

{will need to make a slide for this; Darline: add names of new prospective elders with their campus affiliation; verify with Cory that “budget” email has been set up}
2025 Budget Approval & Elder Affirmation: Start of First Wednesday (12/4)
budget@rockbridge.cc **(this is correct)**

Elder slide that Matt is references above

2025 Potential Elders

Calhoun

Kevin Baggett

Dalton

Mike Mahoney

Chatsworth

Troy Martin

Hixson

Barron Williamson

Series graphic w/matt email

Disappointment with God ...?

- **Unanswered prayer**
- **Times of “Unknowing”**

The Bible is often more honest and “real” than the church!

{Put Luke 22:39 & Matthew 26:36 on the same slide; can be a split screen: left side & right side}

Luke 22:39

He went out and made His way **as usual** to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed Him.

Matthew 26:36

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He told the disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and **pray.**”

We must build habits in good times that sustain us in the bad.

{one slide all together; arrange formatting so it is clear}

Challenge #1: To **avoid prayer.**

→ **Choose—even when you don’t feel like it—to push into **prayer** and stay there!**

Matthew 26:37-38

Taking along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to be **sorrowful and troubled**.³⁸ He said to them, "I am **deeply** grieved to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake **with** Me."

Challenge #2: To **isolate ourselves from **spiritual community****

→ **Choose to be **vulnerable** with **soul friends****

Matthew 26:39

Going a little farther, He fell **facedown** and prayed, "**My Father**, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Challenge #3: To **generalize God and **doubt** His **love****

→ **To **anchor** ourselves in His **fatherly love****

Matthew 26:39b

... "My Father, if it is **possible** ...

Challenge #4: To doubt/question God's **power**

→ **To believe in God's **power** to accomplish His **purpose****

Psalms 138:8a

The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me. Lord, your faithful love **endures** forever...

Daniel 3:15b-18 (NLT)

"...what god will be able to rescue you from my power?"

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve **is able** to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. ¹⁸ **But even if He doesn't**, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."

{come up one at a time; can be 2 sides: one for Get to the question ... and one for Go to Gospel}

When dealing with doubts about God's love & power:

- **Get to the **question** at the bottom of it ...**
 - Is God *really* good? Loving? In charge?
 - Am I being punished? Flawed to futility?
- **Go to the **Gospel****
 - Measure His love by the crucifixion
 - Measure His power by the resurrection

Matthew 26:39

Going a little farther, He fell facedown and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, **let this cup pass from Me** ...

Challenge #5: To pray “cleaned up, dressed up**” prayers**
→ To be **radically honest** in prayer

John 11:32-33 (JB Ph)

When Mary met Jesus, she looked at Him, and then fell down at His feet. “**If only You** had been here, Lord,” she said, “my brother would never have died.”

³³ When **Jesus saw** Mary weep and noticed the tears of the Jews who came with her, **He was deeply moved** and visibly distressed.

Matthew 26:39

... He fell facedown and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet **not as I will, but as you will.**”

Challenge #6: To not **surrender to God’s **will****
(To not appreciate the vastness of God’s ways & wisdom)

Romans 11:33-36

Oh, the **depth** of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!

How **unsearchable** His judgments and **untraceable** His ways!

³⁴ For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?

³⁵ And who has ever given to God, that He should be repaid?

³⁶ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Challenge #6: To not **surrender to God’s **will****
→ To get to **trust** in and through **prayer** (= x3 ... through the night)

We are able to perfectly **trust that we do not perfectly **understand.****

John 16:33 (NIV)

In this world you will have **trouble.**

But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Prayer is like a **journey** that starts with a **need** and ends in **relationship.**

- Matthew 7:7-8 – “Ask ... Seek ... Knock ...”

The power of prayer is **relational**, not **transactional.**

- Powerful relationships are built on **trust**, not just honesty and presence.

God's power and favor are not experienced by the absence of **adversity** and enjoyment of **prosperity** but in terms of God's **nearness**.

→ Nearness is experienced in deep prayer.

{put these 2 verses on the same slide; split screen—left & right—is good}

James 4:8

Draw near to God, and He will **draw near** to you.

Psalm 73:28a (NLT)

But as for me, how **good** it is to be **near God!**