

PRAYER REIMAGINED

August 5 & 6
ADVENTURES
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INTRODUCTION

In his book *Before Amen*, Max Lucado writes the following about prayer: "We all pray . . . some. We pray to stay sober, centered, or solvent. When the lump is deemed malignant. When the money runs out before the month does. When the marriage is falling apart. We pray. But wouldn't we like to pray more? Better? Stronger? With more fire, faith, and fervency? Yet we have kids to feed, bills to pay, deadlines to meet. The calendar pounces on our good intentions like a tiger on a rabbit. And what about our checkered history with prayer? Uncertain words. Unmet expectations. Unanswered requests." Pastor John starts this series with a look at Jesus' prayer for clarity before He chooses the twelve disciples in Luke 6. Turning to Acts 11, we see Peter displaying courage in the face of criticism. Then Peter prays and listens as the Holy Spirit exposes layers of old habits in his life. God can change us, too, with clarity, courage and cleansing when we plug into the adventure of prayer.

DISCUSSION

Read **Luke 6:12-13, Acts 11:1-18 and Matthew 6:9-13**. Then discuss the following questions.

1. M.E. Andross writes: "Time spent alone with God is not wasted. It changes us; it changes our surroundings; and every Christian who would live the life that counts, and who would have power for service must take time to pray." How does Christ's example in Luke 6 set the stage for our prayer times?
2. Missionary Frank Laubach pens, "The trouble with nearly everybody who prays is that he says 'Amen' and runs away before God has a chance to reply. Listening to God is far more important than giving Him our ideas." How does Peter listen to the Holy Spirit in Acts 11? How significant was it for a Jew [Peter] to reach out to the Gentiles [non-Jews] with the Gospel?
3. Nineteenth Century poet Jean Ingelow quipped, "I have lived to thank God that not all my prayers have been answered." In Matthew 6, what does the Lord's Prayer teach us about praying for the right things?

THINK ABOUT IT

Some 400 years ago, Brother Lawrence, a cook in an obscure monastery, advised that Christians should spend time praying throughout the day. Everything we do, no matter how mundane or repetitive, can be done out of love for God and with an awareness that God is present. What's important is not what we have to do each day but how we view it. In everything Lawrence did, he prayed briefly before, during and after the task. In this way, the tasks of his daily routine became prayer, what this Brother called "practicing the presence of God." Are we practicing God's presence every day?

DO SOMETHING

1. Take the 14 Day Prayer Challenge of prayer and fasting. Use the booklet to guide you over the next two weeks.
2. Use the ACTS method as you pray. Start your prayer with Adoration for God. Then spend time in Confession for your sins, including those you might have forgotten. Follow with a period of Thanks-giving for all He has provided. Finally, pray for your needs and those of others, in a time of Supplication.