments in the bathroom or whispered prayers throughout the day.



**Q:** What has prevented you from having a regular time and place of solitude? Is it a lifestyle issue or a seasonal issue?

## DO YOU HAVE A NEIGHBORHOOD?

**READ:** Mt. 26:37-38

cf. Mt. 17:1-1; Pr. 27:6; Ep. 4:16; Lk. 9:18

Jesus developed a habit of close friendships.

*“Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light.”*

~Helen Keller

Relationships in our lives can be described with the analogy of cities, territories/states, and countries.

**Country** – Using the analogy in Luke 15:13, these are people in a “far country” i.e. they aren’t Christians trusting Jesus. They don’t share the same world-view, expectations, or beliefs. Although we still purposefully pursue relationship, they should not be our closest most intimate friends.

For Jesus he had over 5,000 people who followed him. Not everyone agreed with him and not everyone was his friend.  
cf. Lk. 9:10-17

**Territory/State** – These are people who live in the same country as us

(i.e. Christians) but may have differing doctrinal views or are in a different life-stage than us. We pursue relationship but may not necessarily be our closest friends.

Jesus had 72 followers who trusted him and ministered with him; not all were his closest, most trusted friend.  
cf. Lk. 10:1-20

**City** – These are Christians who share similar views, goals, and may be in a similar life-stage as you. The relationship is mutually beneficial through comfort, conviction, and encouragement. We may have several “Territory/State” acquaintances, but only a handful of “City” friends. These friends are the same sex as they will be some of the closest people in your life.

Jesus had 12 men in his “city”. These were close friends... some of whom were close enough to know how to most intimately betray him.  
cf. Lk. 6:12-16; Jn. 18:2

*“Not to rebuke sin is a form of hatred, not love. Refusing to warn a person about his sin is just as unloving as refusing to warn him about a serious disease he may have. A person who does not warn a **friend** about his sin cannot claim love as his motive.”*  
~John MacArthur



**Neighborhood** – *These are Christians who you know intimately and they know you intimately. While they may lack understanding in a time of suffering they are present and possess compassion. We may have a handful of “City” friends, but only a small number of “Neighborhood” friends.*

*These “City” friends are people who have the ability to say convicting—and sometimes harsh—words to you but they are said in love.*

**READ:** Pr. 27:6

*cf. Ep. 4:15*

*While Jesus had 12 men in his “City”, he had 3 in his “Neighborhood”—men he would share his most intimate thoughts and struggles with.*

*cf. Mt. 17:1-2; 26:36-38*

**Q:** *Who is able to speak hard, convicting, and sometimes harsh words to you in love for your benefit?*

## ARE YOU HONEST?

**READ:** Mt. 26:39-44

*cf. Mt. 14:1-13a*

Jesus had developed a habit of being authentic with the Father.

Be real with your circumstances, emotions, and in your relationship with the Father. Be you, be in the moment, but don't sin.

Jesus did not fake happiness for

those around him. He expresses genuine grief when his friend and cousin, John, dies. Jesus expresses sorrow and compassion when his friend, Lazarus, dies. When his friends return from ministry, Jesus rejoices with them and to the Father.

*“Many falsely suppose that the **feelings**, which God has implanted in us as natural, proceed only from a defect. Accordingly the perfecting of believers does not depend on their casting off all **feelings**, but on their yielding to them and controlling them, only for proper reason.”*

*~John Calvin*

Jesus shows us that we can be real, be authentic, and be in the moment in our prayers. Although he felt emotion Jesus was not led by his emotions. Whether you're happy, hurting, broken, angry, be real—God is big enough.

*“**Feelings** must be engaged. They are meant to be involved. [Yet] our danger is to submit ourselves to our **feelings** and to allow them to dictate to us, to govern and to master us and to control the whole of our lives.*

*~Martin Lloyd-Jones*



**Q:** Do you celebrate with the Father in good times and grieve with the Father in painful times—are you real and open with your emotions? Why or why not?

## ARE YOU SUBMISSIVE?

**READ:** Mt. 6:39, 44-45

*cf. Jn. 14:8-11; 1 Th. 5:16-18*

Jesus fully submitted himself to the Father's will and the Holy Spirit's empowerment.

*"Above all else, we must learn how to bring our wills into **submission** and obedience to the will of God, on a practical, daily, hour-by-hour basis."*

*~Jerry Bridges*

Jesus submits his desires to the Father. For Jesus, thankfulness and contentment were catalysts for his submission.

**READ:** He. 12:1-2

*"It is Christ who is to be exalted, not our feelings. We will know Him by obedience, not by **emotions**. Our love will be shown by obedience, not by how good we feel about God at a given moment. "And love means following the commands of God." "Do you love Me?" Jesus asked Peter. "Feed My lambs." He was not asking, "How do you feel about Me?" for love is not a feeling. He was asking for action."*

*~Elisabeth Elliot*

Fear is not absent when submitting to the Father; rather, it is trusting the Father amidst the source of fear.

**Q:** When is it the most difficult for you to submit to the Father? Why?

## RESPONSE

**DISCUSSION:** Pray and discuss the above questions with your partner and journal your responses including additional questions, differing opinions, and additional thoughts that were shared in your conversation.

**NEXT STEP:** Develop and implement a "garden" and "neighborhood" in your life.



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**NATHAN & LACEY STEEL** Nathan and Lacey Steel were married in 2004 after meeting at Alaska Bible Institute, located in Homer, Alaska, where Nathan graduated from their Biblical Studies and Christian Ministry programs. Nathan was born with a genetic disease called Cystic Fibrosis, which led them to adopting their two girls, Lydia and Arianna. Through their story of God's grace and provision in their lives, the Steel's have had the opportunity to share the love, grace, mercy, and truth of Jesus all over the

world, especially in Ireland. Nathan and Lacey's expressed purpose is to Make Disciples & Teach the Bible. They fulfill this call through two primary venues: Teaching, facilitating, and promoting FreshStart® and teaching the Christian Living course at Alaska Bible Institute. FreshStart® is a ministry of the church that promotes and equips people to live lifestyles of freedom and victory through forgiveness and repentance ([www.FreshStartForAllNations.org](http://www.FreshStartForAllNations.org)). Alaska Bible Institute exists to train and equip Christians for life and ministry ([www.AlaskaBible.org](http://www.AlaskaBible.org)). For more information about the Steel's visit their website at [www.NathanLaceySteel.com](http://www.NathanLaceySteel.com).

