

# 40 DAYS OF *prayer*



THE ALLIANCE

# 40 DAYS OF prayer

## INTRO

Dear Alliance family,

Welcome to 40 Days of Prayer! This prayer guide features daily devotionals and prayer prompts that are designed to lead you into the presence of God, to cry out to Him in prayer, and to listen for His still, small voice. It's not enough to hear about prayer, read about it, or even just learn about it. During these 40 days at the beginning of 2022, we need to engage in prayer—to perhaps do so with a frequency, fervency, and focus that is not normal for us. This year's theme is **Reawakening to Christ**. The aim of this 40-day focus is to fix our gaze on Jesus; remember who He is, what He has done, what He has given us to do, and what He will do in the future.

Look around at all that is happening in our nation and world. It is time to pray and to surrender to Jesus! Could it be that this 40 Days of Prayer could change us, change our prayer lives, change The Alliance, and even transform our nation and world? Let's step into this prayer experience with the anticipation that we will encounter the living God and fix our eyes upon Him. Let's pray with a spirit of expectancy that the Spirit of God will do great things in, among, and through us to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Keep the faith!



Terry D. Smith  
Vice President for Church Ministries



THE ALLIANCE

40 DAYS  
OF *prayer*

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## WEEK 1

### REAWAKENING TO THE GLORY OF CHRIST

During His Incarnation, the glory of Christ is often veiled, and we see His humility. But His glory has existed from eternity past and will continue into eternity future. Even during His Incarnation, His glory is seen from time to time. This week's devotionals unpack various aspects of the glory of Christ so that we will find ourselves caught up in worship.

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## THE ETERNITY OF CHRIST

MICAH 5:2

This is the story of God's love. A story in which the Heavenly Father stepped down into the limits of time, where a sweet, little visitor from heaven approached Bethlehem, a little town surrounded by crumbling walls.

The visitor was the baby in whom the greatness and glory of the Creator became a mere human. Throughout His life, the love of the Father took this visitor through the difficult trials of humanity. He experienced much pain, loneliness, and rejection. He was despised and cast out. But He was loved. Even more than that, *He was love*.

This visitor is also the Great Judge. He walked to the end of the road with the heavy weight of our guilt on His shoulders, ready to be humiliated, abandoned, slapped in the face, and rejected on a cross for our sake.

This humiliated visitor, resurrected and exalted, later regained control of all things, and as a tender shepherd, took care of His lambs and continues to do so. The greatness of His name leads us to the security of His eternal love that is safe and peaceful.

He came from eternity to humanity and back to eternity, making the great, if at all possible, greater still.

This is Jesus, our Lord. He is a great mystery—not fully understood, but believed and treasured by those who accept such a high-priced gift—unmerited, undeserved, and available only by grace through faith. He was brought by the Father to a decaying world that was and is in need of a touch from beyond time, from beyond humanity.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask the Lord to help you delight in the unfathomable reality of the Incarnation.
2. Pray that He will lead you to be thankful and worshipful.
3. Ask Him to guide you into a life worthy of such love.

## THE DEITY OF CHRIST

## COLOSSIANS 2:9

I have noticed that most church traditions tend to lean toward an emphasis on either God's transcendence or His immanence. Like some of you, I have walked up the steps of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and the synagogue in Chorazin. The stairs there are purposefully steep and uneven to slow people down and cause them to consider the sacred space they are entering. But most Sundays, I walk into a church building without stairs, where you can grab a coffee and take it into the sanctuary and where most people are dressed casually and have come late.

In Colossians 2:8, Paul alludes to a heresy simmering in the church around the depreciation of Christ. In verse 9, he contrasts this heresy with a bold and vital truth, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form . . ." While it is right and good to recognize Christ's immanence and accessibility, we are also to honor His transcendence and deity.

Make no mistake, He is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15); in Him all things were created (1:16); and in Him all things hold together (1:17). We follow not merely a good teacher from Galilee but the Head of the Church (1:18), the first to be resurrected (1:20), and the Reconciler of all things (1:20–22).

What a difference this makes in how we approach Him, our posture before Him, our attitude toward His Word, and our lives of worship lived for Him.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Picture yourself slowly climbing steep, uneven steps; meditate on entering the sacred space around Jesus.
2. Picture yourself bowing down before Him in all His majesty—or do it physically; be still and listen for at least five minutes.
3. Express your praise and worship of Him in all His deity.

» by Jen Ashby

## THE SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST

HEBREWS 4:15

For over thirty years, Jesus lived a sinless life before God and mankind so that we could one day stand clothed before Him in the righteousness of His Son. Our sinless Savior never entertained a thought, never uttered a word, and never carried out an act that emerged from an impure or selfish motive. Jesus always obeyed and honored His Father in heaven as well as His father and mother on earth. He never stole, lied, or coveted. He never uttered a single word out of pride or sinful anger. He never gossiped, slandered, or deceived His neighbor. In other words, Jesus Christ submitted to every commandment of God. He loved His Father with all His heart, soul, strength, and mind, and He fully loved His neighbor as Himself.

In living this life of sinlessness as our representative, Jesus faced the same temptations and difficulties we face so that He might know and sympathize with our weaknesses and failures. He walked in our shoes, entered into our affliction, and then did the unthinkable by dying in our place.

When we hunger and thirst to know our Lord in a deeper and more intimate way, it is essential for us to meditate on His glorious perfection. When we struggle with our own sin and failure, we must remember the sinless One who was obedient unto death in order to find true forgiveness, hope, and assurance in Him.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Spend a time treasuring Jesus, the sinless One, and praising God for the spiritual blessings you have in Christ.
2. Ask Jesus to release the power of His sinless, saving, and sanctifying life into your heart by the Spirit so that His very life can become your own.
3. Reflect on any weaknesses, temptations, or difficulties you may need to bring to Jesus today.

» by Tom Myers

## THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

MATTHEW 17:1-8

Jesus led three of His disciples up a high mountain. There, He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. Such glory the Lord showed His disciples!

Jesus has led us as a family in the C&MA. For the past 140 years, He has shown His glory to the world through us. Countless lost souls have been rescued, and the Kingdom of God has expanded to the ends of the earth through our obedience to His call.

Peter, having seen the Lord's glory said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matt. 17:1), expressing his desire to stay and remain in the status quo. In parallel, the C&MA, having experienced His glory for so long, might now be tempted to say, "Lord, we have had effective ministry, produced excellent fruits, and thus we want to continue our work with the same strategies and methods that have proven successful."

However, our current reality is unique and challenging. COVID-19 has invaded the entire planet with merciless fury. Churches had already been feeling turbulence prior to the pandemic. Congregations are experiencing sharp declines in attendance. Youth and children are dissipating and the remaining members are aging by the day. These are frightening times!

These times demand that we get up and move boldly toward the world with a new paradigm. "Listen to Him!" (Matt. 17:5). Let's listen to Jesus for a new paradigm and follow His Spirit's guidance toward greater revival. Yes, His glory is near!



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that the Lord will let you see and experience greater revival in your time.
2. Ask Him to shower you with His Holy Spirit and anoint you with holy oil.
3. Pray that He will equip the C&MA with a new paradigm to rebuild and renew our churches.

## THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

ACTS 1:9-11

Have you ever caught yourself just ‘standing around?’ At times, standing around is purposeful. You might be waiting for the bus or train. Perhaps you’re waiting for the person in front of you to place their order so that you can place yours. These few examples alone should be enough for you to recognize that this kind of standing around is not in vain.

But what about when you find yourself standing around in an emotional, mental, or spiritual state of paralysis? Life is happening all around you, and though you are physically moving, you feel . . . stuck. Again, I ask you, have you ever caught yourself ‘standing around?’

Two angels ask the disciples why they are standing and looking up toward the sky. Isn’t it obvious? They are staring up toward their hope. Jesus is leaving again; yet this time, no one is running or hiding for their lives. Jesus ascends to heaven, and though I would imagine the disciples experience a bit of grief, they also have hope. This is an example of actively standing and waiting. Their eyes are transfixed on their King who is leaving; but this time, He is leaving in victory, not breathing out His final breath on the cross. Their beholding will not be in vain—Jesus will one day return in the same way they saw Him ascend.

Our standing and waiting need not get in the way of our active participation of Jesus’ will for this world. The disciples beheld and got to work. We are challenged to do the same.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that the Lord will reveal to you areas that you might be standing around and not trusting in the victory of Jesus Christ.
2. Are you lacking in beholding or in actively participating? Ask God to give you strength and wisdom to become an active participant.
3. What would change in your life if you truly believed He will return in the same way He ascended? Ask Jesus to grow your faith.

## THE COMING OF CHRIST IN GLORY

MATTHEW 24:30-31

The glorious return of Christ will be terrible and wonderful. His sign in the heavens will appear at the apex of tribulation on the earth followed by His visible return on the clouds. The glory of Christ the King will become evident to all peoples of the world without exception.

For too many, the vision of His coming will trigger the mournful recognition of a lost opportunity for salvation. But for the elect—that great crowd from every tribe, tongue, and nation who have hoped in Jesus (see Revelation 7:9)—it is a rescue unto eternal life.

Christ's wonderful salvation, made available for all peoples, will be beautifully displayed as he dispatches angels to gather to Himself believers from every direction the winds blow.

May the wonder of this dramatic scene-to-come draw us deeper in devotion to our Savior and King. May that devotion draw us deeper into our commitment to His purpose of preparing a people for Himself from every nation.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that your heart will be captivated anew by the glory of salvation.
2. Pray fervently for the thousands of people groups that are without believers or witnesses to Christ among them.
3. Pray that a great harvest will be reaped as workers are sent to all peoples.

» by Tim Crouch

## THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

## PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

The glorious, majestic One who was with the Father before the world existed emptied Himself so that He might rescue us from sin and restore us to God. As He labored in Gethsemane under the crushing weight of what He was about to endure on our behalf, He prayed for us. He asked that we would be one with each other, as He is one with the Father, so that the world might know that He is the Son of God. It is the commandment that He repeatedly gave us: *love one another*. The most evident way to display that love is by treating others as more important than ourselves.

Jesus didn't just tell us to do this, He lived His life as the very example of sacrificial love. He had every right to assert Himself and claim His rightful place, but He flipped conventional wisdom on its head by going low in order to be high.

We sing songs about wanting to see Jesus exalted and lifted high, and He loves and deserves the praises of our lips; but He is also glorified by the obedience of our lives. Let's go low by loving one another well so that we might lift Him high; then, the world might smell the sweet fragrance of Christ in us!



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and reveal places of pride and selfishness. Repent.
2. Ask the Father to grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the deep and intimate knowledge of Him so that you might catch a glimpse of His glorious majesty and brilliant beauty. It is as we gaze upon Him that He transfigures us into His image.
3. Thank Jesus for the freedom and privilege you have to speak His name with power and authority, the Name that is above every name!

» by Mary Petty

# 40 DAYS OF *prayer*

## WEEK 2

### REAWAKENING TO THE LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

This week, we will focus on various aspects of Christ's Incarnation—from birth to death and Resurrection. We will turn our eyes to focus on the person of Jesus in all of His glory and continuously pray for deeper understanding of who He is.

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## THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

LUKE 2:1-20

The word “potential” finds its Latin roots in “being able” and “power.” It begins with what seems to be small and insignificant. Yet, when released, it causes a chain reaction exponentially altering all that it touches. An atom is minuscule; but when split, it has the potential to release enormous amounts of energy that can be terrifying; yet, that same power has the potential to light up a city for years.

Consider the potential riddled throughout Luke 2:1–20. Life-changing potential is gifted to a young, insignificant couple betrothed to one another. The nameless shepherds are caught up in a glorious acapella worship session led by angels. When the show is over, they band together, go to a tiny town, and find themselves in awe of a small new life with great potential.

Notice how the potential of Jesus’ entry extends in two directions—deep and wide. It goes wide as the shepherds experience Jesus. As good extroverts, they spread the news about “this child,” and all who heard were amazed. The deep-reaching impact of Jesus’ entry into the world is displayed in Mary’s classic introverted response as she deeply “treasures up all these things” and continues to “ponder them in her heart.”



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ponder God’s great potential in the person of Jesus. Recognize how His humble entry into your world has changed you and equipped you to bring light into a darkened world that so desperately needs to hear that He can forever redeem any soul who calls on His name.
2. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help you see potential places where He is at work in those around you.
3. Ask the Lord to highlight areas in your life that you need to be convicted of and to bring comfort to areas that need His healing touch.

## THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

LUKE 4:1-13

As Jesus broke through the waters of baptism, the Spirit descended upon Him, prophetically remaining with and in Him. The Spirit would be His source of strength, power, discernment, and direction as He began His messianic ministry. There are two primary works for which the Spirit is given: to transform our character toward holiness and to become our source of power for life and ministry.

Following Jesus' baptism of the Spirit in the Jordan, He entered the arena of character building in the desert of temptation. It was after this trial of temptation that He began His ministry in the power of the Spirit. We follow a similar pattern—regenerated by the Holy Spirit, transformed in character, empowered for ministry, and surrendered in obedience to the commands of the Father for Kingdom service.

Jesus gives us access to the same power to overcome sin and temptation through surrender, obedience, and His Spirit's ongoing, indwelling presence.

- Holiness is our birthright.
- Jesus models the normal Christian life of Spirit-empowered life and ministry.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask God to reinforce the truth that you are filled with the same Holy Spirit presence and power that indwelt Jesus.
2. Ask that the Holy Spirit will reveal your sinfulness, redeem your character, and restore your righteousness in Christ.
3. Pray that you will allow the Spirit to lead, guide, and move you into deeper intimacy with Jesus and greater passion to join Him in His work.

» by Monty Wright

## THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

LUKE 4:14-21

The Spirit of the Lord activated, appointed, and anointed Jesus for the ministry of the gospel. It is a ministry to proclaim and demonstrate the power of the Good News to the physically and spiritually poor; to the captive, brokenhearted, blind, and oppressed. Jesus, the Great Physician of the body and soul, faithfully teaches about the Kingdom—and with great authority, sets people free.

As followers of Christ, the Spirit of the Lord anoints us to proclaim and demonstrate the Good News. We cannot have one without the other, and neither one can precede the other.

Just before the outbreak of COVID-19, a new health center was launched in one of the most impoverished communities in San Jose, California. Its mission was not only to proclaim the Good News, but to demonstrate its power to heal the sick and set people free from the curse of poverty. Believers volunteered countless hours to fill out applications for rental relief funds, administer COVID tests, deliver boxes of food, and provide educational and tech support to families.

Thousands experienced God's love and mercy in tangible ways. More than 85 people surrendered their lives to Jesus and were baptized as they heard the message of Christ and experienced healing and deliverance for their souls. The Good News of Jesus is all-the-more good and powerful when it is preached both in word and deed.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that your life and ministry will be marked by the fullness, power, and anointing of the Holy Spirit.
2. Ask the Lord for more confidence to faithfully proclaim and demonstrate the gospel.
3. Pray that He will provide liberty, healing, and jubilee to the spiritually poor, captive, brokenhearted, blind, and oppressed.

## THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

LUKE 5:1-11

The crowd is pressing in on Jesus. They are desperate to be near Him and hear His words. Peter is content being busy around Jesus. He has his own urgent work to be done and tasks that consume his time and attention. He needs to wash out the (empty) nets. Then Jesus interrupts him.

Jesus wants to connect more deeply with this mob of listeners and forces Peter to redirect his attention to something else. Jesus climbs into Peter's boat, and now Peter must ferry this traveling teacher out into deeper water.

Then Jesus decides to give *him* fishing advice! Peter has just cleaned his nets; he has spent an exhaustive amount of time maintaining a system that produced nothing. Surely Jesus can see the bags under his tired eyes and the calluses on his hands from doing the same thing every morning. He even reminds Jesus how hard he has worked and how minuscule the results have been; but Peter obeys and trusts Jesus' words, throwing his clean nets back into the water.

And then suddenly, Peter has a great multitude of fish on his hands. His nets are breaking, and his boat is sinking. His old tools cannot keep up with this new thing Jesus is doing. He calls his friends over to try and help, but they all end up astonished. Now Peter is terrified. He even asks Jesus to leave. In that moment, Jesus' presence and power is overwhelming. It feels like too much. Jesus responds with comfort and a promise. For Peter and every disciple since, following Jesus is just the beginning of so much more.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Are you desperate to be closer to Jesus, or are you content merely being busy around Him? Pray that He will reveal the answer to you.
2. Ask that the Lord will reveal to you what you are simply maintaining without producing fruit.
3. Pray that God will open your eyes to what you need to leave behind so you can be ready for and obedient to Jesus' promise of more.

## THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST

LUKE 7:11-17

An outstanding feature of the earthly life of Jesus Christ was the miracles He performed. The one described in Luke 7:1–17 involved interrupting a funeral procession to raise a young man from the dead and “give him back to his mother.” I love the response of the people who witnessed this miracle: “They were all filled with awe and praised God . . . ‘God has come to help His people.’” Of course, this was just one of the many miracles of Jesus, who healed people of various diseases, released them from demonic control, turned water into wine, calmed the storm, multiplied food, and raised others from the dead.

And Jesus Christ is still a worker of miracles. He is daily intervening in people’s lives, overruling and overturning their circumstances. He is still miraculously at work to “help His people.” Does He still raise the dead? Well, I’ve heard three stories in recent years from credible witnesses where it seems He did.

He still heals the sick, defies the natural order of things, and multiplies resources to provide for His people. Hebrews 13:8 declares, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Obviously, Jesus doesn’t choose to miraculously intervene in every situation, but He still does miraculously intervene, and we still have the privilege to approach the throne boldly and ask in faith for Him to do so. Whatever you need Jesus to do today, be confident that He is still able.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that the size of your faith will be defined by the power of Jesus Christ.
2. Ask Jesus to help you to stop worrying and fretting over your difficult circumstances.
3. Take what you’re facing today to Jesus and trust Him for a miracle.

» by Terry Smith

## THE ATONING DEATH OF CHRIST

LUKE 23:32-34

Our text today (Luke 23:32–34) reminds us that Jesus died with criminals, yet He extended forgiveness to them. Imagine it—our Jesus was executed with other death row inmates! And in that setting, we see His care for the one who believed (Luke 23:43).

In that same setting, what did Jesus pray? *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”* (Luke 23:34). This was not a prayer for the criminals; it was a prayer for the soldiers (law enforcers) tasked with officiating His execution for the government!

Our Jesus understood His role. He became the atoning sacrifice for our sin. He did not shy away from this task. He became the divine sacrifice (in the old English, the word was “propitiation”) for human sin. The apostle John put it this way: *“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world”* (1 John 2:2). His death paid the price for my sin!

This week, we remember Christ’s life and His death on the cross. Oh, that we thank Jesus for providing forgiveness for sin through His shed blood.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that incarcerated men and women will see Jesus as their forgiver of their sins.
2. Pray that men and women in law enforcement and the military will see Jesus as their sustainer and encourager in hard times.
3. Ask the Lord to reveal one people group that you can pray for.

» by Patrick Blewett

## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

LUKE 24:1-11

The crowning miracle of the Incarnation was the Resurrection of Jesus Christ—predicted by Jesus, but still unexpected. The Resurrection cements the authenticity of all of Jesus' other claims. He is Lord!

Oh, how we love these women who went to the tomb early that morning. We know that sorrow and disappointment bring fatigue. Yet, despite the heartbreaking hours at the foot of the cross, following the procession to the tomb, and investing their resources to gather the spices, they somehow still managed to get out the door before sunrise. This demonstrates their faithful love for Jesus.

Disappointment and sorrow can also send us searching for answers in all the wrong places. The angels' question is one for us: "Why are you looking to dead things to solve your problems or ease your pain or bring meaning to your life?"

And, finally, we all know that disappointment and sorrow often cause us to forget. The angels didn't tell the women anything new; they simply reminded them of what Jesus had already said. *Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life!*



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. To the disciples, the women's story sounded like nonsense. Pray Mark 9:24: "Help me overcome my unbelief" for children, family members, and for the people where your missionaries serve, that they would investigate the risen Christ for themselves.
2. Pray for those who are experiencing sorrow and disappointment, that they would stay faithful to and focused on the Lord Jesus and remember His wonderful words of life.
3. Praise the Lord that because of Jesus, the stone has been rolled away in our own lives. We now live anew in the Resurrection power of Christ. *What a powerful name it is, the name of Jesus!*

# 40 DAYS OF *prayer*

## WEEK 3

### REAWAKENING TO THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

Jesus did not leave us as orphans; rather, He sent His Holy Spirit to indwell and fill those who put their trust in Him. This week, we will explore various aspects of the Spirit's ministry to us. Pray for the Holy Spirit to be present and to open up your eyes and heart.

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## INHABITED BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

ROMANS 8:9

When we meet someone for the first time we often ask, “Where are you from?” In some ways, perhaps, this is an icebreaker, a tool we use to have something to say to a person we are just getting to know.

But, it may be also a way for us to identify certain traits about that person that help us to get to know them more quickly. Knowing where a person is from might help us to understand them better, or it might allow us to better connect with them.

As believers, the question of where we’re from takes on a different meaning. Paul tells us that we are not in the realm of the flesh but rather in that of the Spirit. We may think of a “realm” as a physical place, a literal kingdom, but the implication is that we are “in” and “of” someone—under their control—while we are somewhere else.

We are here, physically on earth; and as such, the realm of earthly things would seem to rule. We are not “in” that realm, but rather in the realm of the Spirit. Our worldview, our values, our hopes, our allegiance, and our obedience are in the Spirit of Christ who inhabits us. It is what we’re in—not where we’re from—that defines us.

The next time someone asks where you’re from, tell them who you’re in.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that you might understand clearly that you are here on earth, but not under the control of the earthly realm.
2. Pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal to you greater understanding that Christ defines you as a believer.
3. Ask the Lord to open your eyes to better understand that your obedience is to Christ and to the Spirit, not the worldly realm you inhabit.

» by Hazael Morell

## CONVICTED BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

JOHN 16:8-11

I love math. I love numbers and how they seemingly show up in everything. I can count my steps, cups of coffee, miles per gallon, activity time on my cell phone, and on and on. In college, I took a high-level math class and got behind, became discouraged, and just quit trying. We get behind, and we tend to give up.

The same seems to be true in our spiritual lives. We get behind in obedience, in maintaining spiritual disciplines, in our walk with Jesus, and we give up. We begin to live with a low-grade guilt that lurks around everything.

The good news is that Jesus tells us, through the apostle John, that we have a Helper—one who will “convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” The very Spirit of Christ points to our wrong (sin), our thinking (righteousness), and our decisions (judgment).

Conviction can **expose** our sin, our righteousness, and our judgment. The Holy Spirit constantly sheds light in dark places to bring reconciliation with God when we get behind or feel like giving up.

Conviction can also **convince** us that God is pleased when we do not sin, when we think rightly, and make decisions to follow Him. The Spirit’s conviction, surprisingly, can be positive—God affirming us when we give into Him rather than giving up.

What a Savior!



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Is the Spirit exposing an action, pattern of thinking, or decision that needs changing? Ask Him to reveal it to you.
2. Pray that the Lord would bring to light areas of your life that are pleasing to Him.
3. Ask the Lord to reveal ways you can better serve Him.

» by David Smith

## TAUGHT BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

JOHN 14:17; 16:13

One of the greatest challenges we face in the times we live in is the battle for truth. The world is constantly pushing us to believe the lie that truth is relative and self-determined. It is not hard to see the effect of this thinking in our culture—people clamoring for others to accept their “truth” no matter how contrary or different it may be from someone else’s.

Christ has revealed Himself as the Truth (John 14:6), and all who have recognized this have been forgiven and accepted as they are. In turn, the Spirit of Truth has come to dwell only in them.

By indwelling us, the Spirit constantly reveals our present condition, guides us into all truth, enlightens our hearts and minds, teaches us to know God, and helps us understand the depths of Christ and His Word—the truth, which sanctifies us (John 17:17).

The danger is that we might forget that our greatest teacher lives in us and longs for us to sit in His classroom. He has inspired the authors of the Bible and, in turn, helps us to understand, apply, live, and teach it to others. Yet, we continually face the temptation to rely only on our own understanding, searching for quick answers to our needs and questions in other books, places, or people, while forgetting that they are merely substitute teachers for a period in our life.

Jesus is calling us to a deeper life, to abide in Him. Knowing our limitations, the Father has given us everything we need to achieve it: His Word, His Church, and His Spirit, our guide and teacher in the journey.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray the Word—read Ephesians 1:17-19. Make this prayer your own.
2. Pray for the world—that they may know the truth of Christ.
3. Pray for yourself in the world—that you may respond in obedience to Christ’s calling and the Holy Spirit’s guidance in your life.

## HELPED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT OF CHRIST JOHN 14:16, 26; 16:17

In the upper room during the final week of His life on earth, Jesus knew that His near departure would cause great distress to His disciples. He promised that He would not leave them alone in this world, but that He would send the Holy Spirit as the Helper to be with them forever.

Jesus fulfilled His promises, not only to His disciples but to all of us today.

The Holy Spirit gives wisdom, power, and boldness to God's children. Jesus also promised that the Helper would teach them and remind them what He has taught them.

The Messiah, according to the prophet Isaiah, was given wisdom, power, and boldness by the Spirit of the Lord God to carry out His ministry and bring great results. The Holy Spirit gives wisdom to God's servants and gives God's people the ability to boldly proclaim the gospel to the lost and fulfill the Great Commission with great results.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that the Lord will remind you of the ways the Holy Spirit is within you.
2. Ask Him to continuously give you wisdom and boldness to proclaim the good news throughout the world.
3. Pray that God would give you strength to expand His Kingdom for His glory.

» by Ha Ho

## POINTED TO JESUS BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST JOHN 15:26

We are here to testify for Jesus (John 15:27); however, Jesus made it clear that it will not be easy (John 15:18–25). The provision for our inability to testify for Jesus is the Advocate or Counselor—the Holy Spirit.

First, the Holy Spirit is the one who can and will testify about Jesus because of who He is. Jesus said that He will send the Advocate from the Father, and He is going out from the Father to us. He is a part of the Trinity or triune God. He has full knowledge of Jesus and can best testify about Him.

Second, the Holy Spirit is the one who will testify about the work of Jesus and the role He plays in our lives and in this world. Jesus knew about our inability and weakness to testify about Him, so He promised to send us the Helper or Advocate—the Holy Spirit. He is the one who will make Jesus known to us and the world as Lord, Savior, and Messiah.

Therefore, let us be strong in our witness for Jesus because we are not alone. We have the Holy Spirit on our side who will help us in every way as we share Jesus with others. All we need is a heart of faith and obedience.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask that the Lord will help you grow in your understanding and willingness to yield to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your witness for Jesus.
2. Pray that He will make His presence known in your church through the Holy Spirit.
3. Ask that He will anoint your pastor and elders with the Holy Spirit so that they can lead your church in the testimony of Jesus to your community.

## ENLIVENED BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

ROMANS 8:11

As Christians, we are not called to a life of superhuman effort. We are called to a life that, humanly speaking, is impossible. Listen to the words of Jesus: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt. 5:44)—humanly impossible. Hear also the words of Paul: “Forgive one another just as God in Christ has forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32)—once again, humanly impossible.

So where does this leave us? Are we destined for a life of discouragement? No. We are destined for and called to a life of dependence on the Holy Spirit who makes the impossible possible in the life of the believer.

Romans 8:11 says, “and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to our mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” The context of the verse is victory over sin for the believer through life in the Spirit. As we know, there is no victory over sin in the Christian’s life through human effort. God provides the victory that He desires for us through Himself, through the gift of the Holy Spirit who lives in the heart of every believer in Christ Jesus.

What challenges are you facing today? Where do we turn when the issues around us or the challenges within us overwhelm us? As Christians, we are called to a life of dependence on the Holy Spirit who makes possible the impossible. Praise be to God.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask the Lord to open your heart to the ways you need to lean on Him today.
2. Pray that He will open your eyes to what He wants you to see and experience.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of challenge. Pray for strength to lean on Him and not yourself.

## FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

EPHESIANS 5:18

The story goes that when evangelist D.L. Moody was asked why he needed to keep being filled with the Spirit, he replied, “Because I leak!” Ephesians 5:18 reads that we are to “be filled with the Holy Spirit” as an ongoing need in our lives. At salvation, we receive all of the Holy Spirit, but He doesn’t receive all of us because there are still areas of our lives that need to be surrendered to His lordship. The leaking problem is not on God’s end. The leaking problem is that we are fallible human beings who get hungry, tired, and emotionally depleted.

We need the continual impartation of His Spirit to willingly choose to say no to sin and yes to Him. He lovingly points out areas of our lives that are taking up room that belong to Him—areas of fear, anger, pride, or self-righteousness. When these areas are surrendered to the Lord, we make room in our lives for more of Him. It is not just sin that needs to be surrendered, it is areas of pain, wounding, grief, disappointment, and loss that need a fresh touch of His Spirit. This is the process of sanctification.

Many people say that they want more of God and then try to qualify how He can come to them. Surrender means giving up control; so when we open ourselves to the filling of the Holy Spirit, we trust Him to choose the way He wants us to experience His presence. It is an act of intimate love to dare to give ourselves to the Lord; therefore, our yes to Him is the doorway to more of Him.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Give the Holy Spirit permission to come to you in any way that He chooses.
2. Pray that the Spirit will increase your heart’s capacity to receive more of Him.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you again and again.

» by Wanda Walborn

# 40 DAYS OF *prayer*

## WEEK 4

### REAWAKENING TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church was purchased by Christ, initiated by Christ, and is under the ownership and leadership of Christ. He is in the position to tell us the purpose and function of the Church, and we are to submit to His ownership and headship. Think about Jesus' intent for the Church and how we are to live into that intent. Pray for an open heart.

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## THE CHURCH WITH CHRIST AS ITS HEAD      EPHESIANS 1:22

Christ as the Head of the Church is not so much about the Church's subordinate position as it is about Christ's supremacy in everything, including the Church. A focus on a church's duty to submit emphasizes what we are doing, but a focus on Christ's supremacy fixes our eyes on who leads the Church.

Paul reminds the Ephesians that Christ is seated at God's right hand "in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet . . ." (Eph. 1:20–22). It is this high and exalted Christ whom God has appointed to be Head of the Church.

The Church with Christ as its Head does not need to worry about political upheaval, economic downturns, or crumbling religiosity. There is absolutely no need for mudslinging, handwringing, or doomsday-ing when we know "his incomparably great power for us who believe" (Eph. 1:19). No matter how dire or disastrous things may appear for the Church, we do not need to be riled up with anger or overwhelmed with despair because we know that with the high and exalted Christ as its Head, the Church will prevail.

In our current times of scandals, sociopolitical schisms, and declining church attendance, let us fix our eyes once again on Christ, the Head of the Church, who is seated at God's right hand.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Turn your gaze upon the high and exalted Christ, worshiping Him in His supremacy and thanking Him for His leadership of the universal Church and your local church.
2. Confess any anxieties you may have about the Church's position in society, power in politics, or reputation in the world.
3. Ask God to open the eyes of your heart so that you will know His incomparably great power for us who believe.

## THE CHURCH AS CHRIST'S BODY

EPHESIANS 1:23

Christ's Body—what a powerful image to describe the Church. Think about your body and all that happens in and through your skin, bones, muscles, brain, and heart. With our bodies, we move; we touch; we speak; we see; we eat; we rest; we hear; we smile; we weep; we embrace; we serve; we feel pain; we show compassion; and we love. And the Church is collectively described as the living, moving, breathing Body of our Lord and King.

This is both a wonderful and sobering reality—one we must acknowledge with joy and responsibility. What a privilege it is to be the arms and legs and voice of Christ in the world. What an honor that, despite our deep brokenness, He chooses to manifest Himself through us. This honor comes with great responsibility. We are to reflect Christ at all times and in all things—in how we love one another, navigate conflict, serve our communities, celebrate, lament, care for “the least of these” among us, and in how we proclaim His good news.

If we become overwhelmed by the seeming impossibility of this calling, let us remember that Christ is the one who “fills all in all.” It is only through His filling, the indwelling of His Spirit, that our bones come to life, that breath fills our lungs, and that He is made known through us.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Praise God for the honor of being Christ's Body.
2. Ask His forgiveness for the ways you have relied on your own strength and failed to reflect Him.
3. Pray for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit to empower the Church to live as His Body.

» by Anya Holcomb

## THE CHURCH AS GOD'S FAMILY

## EPHESIANS 2:19

Have you ever experienced what it feels like to be a foreigner, a stranger? As a new worker overseas, I did. It took a friend welcoming me into her household and giving me her family name before I felt like I truly belonged. To this day, many of my dearest friends know me as Bintou Diallo.

As Christ-followers, one of our greatest blessings is being a part of God's family. We no longer go through life seeking to belong because we've found our rightful place. Our Abba knows us by name, and we are His cherished children.

In God's family, we are all on equal footing. It's a running joke in my family—made up of four girls and one boy—that my brother is the favored one. To prove it, he has a coffee mug that says, "I love how we all know that I'm your favorite child."

Unlike my parents, God doesn't play favorites. We were all unworthy, each of us saved by grace, and we are all equal heirs.

God's household is a global family. On that great day when the multitudes gather, there will be peoples from every nation, tribe, and language worshiping the Lamb. What a glorious family reunion it will be!



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Spend some time thanking God for the gift of being a part of His family.
2. Ask the Lord to reveal to you someone who's estranged, left out, or feeling marginalized and needing to find their rightful place in God's family.
3. Search your heart. Have you looked at a brother or sister in Christ and felt they were unworthy of their equal place in God's household? Repent.
4. Pray for our global family. Pray especially for persecuted brothers and sisters whose earthly families have abandoned them.

## THE CHURCH AS THE DWELLING OF GOD'S SPIRIT EPHESIANS 2:21-22

Recently, as I was driving, I saw a handwritten sign posted by the road. It said: “Repent or Hell.” It immediately triggered frustration within me. Why would those three words create frustration? As I pondered and prayed, I realized this reductionist message was missing the entire gospel work of Jesus Christ and His love for all people.

Ephesians 2:21 says that our identity and position in this life and for eternity is “in Him.” Those two powerful words are centered on the work and love of Christ. God chose us to be His Church, His Body. Then, He sends His Holy Spirit to empower us.

The Holy Spirit is not weak, timid, or tired, so when we, or the church, are weak, timid, or tired, it often reflects that we are not being fully surrendered to the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit doesn't force Himself on us. He waits for the invitation; He longs for us to fully surrender to Him. We need to daily surrender to the Holy Spirit and invite Him to take charge of our lives and every trial we face.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Take a moment today to thank the Lord that He chose you and purchased you to be His Body. You are the Church.
2. Surrender to the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit so that His work can be done in you and through you for His glory.
3. Ask God for opportunity and boldness to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ to those in your world who desperately need our Savior.

» by David Gilmore

## THE CHURCH AS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST EPHESIANS 5:22-33

The heading in my Bible for today's passage of Scripture reads, "Wives and Husbands," so it's not surprising that most of the time we read this section of Scripture through that lens. But as I read today's passage through a different frame of reference, the Church as the Bride of Christ, the passage is even more convicting.

Christ's love for His Bride, the Church, and His desire to see its beauty and splendor is front and center. Do you see it?

Christ's sacrifice on the cross makes it possible for His Bride to be purified and purged from sin. Today's passage aligns with John 17:17-19 when Jesus prays in the garden, "sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth." If Christ's heart for His Bride is to be set apart, dedicated, and made holy, how are we to prepare for that glorious day?

Preparation is key with weddings. I'm reminded of this again as my son, Jeremy, and his fiancée, Sydney, prepare for their wedding in June. They have spent a lot of time intentionally choosing a venue, photographer, wedding party, and guests.

How are you intentionally preparing the Bride of Christ for His return? Perhaps, like me, your heart is broken with this sobering reminder.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask God what wedding attire you need to put on (see Colossians 3:12-14).
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the sanctifying work that He wants to do in your church or ministry.
3. Pray that the Lord will open your eyes to the truths He wants you to teach or speak about in 2022.

## THE CHURCH AS CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION 2 CORINTHIANS 5:19-20

The dictionary defines the word “ambassador” as: “An accredited diplomat sent by a country as its official representative to a foreign country . . . a person who acts as a promoter of a specified activity.” As ambassadors for Christ and citizens of heaven, we are His representatives on earth and have been given “the ministry of reconciliation.”

In a world that tries to define the role of the Church in worldly, unbiblical ways, let us not forget that our calling as Christ’s ambassadors is to proclaim without apology that: the Kingdom of God has come; the way of salvation and reconciled relationship with the Father is through the atoning work of Christ on the cross; anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; a reconciled relationship with the Father makes way for reconciled relationship with one another; and “all this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18).

We are Christ’s ambassadors. We carry the ministry of reconciliation! The Church is the answer to racial unity and racial harmony in a world that is filled with racism, discrimination, and division. This ministry of reconciliation starts with the gospel, is at the heart of the gospel, and reaches beyond the walls of the Church as we take the gospel to the world. So, in the words of the apostle Paul, I “implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20).



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that the Church, as citizens of heaven, will be Christ’s ambassadors first and foremost.
2. Pray that the Church will preach and live out the ministry of reconciliation—to God and to those who bear His image—for the sake of the gospel.
3. Ask the Lord where you might have blind spots as His ambassador that need to be corrected by His Spirit.

## THE CHURCH AS THE PILLAR AND FOUNDATION OF THE TRUTH 1 TIMOTHY 3:15

On December 23, 1972, the capital city of Managua, Nicaragua, was filled with joyful anticipation, ready to celebrate Christmas. However, at 12:29 a.m., a 6.3 magnitude earthquake with destructive intensity sifted the entire city. My mom's family was one of many who found themselves without a dwelling place. Lovingly, her uncle stepped in and built a house for the family. As he worked, he taught my uncles the importance of a strong foundation, support beams, and load-bearing walls. He also shared that in ancient cities, pillars were commonly used to make proclamations by pinning important messages directly on the pillar itself. That house still stands today. It has withstood other earthquakes, civil war, and the wear and tear of life.

Jesus is central in the analogy Paul used regarding God's dwelling, the pillar and foundation of the truth. John 14 clearly conveys that truth is a person, and that person is Jesus Christ. He is the truth, the master builder, the pillar that proclaims the truth of salvation, the firm foundation, the solid rock that will withstand any storm, and the cornerstone that holds it all together. There is both a mystery and a beauty that Christ would become one with His Church and graft us into being part of the dwelling place of God where the foundation that we firmly rest on is Jesus. As pillars, we proclaim the message of truth with His words written on our hearts to those around us.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask that the Lord will reveal to you how the truth of Jesus is upholding your life through various seasons.
2. As a pillar, is the message of Jesus, the truth, being proclaimed to those around you? Ask the Lord to reveal areas of your life where you might be able to reflect and exude more of Him.
3. Ask Jesus to make the truth fresh and beautiful in your heart if it has become dry and stale.