



Leader Guide

Pray

June 4, 2023

Main Passage: Acts 4:23-31; Philippians 4:6-7

Theological Theme

The early church set an example Christians are wise to follow today. When tough times came their way, they gathered and prayed with faith, believing their prayers could bring about powerful results. Prayer should be our first response in good times and difficult days.

Introduction

- ❓ Who is your first call when you are frustrated or need advice?
- ❓ What stops you from taking your concerns to the Lord first in these moments?

1. Powerful Prayer (Acts 4:23-28)

As they lived out their faith, the early church faced persecution and attack. Peter and John were taken into custody because of their ministry of preaching and healing in Jesus's name. In verse 23, they returned to their church family after being released and reported how God had used the persecution for His glory. It is important to recognize they did not gather and whine about how hard it was to be followers of Jesus. They did not complain about being arrested or mistreated. Instead, they celebrated the good things God was doing.

- ❓ What most often moves you to prayer?
- ❓ How does it strengthen your prayers to remember the unchanging attributes and character of God as you call to Him?
- ❓ Application: How might you make a practice of praying the Bible back to God? Why is this good and appropriate to do?

2. Answered Prayer (Acts 4:29-31)

These believers did not ask God to take away their difficulties and persecution. Instead, they asked for boldness to keep spreading the gospel. The renewed boldness they sought would also inevitably lead to more confrontation and persecution. It would have been understandable for this group to seek relief from persecution, but they were far more concerned with advancing the gospel than protecting themselves.

- ❓ Put yourself in the place of these early believers. What would you have asked God for in this moment? How did their prayers reveal their ultimate priority?
- ❓ Why is humility key to being used by God? What makes it tempting to move away from humility when God is working among us?
- ❓ Application: Where do you need Holy Spirit-inspired boldness today? How will you seek this from the Lord in prayer?

3. Practical Prayer (Philippians 4:6-7)

The apostle Paul wrote some of the most practical instruction in Scripture. In Philippians, he gave instructions relating to prayer that we can use in our lives as we are committed to intentional growth in our prayer lives. The way Paul addressed the subject gives us helpful guidance for prayer.

- ❓ How quickly do you submit the things that make you anxious before the Lord?
- ❓ What are the areas of your life you tend to compartmentalize or leave out of prayer? How can you bring those things before the Lord today?
- ❓ Application: How could your prayer life change based on this passage?

Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

1. What does this passage say?
2. What did this passage mean to its original audience?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about man?
5. What does this passage demand of me?
6. How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
7. How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC

Here's How to Become a Christ-Follower:

Read the following verses and ask after each one: "What does this say to me?"

- **All have sinned:** Romans 3:23 & 1 John 1:8
- **The wages of sin:** Romans 6:23 & John 3:18
- **But while we were sinners, salvation was provided:** Romans 5:8
- **Become a Christ-follower:** Romans 10:9-10 Confess and Believe

Accepting Christ is Just the Beginning:

Next Steps:

- Publicly profess your faith by being baptized (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 3:21; Romans 6:4).
- Join a church which follows the Bible, where you can grow in your faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship with other Christians.
- Get involved in groups for encouragement and accountability.
- Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.
- Share with others what Jesus has done for you. Tell your story (Romans 10:14; Matthew 28:19-20).
- Begin to live for God (Romans 12:1-2, 9-18; James 1:19-27).