

# Prayer Walking:

Preparing the Way for the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ

 Tennessee WMU | A Resource from Tennessee WMU



# Introduction

As I loaded my bag onto a large dug out canoe and sat down for the 2-hour ride down the Amazon River, I asked the Lord to open my eyes to what He was doing in the jungles of this remote place. We began our journey with the sun illuminating our way and revealing rocks to avoid. I asked the Lord to illuminate the hearts of the people to see Him as the One, True God. I asked Him to reveal the barriers to avoid and the bridges to use as I engage this people group with the gospel. The cool breeze on my face was refreshing and I asked that I would be a refreshment and encouragement to the believers here. We passed island after island on our journey and the lush green of the jungles, and the exotic flowers captivated my eyes and led me to worship. Oh, that the Name of the LORD will be lifted high and worshipped on each of these islands!

And oh, that the Name of the Lord will be lifted high and worshipped where He has placed you today.

What is the goal of the Christian life? RC Sproul answered this question by saying: “Godliness born of obedience to Christ. Obedience unlocks the riches of the Christian experience. Prayer is what prompts and nurtures obedience, putting the heart into the proper ‘frame of mind’ to desire obedience.” Scripture does not command us to prayer walk but does command us to “pray without ceasing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17

In this resource, we are going to take a closer look into this idea of prayer walking. Our goal is to take this idea that can seem intimidating, allow God’s Word and Spirit to illuminate and explain prayer to us, and sharpen us as His instruments of His righteousness for His glory as we step out in obedience and practice prayer walking.

Hawthorne and Kendrick say that prayer walking is simply “praying on site with insight.”

# **1: The Life of Following Jesus is a Prayer Walk**

So, how and where do we begin? We begin by allowing prayer to put our hearts into the proper frame of mind to be obedient to the commands of Jesus. The first and last words that Jesus spoke to Peter were the same: "Follow Me" (Mark 1:27; John 21:22). It is no different for us as His disciples. He tells us in Matthew 16:24-25, *"If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."* Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was a pastor and murdered by the Nazis said it like this, "when Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die."

Our lives before Christ were self-centered and self-serving. In daily taking up our cross (our identification with Him), we are reinforcing our death to this old way of living and in turn enjoying a life of freedom lived in Christ. Prayer is an unceasing, God-pleasing walk with Him and one of the main ways we grow in wisdom and understanding of Who He is and how He desires to use us for His glory. The life of following Jesus is a prayer walk and as we walk with Him, His purposes for coming to this earth become our purposes for living on this earth.

Luke 19:10 and John 10:10. Why did Jesus come?

Jesus came to seek the lost, save them, and bring them back to a place where they can walk with God in a life of abundance. How has He enabled you to walk with Him today? How is God accomplishing His purposes thru you today? How well did you do at living out Matthew 16:24-25 today? At what points today did you adjust the way you think or act to His Word? As we walk with Him, He daily conforms us to the image of Christ.

## **2: Jesus - Teacher and Model**

If prayer is daily, unceasingly walking in God's presence to bring Him glory and align our wills with His will, then maybe we need to be like the disciples and ask Him, "*Lord teach us to pray*" (Luke 11:1.) Read Luke 11:1-4 and Matthew 6:9-15. As Jesus taught the disciples to pray, He started with teaching them about the supremacy of God and His Kingdom. What else did you notice in His prayer? Compare your current prayers to His model.

Jesus not only taught His disciples how to pray but He modeled it for them as He walked alongside them.

Look at Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, Matthew 14:23 and compare your current prayer life to what He has modeled before us.

Luke 6:12-13 says, "*It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.*" And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles..." What did Jesus do before He chose His disciples or acted on anything? What does that show you about what should be the base of all we do? Compare your decision-making process to what Jesus did in these verses.

Hebrews 5:7 gives us more insight into how Jesus lived His life while on earth. "*In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.*" What did Jesus do? Why was He heard? How do all of these verses compare to your current prayer life?

### 3: Intentional Prayer Walking

Why did you have to read through #'s 1 and 2? Isn't that common knowledge and practice of disciples of Christ? Studies show that the average American Christian only values prayer minimally and is infrequent in their prayer time. There are two obvious truths: God's Word tells us to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) and most of us, do not do it. So, until we daily live out the principals from #'s 1 and 2, we will not be equipped for prayer walking.

Read Colossians 4:2. What are our lives to be devoted to?

Prayer is walking in God's presence daily. Prayer is not an option. So, what does prayer walking really look like? Randy Sprinkle says that there are three types of prayer walking: devotional, incidental, and intentional. Devotional prayer walking comes from a conscious realization of God's presence in our life. It is an outflowing of your time alone (devotional time) with God daily. We have devoted our lives to Him and we walk that out daily. Incidental prayer walking happens as we walk through normal responsibilities of the day with intentionality. If we are in tune with God and able to hear His voice, He can use us in the lives of people we cross paths with for His strategic purposes. It can be as simple as walking through your office to the bathroom but as He leads, saying an intercessional prayer for your coworker. Read Luke 19:1-10 to see what happened as Jesus was "passing through". Lastly, intentional prayer walking is what we want to begin to practice.

Look at Luke 10:1, "*Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.*" What did Jesus do? He intentionally sent 70 people out ahead of Him to every city and place where He was going to go and share. Why? What did this show us as we seek to go and share the gospel? What does it mean to be intentional? As we seek to know how to best engage a community or people, this passage speaks to what we need to do first. Record and discuss your insights.

## **4: A Life of Unhindered & Daily Communion with God**

How do you prepare to prayer walk? In sporting events, the fans always focus on the finish while the athletes competing focus on the start first because they know it is critical to the finish. How we begin determines how we run and where we finish. Read 1 Cor. 9:24-27. How did Paul say we should run? What is the key? We need discipline that is grounded in Christ and self-control that is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

As men and women who want to walk out a life of unhindered communion (prayer) with God, our start to each day is critical. This may sound like a broken record but heed these words. Read Matthew 6:6. How did Jesus say we should begin our times in prayer? Read Psalm 119:105. What lights our path and shows us how to walk? Read Isaiah 59:1-3. What hinders the hearing and the answering of our prayers? Ask God to reveal any hindering sin in your life. Remember 1 John 1:9 and take heart.

*Victory begins at the start of each day with time alone with the Holy Spirit, an open Bible, and a disciplined, responsive heart ready to loosen our grip on anything that hinders our walk and work with God for the sake of His kingdom today.*

# 5: Tips & Tools for Prayer Walking

Read 1 Timothy 2:8. How and where are we to pray? It is a custom in the Western world to fold our hands, bow our heads, and close our eyes. The Hebrews custom was to lift their hands which is symbolic of hands/heart reaching out to God. Are there location limits to where we pray? There are none as we can pray anywhere. Read Mark 16:15: What did Jesus command? So as we go, what do we do exactly?

### **Preparing to walk**

1. Recognize that God is calling you to join Him in prayer in the world.
2. Stay prepared to walk with Him by spending time with Him, confessing any hidden sin and walking according to His Word.
3. Still your mind and focus on Him.
4. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and guide you each day.
5. Be ready to obey Him wherever He leads you.

### **As you walk**

1. Keep your eyes and ears open. Be alert and respond in prayer.
2. Listen, then speak. Feel free to pray silently or aloud. Praise Him and worship Him as you walk.
3. Go with 1 or more partners and pray together. Take turns praying short prayers in an open dialogue with the Lord.
4. Move slowly so that God may move in and through you.
5. Pray Scripture over the places and people. Pray for the people around you and ask God to open the hearts of the lost and to give them His greatest desires for them.
6. Anticipate the devil's interference. Resist him by drawing near to God, stand firm in your faith, and continue moving forward taking refuge in the shadow of God's wings.
7. Expect God to answer your prayers. Be ready to share a word of greeting, encouragement or the gospel with those you meet as you walk. Always be prepared to give an answer for the hope that is within you.
8. Tell people that you are praying for them and ask if they have a specific need. Pray right there with them.
9. Pray according to what you know about the people and area, about what you observe as you walk, and as the Holy Spirit inspires you.
10. Just step out in faith and go.

### **After you walk**

1. Be silent and alone before the Lord.
2. Write down what the Lord showed you on your prayer walk.
3. Get together with your group and debrief your prayer walk. Share the verses that the Lord laid on your heart for the people or place. Share your observations. Are there any similarities as your team shared? If so, note those.
4. Pray together as a team.
5. Read, remember and live out 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Pray without ceasing by recognizing your utter dependence on God for everything. Lean on God all the time and abide in His presence. Call to Him repeatedly and often.

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A Resource from Tennessee WMU, written by Kendall Faust Shirey

## **Practical Tools**

1. **Practice Activity** - Take at least a 15-minute walk alone, with your family, or friends around your neighborhood, local store, or mall to practice what you have read about in this pamphlet. Take some Scripture prompts in a journal, on your phone, or on index cards to pray as you walk. Debrief your walk. What was easy about this activity? What was uncomfortable about this? What would help you on future walks? Plan a time to prayer walk the same area again.

2. **I Spy** - Play a game of I Spy and use the things that you spy to lead your team to pray.

For example:

- Kids toys – pray that the kids in that house would love Jesus
- Birds singing – pray that people in the neighborhood would praise God
- Trash can – pray that people would confess their sin and that God would remove the “trash” from their lives
- Flowers – pray that your team would be a sweet-smelling fragrance of God’s love to anyone you meet
- Phone lines – pray that people would have a desire to talk to God
- “Slow down” sign – pray that people would slow down and listen to God
- “Stop” sign – pray that people would stop and thank God for something

3. **Scripture Prompts** - Praying scripture is a safe and powerful way to pray for you, your team, and the people in the area of your prayer walk. Use these Scripture passages and others to prompt you as you pray. You can print them out to carry with you, load them to your phone, or meditate on and memorize them.

- **Pray that God would exalt His Name in the world.**  
*“Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.’” (Matthew 6:9)*
- **Pray that God would extend His kingdom in the world.**  
*“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)*
- **Pray that the gospel would speed ahead and be honored.**  
*“Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you.” (2 Thessalonians 3:1)*
- **Pray that God would open the eyes of unbelievers and save them.**  
*“Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.” (Romans 10:1)*
- **Pray for boldness in proclamation.**  
*“[Pray] at all times in the Spirit . . . and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.” (Ephesians 6:18–19)*  
*“And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.” (Acts 4:29)*
- **Pray for signs and wonders.**  
*“And now, Lord, . . . 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.” (Acts 4:29–30)*  
*“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.” (James 5:17–18)*



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(continued)

- **Pray for miraculous deliverances.**  
*“So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. . . . When he realized [he had been freed], he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.” (Acts 12:5, 12)*  
*“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake.” (Acts 16:25–26)*
- **Pray that God would give His people all that they need.**  
*“Give us this day our daily bread.” (Matthew 6:11)*
- **Pray for strategic wisdom as you walk.**  
*“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” (James 1:5)*
- **Pray for unity and harmony in the body.**  
*“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17:20–21)*
- **Pray for a mind of discernment for yourself and those on your walk.**  
*“And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.” (Philippians 1:9–10)*
- **Pray for a knowledge of God’s will (for you and others).**  
*“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” (Colossians 1:9)*
- **Pray to know God better.**  
*“[We have not ceased to pray for you to be] increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Colossians 1:10; cf. Ephesians 1:17)*
- **Pray for power to comprehend the love of Christ.**  
*“I bow my knees before the Father . . . [that you] may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.” (Ephesians 3:14, 18–19)*
- **Pray for a deeper sense of assured hope.**  
*“I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers . . . that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.” (Ephesians 1:16, 18)*
- **Pray for strength and endurance.**  
*“[We have not ceased to pray for you to be] strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.” (Colossians 1:11; cf. Ephesians 3:16)*
- **Pray for a deeper sense of God’s power within you.**  
*“I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers . . . that you may know . . . what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.” (Ephesians 1:16, 18–19)*

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- **Pray that your faith not be destroyed.**  
*“I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:32)*  
*“But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36)*
- **Pray for greater faith.**  
*Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”*  
(Mark 9:24; cf. Ephesians 3:17)
- **Pray that you or others might not fall into temptation.**  
*“Lead us not into temptation.” (Matthew 6:13)*  
*“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41)*
- **Pray that you and others will bear fruit.**  
*“[We have not ceased to pray for you that you would] walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work.” (Colossians 1:10)*
- **Pray for the forgiveness of your sins.**  
*“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)*
- **Pray for protection from the evil one.**  
*“Deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13)*

## Closing Challenge

Remember the story of my 2-hour boat ride in the jungles of the Amazon? I was praying on site with insight. I was “prayer walking” on my 2-hour canoe ride. It is that simple.

Where is He asking you to go ahead of Him to prepare the way for the gospel message of Jesus Christ? Be obedient and go.

Remember that the power of your prayer walk will never exceed the posture of your private prayer life.

*Pray on site with insight.*

*Be obedient and go.*

*The power of your prayer walk will never exceed  
the posture of your private prayer life.*