

DAVE CLAYTON



JESUS

NEXT DOOR

*A 30-Day Prayer Guide
to Help You Practically Love
the People Around You*





Jesus Next Door

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START HERE

When asked to pinpoint what mattered most to God, Jesus did not beat around the bush or speak in code. He said (to paraphrase), “This is what matters most to God: Love the Lord your God with the entirety of who you are and love your neighbors as much as you love yourself” (Matt. 22:37–39). Even though Jesus’ words in Matthew 22 are crystal clear, most followers of Jesus will be quick to admit that they struggle to live them out.

I am convinced the journey to becoming a person shaped by the two greatest commandments—to love God and love people—often begins in the place of prayer. God is love and loves all people. I have found that if I consistently come into his presence through prayer, it is impossible to not begin loving God and those around me more fully.

This is the simple focus of this thirty-day prayer journey. It is designed to help you practically grow in love for God and the people he has already put around you in the places where you live, work, and play.

As we get started, here are a few practical suggestions to help you get the most from this prayer journey:



1 CHOOSE PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR

Since this guide is designed to help you pray for the people God has already put around you, it is important that you begin this

journey by identifying a few people for whom you plan to pray each day. You can pray for your next-door neighbors, your co-workers, friends from school, the barista at your favorite coffee shop, or someone in your own family. You get to choose. But before you go any further, take a moment to write down the names of the people for whom you will commit to pray each day over the course of the next month.



2 CHOOSE YOUR PEOPLE TO PRAY WITH

Once you have determined whom you will pray for, take a minute to identify *who you will pray with* during this season of prayer. Learning to pray not only for others but also with others will revolutionize your life with Jesus. We are made for community, and, like nearly everything else in life, prayer is better when experienced with other followers of Jesus. Make it a priority to pray together throughout the month, whether in person or through a virtual platform like phone calls, text messaging, or video chats. Get creative, but stay connected to others!

DAY 4

Father, Please Help Me

EXPERIENCE YOUR LOVE

“And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, *whom I love*; with you I am well pleased.’”

— Mark 1:11

ON APRIL 10, 1912, a Scottish preacher named John Harper, with his six-year-old daughter and his sister, boarded the Titanic to head for America to preach at a church in Chicago, Illinois, pastored by Dwight L. Moody. Four days later, at 11:40 pm while John was doing his nightly devotions, the Titanic hit an iceberg and began to sink.

John wrapped his six-year-old daughter in a blanket, kissed her on the forehead, and placed her, along with his sister, on a lifeboat. He knew he would likely never see them again. Then, John went up and down the deck of the Titanic, pleading with Christians to give up their spots on the lifeboats so that those who were not yet followers of Jesus could survive and have a chance to be saved by Jesus’ transforming love.

Jesus teaches us to approach our heavenly Father in a similar way. There is a beautiful moment in Mark 11:24 that reminds me of how my friend approached his earthly father. To paraphrase, Jesus says, “If your prayer lines up with your heavenly Father’s plans, then you can go ahead and rest assured his answer will be yes.”

Have you ever been around
someone who consistently prays
with this kind of confidence?

I think of my friend Paul, who lived for years depending on God to meet his needs day by day. His prayer life was simply contagious. He spoke with God in ways that stirred a deep longing within me to know God more intimately. Then there’s my friend Shodankeh. When he prays, you get a sense that heaven is rearranging history because of the confidence with which he approaches our heavenly Father.

Jesus tells us that whenever we pray in agreement with the will of God, our prayer is as good as answered. The question is this:

Do we believe Jesus is telling us the truth when it comes to how God responds to our faith-filled prayers?

If you’re like me, it’s easy to affirm the truth without actually believing it. I often allow my personal experiences and disappointments to carry more weight in my life than God’s Word. If you struggle to believe Jesus’ word about prayer from Mark 11:24, I encourage you to humbly come to God today, like

GOING DEEPER



Read: Acts 1:1-11



Reflect

- ▶ Take some time to reflect on your journey with Jesus.
- ▶ If you had to name some key turning points in your relationship with Jesus, what would they be?
- ▶ When and how did you come to recognize your need for Jesus' love and leadership in your life?
- ▶ How is Jesus working to actively grow your relationship with him in your current season of life?



Pray

- ▶ Father, please give me an awareness of how you have been at work in my life.
- ▶ Father, please fill me with power and confidence from the Holy Spirit to share my story with someone today.
- ▶ Father, please use my story to help someone else understand where you have been at work in theirs.

DAY 27

Father, Please Help Me

LEVERAGE MY PASSION

“Come, follow me . . . and I will send you out to fish for people.”

— Mark 1:17

I BELIEVE THAT it brings God great joy when we discover the ways our passions can be leveraged for his purposes.

I have been so inspired by people who have found creative ways to use their talents to point to God’s goodness:

Ben uses soccer to build relationships with kids in underserved neighborhoods.

Cynthia uses her leadership gifts to create safe and healthy work environments for employees who have been neglected or abused.

Helga uses art to introduce people to the goodness of Jesus.

What's Next?

A PRAYER FOR STAYING THE COURSE

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest *if we do not give up.*”

— Galatians 6:9

I hope the last thirty days of prayer was life-changing for you:

I hope each day was filled with joy and deep intimacy, as you made time to talk with God.

I hope you experienced the thrill of following Jesus in new ways, as you spent time praying for the people around you with new levels of intentionality.

I hope you saw God open doors for meaningful relationships and conversations around what matters most.

I hope you feel more strength and clarity with regard to Jesus' purpose for you in your current season of life.

About the Author

DAVE CLAYTON is a follower of Jesus, a husband to Sydney, and a dad to Micah, Jack, and Judah. He lives in Nashville, Tennessee, where he has the joy of serving Ethos Church, Onward Church Planting, and Awaken Nashville. Dave is passionate about making disciples, planting churches, and awakening a movement for the glory of God, the joy of the church, and the good of the multitudes who don't yet know Jesus.