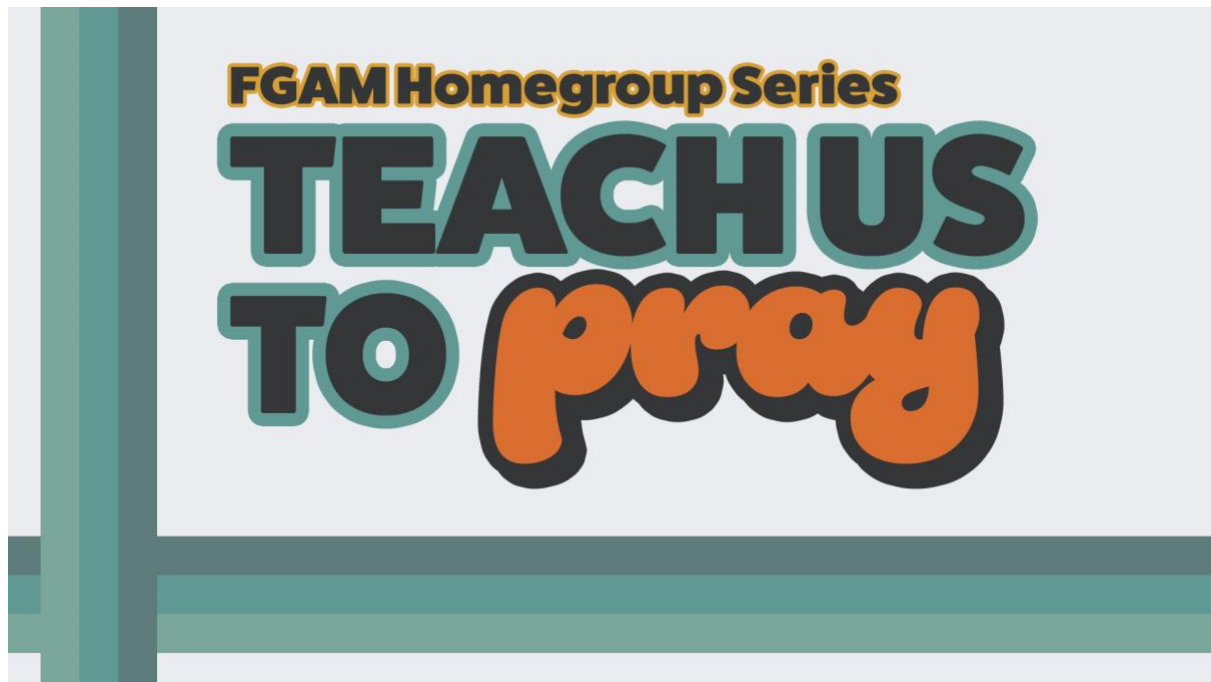


Teach Us To Pray



Home Group Leader's Guide

July – August 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW3

SESSION 1 – Why Pray?7

SESSION 2 – Adoration and Thanksgiving11

SESSION 3 – Listening and Contemplation.....15

SESSION 4 – Petition and Intercession18

SESSION 5 – Spiritual Warfare22

APPENDIX I – The Names of God27

APPENDIX II – Steps to Hearing from God28

APPENDIX III – The Full Armour of God Spiritual Exercise29

OVERVIEW

Teach Us To Pray

Series Passage

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'" Matthew 6:8-13 (ESV)

A. INTRODUCTION: "Teach Us To Pray" Home Group Series

Prayer is an essential spiritual discipline and a powerful weapon in our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. Many people associate prayer with merely petition – asking for physical or material needs to be met. Not many view prayer as a means for growing in intimacy with God. Fewer still are those who naturally think of prayer as a way to discover God's revealed purpose in Scripture, and then praying for the outworking of His purpose. When we primarily view prayer as asking God to do something for us or give us what we want without consideration for His purpose and will, we will likely find ourselves thinking prayer is an ineffective tool which sometimes works and sometimes doesn't.

Through the "Teach Us To Pray" series we will have the opportunity to explore key tools Jesus that taught his disciples based on the Lord's Prayer. Through activation exercises in each session we have the chance to experience how prayer can be one of the most powerful and effective spiritual weapons God has given us.

*"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, **"Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."** Luke 11:1*

All disciples of Jesus need to learn how to pray

What is Prayer?

Prayer involves establishing a connection and engaging in communication with a living God. It is a reciprocal exchange where we express our thoughts, emotions, desires, gratitude, and concerns to our Creator. By nurturing this connection, we can obtain guidance, find comfort through acts of worship and adoration, and partake in meaningful conversations with our Heavenly Father. Just as it is in the natural so it is in the spiritual. No relationship can grow without communication and time spent together, whether it be in a marriage, dating, family or simply a friendship. The same applies to our relationship with God.

Through the series we will see how various forms of prayer are actually tools that God has given to us to thrive in our prayer life, including adoration and worship, listening and silent contemplation, petition and intercession. We will also touch on how to pray when there is spiritual warfare, including using the Word of God and the armour of God.

B. ABOUT THE SESSIONS

In this series, we will explore the importance of prayer as we study the Lord's Prayer as a way to teach us different ways to pray. We will examine why prayer is necessary and how it can enhance our relationship with God and outworking in more productive and fruitful lives.

The prayer tools or methods have been correlated with specific sections of the lord's prayer as follows:

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Matthew 6:9-13)

Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name	<i>Adoration</i>
Your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven	<i>Listening & Contemplation</i>
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors	<i>Petition & Intercession</i>
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil	<i>Spiritual Warfare</i>

We will look at each of these types of prayer and have the opportunity to practice them as we go through the series.

C. SESSION STRUCTURE

Here is the suggested format for your home group, with emphasis on changes for this series highlighted in bold font:

SESSION ACTIVITY	TIME
Worship / Opening Prayer	5-15 mins
Welcome and Read Session Introduction	10 mins
Watch Session Video and read Main Point	15 mins
Discuss up to 2 Questions	20 mins
Activation	10-15 mins
TOTAL TIME	70-90 mins

The key emphases for this series are:

1. **Introduction** – this is an important component for the session. The facilitator should summaries and encourage the members to read the section.
2. **Discussion Questions** – We have provided two or three questions, but there is only time for discussing one or two questions. The leader should pick which ones best suit the group. This will allow more time for the group activation, which is an essential part of this series.
3. **Activation** – This is an essential section for the Home Group series since we are learning tools to pray we want to ensure there is time to put them into practice.

D. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The "Teach Us To Pray" video streaming and copies of the Leader's Guide and Member Notes are available for download at <http://fgam.org.au/media/homegroup-materials>.

If you are unable to access the files or require a printed copy please let contact the FGAM office (Ps. YC Goh (0425 799 576, yc.goh@fgam.org.au).

The "Teach Us To Pray" Sunday preaching series runs for 5 weeks from 28 May to 18th June 2019. Sermons are available online in video (<http://fgam.org.au/media/video-sermons>) or audio (<http://fgam.org.au/media/audio-sermons>) format.

References

The following references were used during the preparation of this material.

1. Greig, Peter and Blackwell, David “24-7 Prayer Manual.” David C. Cook Publishing Company, 2009.
2. Greig, Peter “How To Pray.” Hodder & Stought, 2019.
3. Kendall, RT “Did You Think to Pray.” Hodder Faith, 2009.
4. Prince, Derek “Secrets of a Prayer Warrior.” Chosen Books, 2009.
5. Seow, Roland “Fully Armed Grasshoppers.” Roland Seow, 2016.
6. Sheets, Dutch “Intercessory Prayer.” Bethany House Publishers, 2016.

Keywords: *Prayer • The Lord’s Prayer • Intercession • Spiritual Warfare •
Petition • Adoration • Kingdom of God*

F.A.I.T.H. emphasis: H – Holy & Set Apart

Session 1

Why Pray?

Key Passage: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."*
Philippians 4:6

A. INTRODUCTION

This five-part home group series is designed to improve our prayer life by looking at how Jesus taught his disciples to pray in the Lord's Prayer ([Matthew 6:9-13](#)). In this first Session, we will begin the series by looking at the simple necessity of prayer.

Many ask the question, "If God already knows what we need and what we're going to say, why do we need to pray?". The answer is that prayer is more than just asking God for the things we want. Prayer is a fundamental aspect of our spiritual journey and an essential practice in our relationship with God. It is through prayer that we express our deepest needs, desires, and concerns to the divine, seeking guidance, comfort, and strength. Prayer allows us to connect and communicate with God, align our hearts with God's will, and experience His transformative presence in our lives. In this exploration of why we need to pray, we will uncover the profound impact of prayer in our lives.

Through this series we will experience a series of prayer tools to enable an intimate and effective relationship with our Father in Heaven. These are tools that Jesus taught his disciples in the Lord's Prayer.

1. Adoration & Thanksgiving – Worship, thanksgiving and adoration. Remember God's goodness.
2. Listening & Contemplation – Be still and know that I am God ([Ps 46:10](#)) making time to Pause from distractions, busyness and recognise God's presence and listen to his voice
3. Petition and Intercession – Asking God for help presenting out petitions and seeking his will in matters for ourselves and others
4. Spiritual Warfare

We invite you to participate wholeheartedly in the series and enjoy the benefits of a deeper prayer life.

B. WATCH VIDEO

In this first Video Ps. Chris Ong introduces the topic by sharing reasons why we take time to pray. As described in the Main Point, these include exercising our spiritual authority, improving our intimacy with God, transformation and growth in our spiritual lives, leading to fulfilment of God’s purposes in practical ways.

Ps Chris Ong also shares the P.R.A.Y. acronym as a guide to prayer.

C. MAIN POINT

Have you ever wondered why the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray? They could have asked Jesus for anything, such as to teach them to preach, share their faith, pastor, plant a church, how to feed the poor, etc. yet they asked him to teach them to pray. The disciples spent time with Jesus and recognised **that Prayer was the KEY to Jesus’ ministry (Luke 11:1)**. They were aware of their own limitations and sought help in this area.

Let’s look at a few reasons why we need to pray:

1. **Partnership with God:** It is through prayer that we align our hearts and actions with God’s will, seeking His guidance and direction in all aspects of life.
2. **Spiritual Authority:** When praying, we can access the authority and power God has given us as His children, enabling us to enforce His will on Earth, overcome obstacles, and witness His power at work.
3. **Intimacy with God:** Prayer is a means of communication where we can express our thoughts, emotions, desires, and concerns to Him. Through prayer, we encounter His presence, experience His love, and develop a deeper connection with Him.
4. **Transformation and Growth:** Prayer is essential for personal transformation and spiritual growth. It affects change.
5. **Fulfilling God's Purposes:** Prayer reminds us of our dependence on God and equips us to live out our God-given destinies.

The disciples went on to have incredible prayer life – they prayed for the sick and saw people healed, they prayed for demonic deliverance and people were set free, they prayed for strength, salvation, peace, miracles and so many other things which changed the course of history. If the disciples needed help to know how to pray, then we do too.

D. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **How is your prayer life, what do you usually do and what do you find most challenging/exciting about keeping a vibrant prayer life? Share how you would like to grow in prayer and relationship with God through this series.**

Answer Guide: Encourage people to share honestly about where they are at in their prayer lives. If the series starts with everyone pretending (or talking about prayer in theory without allowing people or the home group series to affect their home prayer life) it will make the series ineffective.

If they don't know what they want to get from the series, have them imagine what an amazing prayer life would look like and see what suggestions they have to bridge the gap between then and now. Home group can be a place where people are just honest with what's going on in their life. It's ok if people don't really pray a lot, there's always room to grow 😊

2. **When you hear the word "prayer", what comes to mind? What else could you add to the list of the 5 benefits of prayer listed in Main Point (make it personal for you and your actual prayer life, and not just theoretical)?**

Answer Guide: This is a baseline question to see where everyone in the group is at. Some may see it as a discipline, some may see it as a privilege, some may see it as a religious duty. Best to have an honest conversation with everyone about what they really think about prayer. Also, dialogue through each of the 5 points to see what each person thinks of the theoretical points (personally).

E. ACTIVATION

Spend some time in prayer together.

As a first step, in the safe home group environment, **take turns for each person to pray aloud** (break into small groups if necessary). You may like to try using the P.R.A.Y. acronym from Grieg:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P – Pause | Have someone open in prayer then make time to PAUSE from distractions, busyness, activities, and invite and recognise God's presence. Be still and know that I am God (Ps 46:10). |
| R – Rejoice | Have each person pray a prayer of Worship, thanksgiving, adoration, or something to remember God's goodness |
| A – Ask | Take turns to God for help, presenting your petitions before God and seek His will in the matters. |
| Y – Yield | Yield and surrender to His voice, repent if you need to and affirm you want to do his will. Listen to God for yourself first then spend some time listening for others. |

Discuss how this model of prayer worked for you and how people felt praying.

Leader's Guide: Some people struggle to pray aloud or in a group. This activation is to help everyone travel together spiritually, and for each person to pray aloud. You may need to remind those comfortable in prayer not to dominate the activation session, but to encourage others in their prayers.

F. LOOKING FORWARD

In Session 2 will look at Adoration and Thanksgiving as a way to experience God's presence in prayer.

SESSION 2

Adoration and Thanksgiving

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name"
Matthew 6:9

A. INTRODUCTION

In this series we are drawing from the Lord's prayer to uncover a series of tools that can improve our prayer life: Adoration, Listening & Contemplation, Petition & Intercession and Spiritual Warfare. In this session, we will look at key words in the Lord's prayer and focus on Adoration.

Here is a list of the sections we will look at during in the following sessions.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Matthew 6:9-13)

Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name	<i>Adoration</i>
Your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven	<i>Listening & Contemplation</i>
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors	<i>Petition & Intercession</i>
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil	<i>Spiritual Warfare</i>

B. WATCH VIDEO

Ps. Chris Ong talks about our dependence on God. Beginning with adoration reminds us that we are to live lives dependent on him and that he is to be exalted to his rightful place.

C. MAIN POINT

When we look at the Lord’s prayer, the word “*Our*” is important because we are by nature self-centred, and that’s reflected in our prayers – bless me, help me, heal me. Jesus reminds us that we are not God’s only child, we have brothers and sisters whom we have been commanded to love and care for.

The word “Father” describes the truth of who God is, every family on earth has God as a Father. To address God as our Heavenly Father acknowledges the restoration of the relationship through Jesus. This is because we have no right to call God our Father except that we have been brought to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. Through Jesus we have been adopted into God’s family (Rom 8:15). To start our prayer with Our Father in heaven is to firstly recollect our standing in Christ before we proceed into prayer. “We are not praying to some remote deity or some impersonal force. We are praying to a Person who has made Himself our Father through Jesus Christ” (Prince, 2009).

With the phrase “*in Heaven*”, Jesus immediately put us in our place. Psalm 115:3 says “*Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him*”. As our Father, we are reminded of His love for us, while “in heaven” reminds us of His Sovereignty and independence – He will not be controlled by us, and that His will prevails.

“*Hallowed be Your name*” conveys a deep sense of reverence, worship and adoration. He is teaching us to not rush into His presence with our requests, but to recognise Who He is first. When we adopt an attitude of reverence in our prayers, something transformative occurs within our spirit. Peter Grieg uses the telescope versus the microscope analogy to illustrate this point. With the microscope, we are zooming in on our own needs and issues while the telescope helps redirecting our focus to the magnificence and the greatness of God. It's like getting lost in something much bigger than us and our problems. We recall His goodness and grace and faithfulness and love towards us. When our focus shifts, we can't help but worship and adore Him, because our hearts are filled with thanksgiving. It shows that our prayer to God is relational, not transactional - coming to the Father not to get something from Him but to give our affection and love to Him.

Adoration and thanksgiving prayers focus on expressing gratitude and reverence towards God. It is a time to reflect on specific things we are thankful for and to vocalise it to the Lord in prayer; to worship Him for His godly attributes such as His holiness, power, wisdom, grace and love. It centres on acknowledging His greatness and our gratitude to and reverence awe of Him. Prayer is relational and not transactional (Grieg).

When looking at examples from Scripture, we see the early church responded to an issue of persecution in prayer. In [Acts 4:23-31](#), 75% of the prayer is telling God things He already knows about Himself, and only a quarter is petitioning God to act on their behalf! Why do you think the disciples spent so much of their prayer time telling God of His own attributes? They are worshipping and adoring Him. They are focusing on His greatness and His character, before their personal issues. They are putting their issues/troubles in context (small troubles, Big God!).

Take a look at [APPENDIX 1](#) and go through the list of God’s names.

D. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **"Prayer is relational, not transactional". Who is God the Father to you? Perhaps take a look at the Names of God in [Appendix 1](#) and see if any of these describe your personal relational view of God?**

Answer Guide: This question is designed to draw out how people view of God our Father. Who is He to you? Is it a duty or an opportunity to meet with God. If people are struggling to answer you can dig deeper by asking questions like "what name do you use when you pray (e.g. Lord, God, Jesus, Father, Heavenly Father, Holy Spirit)?" This may reflect who they are most comfortable praying to.

2. **Looking at [Acts 4:23-31](#) – How can you emulate the disciples' example of putting their own crisis into proper perspective by worshipping and adoring God? What other responses may they have had to their situation?**

Answer Guide: Reflect about what was happening at the time. The story starts in [Acts 4:1](#) where Peter and John were interrupted while preaching to the crowd that Jesus had risen from the dead. The Jewish religious authorities put them in jail overnight. The next day they faced court and were told never to preach in the name of Jesus again. When they went back to their group, they rejoiced at the persecution and spent time worshipping and praising God.

Other responses could have been to just considering their own situation and the trouble and trial they had just been through. Instead of agreeing to never preach in the name of Jesus again, they praised and thanked God for the experience and prayed for boldness to continue sharing about the risen Christ.

In Acts 4:23-31, the disciples provided us with a practical example:

"When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'

for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness."

E. ACTIVATION

End the session with a time of worship (around 15 mins), and offering to God prayers of adoration and thanksgiving.

F. LOOKING FORWARD

Session 3 will look at Listening and Contemplation as a core part of the Lord's prayer.

SESSION 3

Listening and Contemplation

*"Your kingdom come,
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven"*
Matthew 6:10

A. INTRODUCTION

In our fast-paced and busy world, listening and contemplative prayer offers a refreshing and transformative way to connect with God on a deeper level. While prayers often involve us speaking to God, listening and contemplative prayer invite us to silence our minds and open our hearts to hear God's voice and experience His presence. It is in the stillness and quietness that we make space for God to speak, to reveal His truth, wisdom, and guidance to us.

Listening and contemplative prayer enables us to cultivate a deeper intimacy with God, to discern His will, and to be filled and renewed in His loving presence. In this session, we will discover the power and beauty of listening and contemplative prayers and how they can enrich our spiritual life and nurture our intimacy with God.

B. WATCH VIDEO

In the video, Ps Chris Ong focuses on paying "deep attention to God and his kingdom and his voice".

C. MAIN POINT

Prayer is a two-way communication, which means it must involve our listening to God, not just our talking to God. In [John 10:3](#), Jesus is quoted as saying "the sheep hear his voice". The mark of a real Christian is that we listen to Jesus' voice. Just as the daily bread satisfies our physical needs, Jesus' voice fills our spiritual needs and prevents us from starving spiritually.

God speaks to us in various ways – Scripture, people, prophetic expressions (dreams, visions, impressions), nature etc. It will be different for different people. We will sometimes make mistake in listening but let’s not let that discourage us.

In [1 Sam 3:1-10](#), both Samuel and Eli got it wrong, but God doesn’t give up. We don’t need to doubt His ability to speak to us. Eventually it was Eli who realised that it was God’s voice and coached Samuel on how to listen and what to do. If you struggle in this area try spending time with people who are good at hearing God and learn from them.

Another key aspect of prayer is contemplation, where we spend time with God in silence and simply enjoying His loving presence. In contemplation, we are seeking to focus our minds fully on Jesus. **It’s less about doing for God or asking of God, but being with God. Loving attentiveness to God, an intimate sharing between friends, between lovers. No personal agenda.**

[Isaiah 6:1-8](#) is an example of contemplative prayer. Try reading it and picture yourself in that situation. Get caught up in the presence of God, a place where Isaiah received his commission to action. It’s where we get filled, it makes the ministry and commission sustainable. We are taking that presence that we found in the prayer room and bringing it to our family, church, and to the streets.

D. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you hear God in specific ways? If so, in what ways does God speak to you?

Answer Guide: There are many different ways people hear from God, such as dreams, visions, impression, hearing his voice, through the word, through circumstances, journaling etc. A guide to hearing from God, including ways that God speaks, is provided in [Appendix II](#).

Let everyone share. If there are some who have trouble hearing from God let others in the group share how they hear. God speaks to different people differently so there is no set way to hear. Important thing is to be open and create space for God to speak.

2. What do you do to set aside time and space for listening and contemplation? Do you find it easy or have trouble connecting to God through contemplation? What are some of the things you can do to grow in this area?

Answer Guide: This is a practical question. Focus on how listening and contemplation is actually done in a person’s life. It’s hard to get sufficient time, space and peace to be able to really listen to God.

You can also talk through some of the ways we can contemplate or meditate in prayer. Some ways we can connect are specifically through

- 1. Meditate on the character of God*
- 2. Meditate on scripture, allow the word of God speak to you*

3. *Foster Intimacy with Jesus by meditating on his character, his words his presence his promises*
4. *Pray in tongues*
5. *Meditate on the personhood of Jesus and on the Word - to meditate means to consider deeply, to reflect, to be absorbed in thought. Jesus is the total embodiment of the Word, and whatever prophecy we receive will not contradict His Word. Therefore, having a good handle on the Word of God helps guard us against counterfeit prophecies.*

3. What does it mean to do God's will in your life? If we're praying "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven", what's our part to play in that?

Answer Guide: Maybe this isn't a question that can be answered immediately in the home group, but rather something that your Home Group goes off to listen to God about, to spend time contemplating. Our regular prayers should help us to hear God's voice for our lives.

E. ACTIVATION

As a group, stop to practice listening and contemplation. We are seeking to focus our minds fully on Jesus. Instrumental worship music, quiet reflection of God's goodness or a passage of Scripture (such as [Psalm 19](#)) can help.

After about 10-15 mins, invite individuals to share what God has spoken to them.

F. LOOKING FORWARD

Session 5 will look at Petition and Intercession as core components of the Lord's prayer.

SESSION 4

Petition and Intercession

*"Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."*
Matthew 6:11-12

A. INTRODUCTION

Through this series are seeking to grow in our prayer life. In the first two sessions we used tools that focussed on God. The Lord's prayer prioritises God's agenda, adoring him, seeking his ways and purposes... *"Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* The tools we are covering today focus on provision of our physical, spiritual and relational needs.

We start with God's purposes – what is important to Him, what is His will, this includes regard to our personal situation. Using the Lord's prayer as a model prayer reminds us to put God's will and His interest ahead of our own.

The fall of man shuts us into a prison called self. When our lives revolve around self-interest—how can I get what I want? What do I get out of this?—we find ourselves trapped in the prison of self-centredness, and if we are honest, sin. However, through the spiritual rebirth brought by Christ Jesus, we are liberated from the confinement of self-centeredness. This enables us to experience the liberation of forgiveness and restoration of relationships. We are able to prioritise God's desires over our own. By praying in this manner, we go beyond the limitations of the natural realm. We are aligning ourselves with what God wants done in the earth.

B. WATCH VIDEO

Ps. Chris Ong speaks about asking God for our daily bread. This translates into asking him to meet our needs. This may include our practical daily needs as well as the need for forgiveness. When we come before God and acknowledge our need for forgiveness, it's not about self-abasing or putting ourselves down. It's about having an honest conversation about where we have failed so that God may restore us.

When we see that we fail it does two things. It helps to protect us from pride and thinking we can do no wrong; and it also helps us to not judge others who have sinned and to forgive them when they hurt us. Just as we need God's forgiveness, they need ours.

C. MAIN POINT

Petition prayers involve making requests or presenting our needs and desires before God, and asking Him to intervene and provide. But what can we ask for? Jesus taught his disciples to prioritise two requests: daily needs and forgiveness. All followers of Christ would be wise to do likewise.

The Bible encourages us to bring our petition to God with thanksgiving ([Phil 4:6](#)). Although God knows our needs, He still wants us to articulate it to Him. It's an act of faith and trust, believing that God is able and willing to respond to our requests according to His perfect will and timing. However, it is crucial to consider God's purpose and align our requests with God's will (his Kingdom), recognising that His wisdom surpasses our own understanding. Prayer isn't about trying to get God to say Amen to what we want, it is about us saying Amen to what God wants. His will be done, not ours.

[1 John 5:14-15](#) *"And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him".*

One of the elemental requests we are instructed to make to God pertains to forgiveness. We seek forgiveness for our own transgressions, whether they are against God or other people. Nevertheless, our plea for God's forgiveness is also contingent upon our willingness to extend forgiveness to others, also emphasised in Jesus' parable of the unforgiving servant ([Matt 18:23-35](#)). This is why forgiveness is an essential in our prayer life. When we come before God and acknowledge our need for forgiveness, it's not about self-abasing or putting ourselves down, or grovelling before God. It's about having an honest conversation as to where we have failed, in order that we can receive God's mercy and forgiveness and be restored. We can have full confidence in the cross that Jesus paid the price for our sins...in full.

When we acknowledge our failures, it does two things: It helps to protect us from pride and the false presumption we are incapable of making mistakes ([1 John 1:8-9](#)). Secondly, it helps us to extend grace and to forgive others who have harmed us. Just as we need to receive God's forgiveness, we need to release forgiveness to others. This breaks darkness over relationships and gives our hearts the opportunity to heal.

With relationships restored, we can then pray, or intercede for others. To intercede means to come between; to act between two parties with a view to reconcile those who differ; to mediate, to represent. Intercession prayer is a selfless act of going beyond personal petitions and standing in the gap advocating for someone else's well-being, seeking God's intervention and blessings in their lives. Intercession prayer reflects the heart of Jesus, who intercedes for us before the Father ([Rom 8:34](#)). It holds the potential to bring about transformation, healing, and breakthroughs in the lives of those being prayed for.

Take a look at [Exodus 17:8-13](#), Moses is interceding by lifting his hands in prayer. When his hands are lifted in intercession, the Israelites win the battle on the ground, when he lowers his hands, they lose. That's a powerful picture of the connection between what's happening in the spiritual realm and on the ground (our lives, families, churches etc.) and how we intercede for the release of God's plan in all our circumstances.

Intercession is not an option, it's a necessity.

D. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **“Prayer isn’t about trying to get God to say Amen to what we want, it is about us saying Amen to what God wants.” What would it look like for you to pray with this perspective? Petition is about asking for things that align with God’s will. Asking for forgiveness is a kind of Petition too. Why are these things important?**

Answer Guide: If you are praying for God’s kingdom to come in and through you (i.e. meaning that you will be a conduit for God’s will to be done here on earth as it is in heaven), then what things do you need?

This is the question you should be discussing in the Home Group. Sure, there will be a lot of normal needs that will come from that (we all need resources, safety, health etc to be able to do God’s will too), but it’s also important to figure out what needs will help us fulfil God’s kingdom.

Petition includes asking God for forgiveness. How do we incorporate confession into our regular prayer life and why do you think it’s important?

Praying in this way, allows God to CHANGE OUR HEART.

2. **How do you feel about Intercessory prayer? If possible, give an example of a breakthrough you have experienced on behalf of someone else. What do you think was the key to the breakthrough? Share some things you would like to try to work on to incorporate intercessory prayer into your prayer life.**

Answer Guide: Some find intercessory prayer easy whereas others find it a burden or difficult praying on behalf of others. You can even ask for testimonies of breakthroughs people have experienced when interceding for others.

There are lots of things you can do practically to incorporate more intercessory prayer into your life.

1. *Intentionally record prayer requests: Come up with a way to collect and organise prayer requests from others. You can use a physical prayer notebook or a digital tool like notes on your phone. Encourage friends, family, and church members to share their prayer needs with you, and commit to regularly praying for those requests.*
2. *Schedule Prayer Sessions: Set aside specific times in your daily or weekly schedule to devote to praying for the needs of others. Dedicate these sessions solely to interceding for others, and make it a priority to lift up their concerns, challenges,*

and desires to God. Use your prayer list or prayer request system to guide you during these sessions.

3. *Practice Empathy and Compassion: Cultivate empathy and compassion for others by intentionally putting yourself in their shoes. Seek to understand their struggles, joys, and aspirations. As you empathise with their situations, it becomes easier to pray with sincerity and specificity, addressing their unique needs before God.*
4. *Pray with Scripture: Incorporate the use of Scripture into your intercessory prayers. Select relevant verses or passages that speak to the specific needs or challenges of the people you are praying for. Personalise these verses as you pray, declaring God's promises and seeking His intervention on behalf of others.*
5. *Follow Up and Share Encouragement: Once you have prayed for someone's specific request, follow up with them to see how things are progressing. Offer words of encouragement, share any insights or Scripture that came to mind during your prayer, and let them know they are being lifted up in prayer. This shows care and support, and it strengthens the sense of community and connection among believers.*

Intercessory prayer is a powerful way to demonstrate love and support for others. By faithfully lifting up their needs and desires to God, you can make a meaningful impact in their lives and experience the joy of being part of God's work in answering prayers.

E. ACTIVATION

Are you experiencing a "green", "amber" or "red" response to any specific prayers at the moment? Briefly share your experiences. In small groups, take time to pray for one another for your situation.

When you pray take some time to practice the tools you have learnt so far.

1. Adoration
2. Listening (seek God's his viewpoint and any scripture that you can use to pray)
3. Petition/intercession (the person asking for prayer can also pray (petition) while others around them can pray for them (intercede)).

You can use Scripture to pray the promises of God that are relevant to the situation.

F. LOOKING FORWARD

In the last session will learn how prayer is a weapon which can help us in life's spiritual battles.

SESSION 5

Spiritual Warfare

*"and lead us not into temptation but
deliver us from evil"*

Matthew 6:13

A. INTRODUCTION

Prayer is not only a means of communication with God but also a powerful weapon to help us fight battles in the spiritual realm. To understand spiritual warfare, we need to know what we are fighting against. In the Lord's prayer, Jesus told us to pray "Deliver us from Evil". This is for a good reason. Paul expands on this in Ephesians 6:12 saying, *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."* What the scripture means, is that in the realm of the spirit there are real forces at work that seek to hinder, oppose, and destroy God's purposes and the well-being of humanity.

We can't fight a spiritual war with human weapons or willpower alone. God, however, has provided prayer as a means to launch powerful spiritual weapons. We can pray the Word of God in the name of Jesus, as a child of God redeemed by the blood of Jesus to deliver us, and others, from the enemy. It is through prayer that we access God's power and invite His intervention to dismantle strongholds, break chains and experience victory.

In this final session, we will discover the importance of prayer in engaging the spiritual realm, discerning spiritual battles, and experiencing the triumph that comes through aligning ourselves with God's purposes.

B. WATCH VIDEO

Ps. Chris Ong speaks about how prayer is a weapon which is a powerful tool given by God. In this last part of the Lord's prayer Jesus instructs the disciples to ask God to deliver them from evil.

To understand spiritual warfare we need to know what we are fighting against. We are not fighting against flesh and blood but a range of spiritual powers which are at work, as described in [Ephesians 6:11-12](#).

We need to pray and engage in the spiritual realm as we align ourselves with God’s purposes.

C. MAIN POINT

The book of Daniel gives a vivid picture of the power of prayer. In Daniel [chapter 9](#) and again in [chapter 10](#) we read how Daniel spent times in fasting, prayer and mourning for the nation of Israel. He had realised that God promised restoration of the nation and wanted to see that happen. His prayers also resulted in a series of visitations by the archangel Gabriel, who then imparted revelation from God for Israel’s purpose for those times and well into the future.

Daniel 10:12 “Then he said, “Don’t be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer.”

A few key points we can glean from Daniel’s experiences:

- Daniel took the initiative to pray. The archangel Gabriel came in response to Daniel’s prayers ([Dan 9:23](#), [10:12](#));
- Daniel’s persistence and unwavering faith in prayer ([9:20](#), [10:2-3](#)), even in the face of delay and opposition, resulted in angelic intervention and divine revelation ([9:21-22](#), [10:12-14](#));
- Daniel fought the spiritual battle by standing in the gap for the people of Israel, acknowledging their failures but also knowing God’s heart and will for them([9:4-20](#)).
- Daniel fought spiritual battle strategically by aligning his prayers with God’s will for His people, and not his own will ([9:2-3](#)).
- Daniel’s practice of combined prayer and fasting amplified the effectiveness of spiritual warfare against the enemy by increasing spiritual sensitivity, deepening dependence on God and breaking through spiritual strongholds.

D. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **In what ways have you personally experienced or observed spiritual warfare in your life? How do you recognise or discern whether things that happen are of natural causes or are related to spiritual warfare?**

Answer Guide: Spiritual warfare is a reality in life, however it is not always very easy to discern. The enemy is very deceptive and we are often underplaying his schemes. We can also go to the other extreme and blame the Devil for all the mistakes that we are making. The balance is somewhere in between.

There are several tell-tale signs that may indicate you are involved in spiritual warfare. Here are some common indicators to be aware of:

- *Intensified Inner Struggles: You may experience intensified internal battles, such as persistent negative thoughts, doubts, fear, outbursts of anger or temptation that go beyond normal challenges.*
- *Relationship Struggles: If conflicts, misunderstandings, or divisions arise in your relationships without a clear reason, it could be a sign of spiritual warfare attempting to disrupt unity and harmony.*
- *Sudden and Intense Attacks: You may face unexpected and intense trials, setbacks, or opposition in various areas of your life, including your health, finances, career, or personal relationships.*
- *Disruption of Spiritual Life: A noticeable decline in your spiritual life, such as a lack of desire for prayer, Bible reading, or fellowship with other believers, falling asleep in church, can indicate spiritual warfare at work.*
- *Persistent Negative Patterns: Repeated cycles of negative behaviour, addictions, or destructive habits that you struggle to break free from may be influenced by spiritual warfare.*
- *Targeting Your Identity and Purpose: Spiritual warfare often seeks to undermine your sense of identity in Christ and hinder you from fulfilling your God-given purpose. You may feel confused, discouraged, or spiritually stagnant.*
- *Unexplained Oppression: Experiencing a sense of heaviness, oppression, or a feeling of being watched, or nightmares can be a sign of spiritual warfare.*

Remember, not every challenging situation is necessarily spiritual warfare, but being aware of these signs can help you discern when there may be a spiritual battle taking place. Seek guidance from God, stay rooted in His Word, and seek the support of mature believers or spiritual leaders if you suspect spiritual warfare in your life.

2. Temptation can involve spiritual warfare. How can you recognise and defeat the enemy to resist temptation?

Answer Guide: One of the most common ways the enemy attacks us with accusations or temptations is through our thoughts. Remember the three "R"s of spiritual warfare as the enemy comes to attack you by sewing things in your mind:

Recognise *Recognise the devil, when a thought comes that you know God wouldn't have put it there, consider it as evil;*

Refuse *Refuse to entertain the thought;*

Resist *If the thought persists, resist it! We have the promise in James 4:7 "resist the devil, and he will flee from you!"*

3. Share if there a situation in your life now which could be related spiritual warfare? What are some of the ways you think you can pray about it?

Answer Guide: If you feel like you are in spiritual warfare, here are some steps to guide your prayers:

- *Seek God's Guidance and Protection: Begin by seeking God's wisdom and guidance through prayer. Ask Him to reveal any areas of spiritual warfare in your life and to provide His protection and strength.*
- *Confess and Repent: Examine your heart and confess any known sins or areas where you may have opened doors to the enemy. Repentance allows you to receive God's forgiveness and align yourself with His purposes.*
- *Put on the Armor of God: Pray for the spiritual armour described in [Ephesians 6:10-18](#) ([Appendix III](#)). Ask God to equip you with the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (which is the Word of God).*
- *Declare God's Promises and Truth: Speak God's promises and truths over your life. Declare scriptures that proclaim victory, freedom, and protection. Remind yourself and the enemy of the authority you have in Christ.*
- *Bind and Rebuke the Enemy: In Jesus' name, bind the influence and power of the enemy over your life and circumstances. Rebuke any demonic forces, strongholds, or negative influences that are opposing God's will.*
- *Pray for God's Intervention and Deliverance: Ask God to intervene in the spiritual battle and to bring deliverance from the enemy's schemes. Pray for His supernatural intervention, healing, restoration, and victory.*
- *Seek Intercessory Prayer Support: Reach out to other believers who can join you in prayer. Seek the support of trusted individuals who can intercede on your behalf and stand with you in spiritual warfare.*
- *Stay Grounded in God's Word and Prayer: Maintain a consistent prayer life and immerse yourself in God's Word. Continually seek His guidance, wisdom, and strength through regular communion with Him.*
- *Remember, spiritual warfare requires perseverance and reliance on God's power. Trust in His faithfulness and stay steadfast in prayer as you navigate the challenges of spiritual warfare.*

4. Ask if there are any questions from your group about the topic of spiritual warfare.

Answer Guide: This can be a difficult topic. Allow time for the group to answer any questions and address any concerns. If you are feeling ill-equipped reach out to the pastoral team for assistance.

E. ACTIVATION

Following on from Question 3, take some time to pray into areas of spiritual warfare that some of the members in your group are facing. Before you pray spend some time look for scriptures or promises in God’s word that will help you to resist the enemy.

When you pray use the tools you have learnt (times are a guide):

- Adoration (1 min)
- Listening to God and contemplating his viewpoint (2 mins)
- Pray for needs (protection; 1 min)
- Spiritual warfare (remainder of the prayer)

You may need to break into smaller groups and pray for one another.

F. CONCLUSION

The Lord’s Prayer is the perfect and complete prayer. It shows not only what we should say when we approach God, but the pattern we should follow. We do not ever outgrow the Lord’s Prayer, we will need to pray the Lord’s Prayer or the pattern of it until the day Jesus comes. Be careful not to approach it legalistically, as it is the Spirit that must guide us, not the letter. Bear in mind that the main thing about the Lord’s prayer is to primarily seek His face, not His hand.

Close the series in prayer. Cover the lessons you’ve learned in this series, and ask God to help put them into practice.

APPENDIX I

THE NAMES OF GOD

These are some of the names of God which can help in the meditation on God’s character.

Note: The prefix commonly used is Jehovah has been replaced by the more modern spelling YHWH (Yahweh), the proper title for the God of Israel. Jehovah is an old Germanic translation of the Hebrew word יהוה ([yhvh](#)) and pronounced (yeh-ho-vaw').

NAME	BIBLICAL MEANING	NOTES
OLD TESTAMENT		
El Shaddai	Lord God Almighty	God is omnipotent, omnipotent and omnipresent
El Elyon	The Most High God	God his higher than every other force or evil
El Haggadol	The Great God	“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.” Deut 10:17
El Roi	The God who sees	Gen 16:13 . God sees your situation and has not forgotten you.
El Nathan Neqamah	The God Who Avenges Me	We leave vengeance to God. “He is the God who avenges me, who puts the nations under me.” 2 Sam 22:48
El Yalad	The God who gave you birth	God formed you in the womb and knows you by name. He brought you forth for his purposes Deut 32:18
YHWH Nissi	The Lord My Banner	God is our banner in war. His name is over us. We belong to him
YHWH-Raah	The Lord My Shepherd	The God will guide us in all situations

YHWH Rapha	The Lord That Heals	God heals us when we are wounded in battle
YHWH Shammah	The Lord Is There (who hears)	The Lord hears our cries and answers them Ex 2:23-24
YHWH Tsidkenu	The Lord Our Righteousness	We are pure in the eyes of God through Christ Jesus
YHWH Jireh	The Lord Will Provide	God knows our needs and provides for them (Ps 23:1)
YHWH Shalom	The Lord Is Peace	God is our peace.
Elohay Selichot	The God who is ready to forgive	Even in our mistakes God will forgive us Neh 9:17
NEW TESTAMENT		
Jesus	Dayspring	Jesus is our light in darkness Luke 1:78
Jesus	High Priest	Jesus intercedes for us Heb 4:15
Jesus	Passover lamb	Jesus was sacrificed on our behalf 1 Cor 5:7
Jesus	Lamb of God	Jesus takes away our sins John 1:29
Jesus	Lion of Judah	Jesus leads our tribe Rev 5:5
Jesus Christ	Messiah/Saviour	Jesus was sent to save us John 1:41
Jesus	Friend of Sinners	Jesus doesn't hold partiality Matt 11:19
Jesus	Mediator	Jesus mediates for us in the spiritual realm 1 Tim 2:5

APPENDIX II

Steps to Hearing from God

There are three main steps in hearing from God. Divine revelation, Interpretation and Application.

Divine Revelation

God is a creative God, and He speaks to us in numerous creative ways, involving any of our five senses. The list is not exhaustive but includes (including biblical examples):

- Primary is word of God, the Bible. There is a call for those gifted in the prophetic to know the scripture well ([Heb 4:12](#), [Ps 119:105](#))
- Heavenly encounters through appearances, angelic messengers, audible voice (e.g. [Gen 28:10-17](#), [Matt 1:20](#))
- Words from God through an audible voice, audible only to your ears, internal voice, sentence fragments ([John 12:28-29](#))
- A knowing or impression ([Matt 9:4](#), [12:25](#); [Luke 7:49-50](#))
- Dreams, visions, trances (e.g. [Acts 2:17-18](#), [John 1:38](#))
- Natural events or aspects creation ([Ps 19:1-2](#), [Matt 6:26](#), [28](#); [Luke 21:11](#), [28](#))
- Daily circumstances ([Rev 3:8](#))
- Songs ([Col 3:16](#))
- Fleeces ([Judges 6:36-40](#))
- Physical manifestations in our bodies ([Luke 24:32](#))

2. Human Interpretation

Know that every revelation is subjected to. Human interpretation. You need to ask God for specific interpretation of the revelation

3. Application

Application is an important part of the revelation. It basically means, how does this apply and what steps of faith will we take to obey God.

It can also be prudent to seek counsel of wise leaders in our lives when we receive directional words.

APPENDIX III

The Full Armour of God Spiritual Exercise

(Excerpt from the book Fully Armed Grasshoppers, by Roland Seow)

You can pray to put on the full armour of God mentioned in [Ephesians 6:10-18](#), to help you in times of spiritual warfare. In this prayer, your interaction is primarily with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Belt of Truth (Place hands on your waist)

Good morning Holy Spirit, thank you for being in my life. I alert myself to Your presence and ready myself for the changes You have in store for me. You are the Spirit of Truth sent to teach me all things ([Jn 14:26](#)) so that I would not be ignorant of the devil's devices and would not be taken advantage of by him ([2 Cor 2:11](#)). I renounce all insincerity, foolishness, lies and deception in my heart. Let Your light shine into my darkened heart and fill me with Your wisdom, knowledge, understanding and discernment that I may see clearly and navigate successfully through this dark and chaotic world. May You grant me the spirit of revelation so that I will be able to see Jesus as He really is and become more like Him with each passing day.

Sorry for grieving and quenching You, Holy Spirit. Alert and sharpen my spiritual senses right now so that I can be more sensitive to Your promptings and voice. Help me to exercise my spiritual senses to be able to discern good from evil ([Heb 5:14](#)) and life from death. Gird me now with Your truth that sets me free and lead me in paths of righteousness for Your Name's sake. I declare that Yahweh Raah (the Lord, My Shepherd) is constantly directing my paths and leading me to green pastures and still waters ([Prov 3:6](#), [Ps 23:2](#)).

Breastplate of Righteousness (Place hands on your chest)

Thank you Lord Jesus for Your marvellous love for me and for paying the incredible price on the cross for my salvation. I receive Your righteousness by faith and I renounce and repent of all of my known and unknown sins – sins of commission and omission (there's no need to dig too deeply into your past; just repent and renounce any specific unconfessed sin the Holy Spirit highlights to you). I have now no more condemnation or guilt in me for Your precious blood is more than able to cleanse my conscience of all my sins ([Rom 8:1](#)).

Through Your sacrifice and precious blood shed on the cross I have Your righteousness and full access to Your presence. Just as Queen Esther entered into the presence of the king I come now boldly to Your throne of grace as the wall/veil separating us has been removed ([Heb 4:16](#)). Through Jesus, I am now accepted as I am and seated with You as Your son (or daughter) in heavenly places, reigning with full authority and dominion as joint-heir, king and priest with You ([Rom 8:17](#), [Rev 1:6](#)).

What a privilege it is to be identified with You dear Lord, for You are the Son of God, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. In You I find my identity, purpose and destiny. I no longer feel ashamed or inferior to anyone and my worth is founded on Your love and acceptance of me. I am a brand new person, old things have passed away and all things have become new. I declare that I am Your favoured child and Your presence and blessing are with me wherever I

go. As I carry Your presence daily, the mountains (problems and challenges in life) will melt like wax before me ([Ps 97:5](#)).

Sandals of Peace (Touch your feet)

Thank you dear Lord Jesus for the Sandals of the Gospel of Peace. Let Your peace that passes all understanding take over my life right now. I exchange my fears, cares, worries, anxieties, confusion and everything that weighs me down for Your Shalom peace and rest that overcomes even the greatest storm. I cast all my cares unto You for You do care for me. I declare: "Peace, be still!" to my turmoil and chaos in my life. I rebuke the spirit of confusion, strife, chaos and fear and I command my affairs to come into God's divine peace and order.

Let the Prince of peace rule in my heart right now as I absorb the atmosphere of heaven and bring it down to my environment around me. Let Your peace saturate the atmosphere around me so that all who interact with me today will be impacted by Your peace. Let the peace of God rule and be the umpire of my heart so that I will know when I am doing things out of Your will.

Shield of Faith (Raise one arm as if holding a shield)

Thank you Jesus for the Shield of Faith You have given me to quench the fiery arrows of doubt and unbelief which the enemy shoots at me. I hereby doubt my doubts and believe I have mountain-moving faith for faith comes from hearing Your Word (Rom 10:17) and not from myself. Since Jesus, the Word of God, is in me and has given me a measure of His faith larger than a mustard seed ([Rom 12:3](#)), I have more than enough faith to command my mountains to be removed and cast into the sea ([Mt 11:23](#)). I cast aside all my disappointments and disillusionments that have robbed me of my faith and I acknowledge that He is working all things together for my good as I love Him and follow His purpose. He is directing my paths and leading me to green pasture and still waters ([Prov 3:6](#), [Ps 23:2](#)).

I declare that God is faithful and He will work all things together for my good as I love Him and pursue His purposes for my life (Rom 8:28). God will do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that works in me. I acknowledge that the King of kings and the Lord of lords has given me the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt me without His permission ([Lk 10:19](#)).

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I am more than a conqueror through Him who loved me. I can run through a troop and leap over a wall through the power of Your Holy Spirit ([Ps 18:29](#)). Hallelujah! It is my faith that releases God's overwhelming favour towards me and overcomes the world.

Helmet of Salvation (Place a hand on your head)

As I put on the Helmet of Salvation over my head, Holy Spirit I invite You to renew my mind with the mind of Christ. I cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every vain thought captive to the obedience of Christ ([2 Cor 10:5](#)). I renounce a weary, weak and discouraged mind and put on a mind that is passionate, focused and zealous in the things of God. I renounce a corrupt, wicked and defiled mind and

put on a pure and holy mind that seeks first God's kingdom and righteousness. I renounce a twisted, reprobate or alienated mind that is rejected by God and put on a sober and sound mind that can think clearly and rationally, a mind which is free from depression, dementia or any mental disease.

I renounce a spiteful and hateful mind and put on a loving mind that loves You and my neighbour as myself. I renounce a proud mind that is hardened against God and replace it with a humble, meek and gentle mind that is open to whatever changes God wants in my life. Heal my blinded mind and replace it with a mind of understanding, knowledge, wisdom and discernment that will enable me to see things from Your perspective. Finally, transform and renew my mind from a worldly or carnal mindset and replace it with a spiritual mind that brings life and peace ([Rom 8:6](#)). I renounce all thoughts that are not from You. May Your thoughts now be my thoughts and my ways Your ways.

Sword of the Spirit (Place a hand on your mouth and then extend it out as though holding a sword)

I take up the Sword of your Spirit, which is the Word of God, to defeat the devices and schemes the devil has set for my life. I shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds from Your mouth ([Matt 4:4](#)). Lord I repent of my loose and careless words that have opened the door to the enemy and brought curses upon my life. Cleanse my mouth today and forgive me of all my gossip, curses and negative words I have ever spoken. May my words be spirit and life to the hearers and health to their flesh ([Prov 4:22](#)).