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“Prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God.”

[Teresa of Avila]

ENGAGE & CONNECT

Thanksgiving is this week, so let’s begin with a moment of gratitude! What is one relationship you are grateful for in this season of life? How is that relationship impacting you?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

“All that he does is splendid and majestic; his righteousness endures forever. He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious and compassionate.”

[Psalm 11:3-4]

BIG IDEA

God’s power and favor are experienced through God’s nearness, and nearness is experienced in deep prayer!

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION

Matthew 26:36-45

1. What do we learn about Jesus’ humanity in his prayer at Gethsemane? How do his emotions connect with your own experiences of suffering?
2. Why do you think that Jesus brought Peter, James, and John with him to pray, even though they fail to stay awake? What does this tell us about the role of community in times of distress?
3. Why does Jesus pray the same prayer three times? What might this repetition teach us about persistence and trust in prayer?
4. Deep prayer is relational, not transactional. If taken to heart, how could this shift in perspective affect how we approach prayer, especially during hardships?
5. How does Jesus’ surrender to God’s will challenge our understanding of what it means to trust God during difficult times?
6. In the sermon we heard that when we are having doubts about God’s love and power, we should: *“Get to the question at the bottom of it (i.e. Is God really good? loving? in charge?) and go to the Gospel (i.e. Measure His love by the crucifixion and His power by the resurrection).”* How could exploring these questions encourage you in your times of doubting?

7. Jesus faced anguish but remained steadfast in prayer. How can you build spiritual habits during good times that will sustain you during struggles?
8. How comfortable are you with being fully transparent (honest) with God in your prayers? What steps could help you (or us) grow in this area?
9. What do you think God is teaching you through unanswered prayers or times of silence? How can you remain hopeful in these situations?
10. Reflect on a time when prayer helped you move from fear or frustration to peace. Briefly share this experience to encourage your small group in their faith journey?

STEP OF OBEDIENCE

Prayer is a journey that starts with a need and ends in relationship with our Father. And the power of this relationship is built on honesty, presence, and trust! Based on the Holy Spirit's wisdom and guidance, what is a step of obedience that you can take this week? Here are a few additional questions to consider. **As you enter into DEEP prayer, are you willing to ...**

- be radically honest in prayer?
- be vulnerable with soul friends?
- trust God and surrender to His will?
- anchor yourself in God's tender love?
- stay in prayer, even when you don't feel like it?
- believe in God's power to accomplish His purpose?

Remember ... draw near to God and He will draw near to you!

PRAYER FOCUS

Experiencing God's Power and Favor

- Take a moment to be reminded that God's power and favor flow from His nearness to us, and we experience that nearness most deeply in prayer. When we draw close to Him, we are reminded of His strength, His grace, and His unshakable love for us.
- As we pray together, let's ask God to help us seek His presence with open hearts. Let's invite Him to draw near to us, so that we may experience His power at work in our lives and rest in the favor of His loving care. What a wonderful gift He gives to His children!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Matthew 26 Commentary](#) & [Jesus's Prayers in the Garden](#)
 - Use these for background and encouragement before your group gathers.
- [Talking With God as His Friend](#)
 - This would be a good resource to use after your group gathers.