

“Praying with Endurance”  
Luke 18:1–8  
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We will be looking at Luke 18 for this study and before I get there, I want to share with you a sticker that people like to put on their cars that stirs up in me both respect and agony all at the same time. It’s a sticker that reads 26.2. For those unfamiliar with what this number means, it means that this person has run a marathon or at least claiming to have run a marathon. A marathon is 26.2 miles and that is an incredible feat to run. A person doesn’t just wake up one day and say, ‘today is the day I’m going to go out and run a marathon’ for that person will get a couple of miles in and then think, ‘this is a horrible mistake.’ If you’re like me, you’ll probably get a couple of miles in and start cramping up all over and say, “Man, what in the world did I decide to do? I want to give up on this.” It takes a lot of discipline. It takes a lot of training. You have to prepare.

I have a friend who is preparing for a triathlon, which is 70.3 miles, where you swim, you bike and you run. The running part is basically like running a half marathon which would be 13.1 miles. He has been training nonstop since he told us that that’s what he’s going to do so I have a lot of respect for people that do that, because, again, it takes a lot of effort, discipline, training, pushing past pain, and the belief that this for some reason is worth it. Now, I don’t know what that reason is, but for some people, this is worth it but you have to have that belief. It stirs up in me agony all at the same time for the same exact reasons. It takes discipline, it takes effort, it takes pushing past pain. It takes belief, which I don’t have, that it’s worth it.

I share that a little bit lightheartedly, because in this study we’re going to look at something that Jesus tells us that we ought to do with endurance, like these triathlons and marathons. These are endurance type of events, and we have to have a very similar mindsets in what we will be looking at in this study. We have to be disciplined. We have to push back doubt, worry and fear and we have to have this conviction that this is worth it. It’s very important to Christ and as we look at this parable He gave, it will challenge us that we ought to pray and not lose heart. Let’s look at Luke 18.

Luke 18:1-8 says [1] *And He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. [2] He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. [3] And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ [4] For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, [5] yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’” [6] And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. [7] And will not God give justice to His elect, who cry to Him day and night? Will He delay long over them? [8] I tell you, He will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?”*

There are four things I want us to unpack from this passage. Number one, I want us to look at the point – what is Jesus’ point from this parable? Number two, I want to look at the people that He describes in this parable. Number three, I want us to unpack the point behind the point. I’ll explain what that means later. Then fourthly, I want us to talk about the practice of praying. What does the practice of praying look like practically in our life?

Let’s start with the first point which is Jesus’ point. In Luke 18:1, Jesus tells them the point of His parable upfront, which is that they ought to always pray and not lose heart. This

breaks pattern and how He typically gives the parable. A parable is a short story that has one main point. Typically, when Jesus gives a parable, He gives the parable first and after some time, after the disciples are scratching their heads wondering what in the world that Jesus is talking about and He kind of rebukes them of saying, 'How do you not understand these things?' then He gives them the point. Here, Jesus breaks pattern. He gives the point up front and that should tell us how important this point is – what He's trying to drive home and that if you don't get anything else, get this.

I love when preachers do that. Maybe it's because I'm just ADD. I like to know going in what we're going to be unpacking so I can pay attention, so I can focus and see how things link together. I love it when they say 'this is the point that we're going to talk about today and we're going to unpack it.' Jesus does that here. He gives us the point upfront so we don't miss it so it's abundantly clear that if we don't get anything else, we still get the point. The point for this whole study is that you are to pray, enduring prayers. You are to pray with endurance and not to lose heart.

Here, this begs the question, because He tells us we to pray and not to lose heart so the question is, why don't we pray with endurance? Why don't we pray with persistence? Why do we give up on prayer time and time again? The reality of prayer is very simple. It's not that complicated or complex. In one sense, it's just talking to God like you talk to anybody else. Now, public praying is terrifying and I'm a pastor and I have to do it every now and then and I still get a little chills about doing it, but praying privately to God is just sharing what's on your heart. So why is it difficult to continue on in prayer? I'd like to tell you a little bit something about the magnitude of prayer and the spiritual warfare that we battle, that if it's something that simple that we have trouble doing, it means that Satan attacks it because God uses it. He's ordained it to work in our lives and to work in the world. So, it could be challenging.

I'll give you two reasons why it is hard to continue on in prayer. One is actually a guess and the other is what Jesus kind of says. The first is we're not conditioned for it. Think about this. We live in the culture of right now. When something happens across the world we instantly know within probably a few minutes of what happened on our news app, right? We get access to pretty much everything within a blink of an eye. We carry these devices in our pockets that connects us all around the world and that we get frustrated when that page that we Googled does not show up in a matter of milliseconds. We think, "the service is so bad here, it took me a whole like two seconds for this thing to load, what is going on?" And we get frustrated and anxious about it. Gone are the days of dial up modem internet. That's a sanctifying exercise in getting on the internet. Google modem internet if you're interested in knowing what that is. But gone are those days. Today instantaneous access to almost anything at all times is what we have so we're not conditioned to endure, to have endurance, to be patient. We have been conditioned to be impatient and I think that impacts our prayer life, because when God doesn't answer our prayers as quickly as we like we think 'okay, this is not working. Let's move on. Let's do something else.'

That leads me to my second point. We may not say this out loud. We might not tell our friends this, but somewhere in our heart of hearts, we may believe, if we're really honest, we don't believe it helps. We've tried it. We haven't seen results. We give it up. This functional myth belief that somehow that there's something else that we can be doing with our time, that this doesn't really quite get it.

Philip Rifkin, in his commentary on this passage, says this; 'It is hard enough to pray at all, let alone to keep on praying until we get God's answer. Sometimes we stop praying because

we lose heart. God does not answer our prayers the way we think He ought to. We pray for the sick, but they're not healed. We pray for God to provide but we are still out of work. We pray for someone to get saved and he or she keeps running away from God. We pray for a partner, but we're still alone. Soon we start to wonder whether God is listening, and eventually we may get discouraged that we stop asking God for help at all.'

This discouragement is real. In some sense when we're feeling this discouragement there is something right that we're understanding. We live in a broken sin, cursed world. The authors of Scriptures get this, and they identify with us in our prayers and our struggles. Psalm 69:3 says, *[3] I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.* The Psalmist has been praying and praying and praying and not hearing what he wants and desires. As Habakkuk 1:2 says, *[2] O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?* There is this reality that the world is broken. There's things in it that cause us to despair and cry out to God. So by us recognizing this discouragement, we recognizing the world we live in.

It's interesting that this passage comes to us right after He talks about the second coming, in which there's this promise to make all things new. We're to understand this passage of this growing faith, because we live in between times of the already, but not yet Kingdom. This means that when Jesus came the first time He inaugurated His Kingdom, by defeating sin on the cross, but yet sin is still present and in the present reality in this world. The power of sin is broken, but the presence of sin is still here and He is coming again to make all things right and do away with sin once and for all. To understand this passage of not losing heart in praying and with enduring prayers, we're always to look to the future and the second coming of Christ that is going to ultimately bring justice and make things right.

So let's look at the second point of the parable which are the people of this parable. There's two particular people that Jesus talks about here. The first is the judge, and the second is the widow. There's two things we learn about this judge. He neither fears God nor respected man. This tells us something significant about him. He's incredibly self-centered. The world and the universe revolves around him, which means he's a corrupt judge. It doesn't care about fairness. He doesn't care about right or wrong or what the law says or helping people. He only cares about what he can get out of anything. When we think about the courtroom of that day, we can't think about it in our modern sensibilities or even what we see on TV. We have to put ourselves in this time, which probably meant he was a judge who had attendants around him. In order to be seen by this judge, you probably had to bribe the attendants and probably even the judge to get the verdict that you wanted. Think about that for a second.

How terrifying is that? Let's say you've been arrested and accused of something that you did not do and you're a defendant in this courtroom. You have prepared your case and have a good lawyer. You know you're innocent. You've got testimony and eyewitness accounts, but in walks a man with a gavel who is completely corrupt. Your heart has to sink to the floor. What hope do you have for a just verdict? Understand who this judge is.

Now let's look at the woman, the widow in this parable. What do we know about her? We know several things. Number one, we know that she's a woman, which is significant in this passage because women didn't have much legal standing in that day. They could be eyewitness testimonies, which means that she didn't have a voice, she didn't have influence, and she didn't have power. Secondly, we know her husband passed away. Now, we don't know how or when. We know at the very least, she's grieving at some level. I don't know what it's like to lose a spouse perhaps maybe some of you do, but I can't imagine doing life without my wife, Kate.

What kind of pain and hurt this widow might be feeling? Maybe the death of her husband is tied to this injustice. We don't know but we know she's grieving and hurting at some level. We know she's very vulnerable.

The Scriptures talk about particular people groups that we ought to pay attention to, that we ought to care for and minister to in a very proactive way, because they're vulnerable. Those who were particularly vulnerable during the ancient times were widows and orphans. In God's law from Deuteronomy 27:19, He'll specifically say, "cursed be anyone who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow and all the people shall say, amen." So not only is she powerless, lacks influence, vulnerable but then some grave injustice was committed against her. We're not told what was done against her or given the specifics of the details and I think that's intentional, because we could be tempted as we read this passage that if it's about a particular thing/injustice, then we'll say it only applies in this particular injustice. The fact that is open ended and we don't know what it is, it can be generally applied. There was some injustice done to her and justice needed to be had.

A fourth thing we learn about here, which is one of the reasons I love this passage, is that she is incredibly persistent. She didn't have money, power or influence, but she had one extremely effective tool – enduring annoyance. She knows something about this judge, right? This judge is very self-centered. He's about what can benefit himself. So she thinks, since she doesn't have the money or power to get his attention she can take away his peace. She is going to nag him and wear him out. In the Greek interpretation of what she is doing it literally means she is going to give him a black eye, metaphorically. She's playing it to sensibilities. She knows if I take away his peace, it won't be about fairness or justice, but he will give her the help she needs just so that she will leave him alone and he grants her the justice she was seeking. She embodied and embrace the idiom – the squeaky wheel gets the grease.

Now thirdly, what's the point behind the point? Now, it's interesting the way Jesus ends this parable. He says at the end "Hear what the unrighteous judge says, and will not God give justice to His elect who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, He will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the sun and a man comes, will He find faith on earth?" His first point is that we are to pray without losing heart, to pray prayers of endurance. But then at the end, He talks about faith and belief. They're connected. Our behavior is always connected to our core beliefs.

Jesus asks a very significant question. In order to pray this way, you got to have the right type of faith and when Jesus comes again, will He find that faith? Now, what is the faith that He is talking about, the core belief? Here is what it is not – it's not pestering a reluctant God. A friend of mine in our small group pointed something out during our mission's conference. We had these banners that were hanging over the balcony and one of the banners said this which I think is attributed to Martin Luther; 'Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance. It's laying hold of His willingness.'

We are not to view God like this unrighteous judge, though we may be tempted to think so. When we pray and we're not hearing answers, we're seeing silence and things are not changing in our life and anxiety and fear are starting to take over, we might tend to think 'okay, I need to approach God in this similar fashion; I need to wear Him out, beat down His door so He will pay attention to me.' That's wrong thinking. In this parable, Jesus is not wanting us to compare God to this judge, for He wants us to contrast. God is wholly unlike this unrighteous judge and we are more to Him than a vulnerable stranger.

Consider the contrast. The woman was a stranger, but we are children of God. We matter to Him. The woman had no one to plead her case, but we have Christ who advocates on our behalf. The woman had no assurance that she would have justice, but we have the promise that Christ will return to defeat, sin, death, Satan, and usher in a perfect joy filled Kingdom where all the wrong things are put right. The judge was selfish and after his own gain, but Christ did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant dying in our place on the cross (Philippians 2:6-7). The judge avoided the cries of the woman, but God promises to draw near to us if we draw near to Him. The judge perverted justice, but Christ is perfectly righteous, just and true. He is wholly unlike this unrighteous judge.

So, what is the faith He's talking about? It's continual trust in the character and the goodness of God demonstrated by a lifestyle of prayer. This is why Paul's going to say in I Thessalonians 5:16-17, *[16] Rejoice always, [17] pray without ceasing.* We are to have a lifestyle of prayer. It is this continually going to Jesus, going to God, understanding that we're fallible and weak and we need Him. Warren Wiersbe says "it is to make prayer as natural to us, as regular breathing."

This begs the question, what do we do when God is seemingly silent? How do we battle unbelief in the midst of that? How do we correct our thinking or are tempted to believe that God is like this unrighteous judge? How do we silence our fears, worries and anxieties? I want to give you five anchor truths to hold on to while we wait on Him. As I said earlier, Jesus connects action with a core belief and to get a core belief, you have to preach to yourself the Scriptures and the promises of God.

We used to live in Charleston before we moved here to Alabama and it's made up of a peninsula. It's made up of these two rivers; one goes to the right, one goes to the left. The Cooper River goes to the left. Cooper River is rhythm. Big Harbor is where the main ships come in and then Ashley is where the marina is. The marina is peppered with all these sailboats and they're all anchored. They're not docked at a pier. They're right there in the middle of that harbor. Now, when a storm comes or a hurricane comes, many of them take their ships and move it to land, but some decide to keep them where they are anchored, but instead of using a harbor anchor they use a storm anchor and they use multiple storm anchors to secure them so it's not tossed out to sea and they lose their ship.

I use that illustration in a sense that when we're in kind of a battle of unbelief, when life gets hard, when trials happen, when suffering comes our way, and we're crying day and night out to the Lord to help us in the midst of it, the storms of this world are at our door so we have to anchor ourselves in greater ways than we normally do. We have to set down the storm anchors to keep us steady. That's what I'm going to try to do with these five anchor truths.

Number one, the cross shouts that God is for us. Praying with endurance goes with the laments we see in the Psalms and other parts of Scripture. Romans 8 tends to be a chapter many Christians love and so many of these anchor truths are found in Romans 8. Romans 8:32 says *[32] He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?* That is a powerful verse. It's a powerful truth. Here, Paul is communicating to us that God has already done the hard work. He has already given you the greatest sacrifice that He can offer and that is His Son taking your place in the judgment seat and experiencing your hell so that you can experience His heaven.

Think about this for a second; Jesus is in heaven. He's in glory. He has angels serving Him. He's in perfect paradise and peace. There is no sin in heaven and He humbles Himself to serve a people that are ungrateful, don't love Him, that mock Him, beat Him, and then eventually

put Him on the cross to kill Him and that's the easy part. The hard part is experiencing the wrath of God poured out on Him so it doesn't have to come to us. Romans 3:23 says that every one of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and that we're all headed to a destiny apart from Him in a place called hell, unless that payment is paid and it cannot be paid by anybody else but Jesus. Paul is saying is, if He's willing to do that, how does He not give you everything else? He has already offered you the greatest gift – Himself and salvation. He's infinitely for us.

Think about this for a second; when we are tempted in our unbelief as well, remember that in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus is sweating blood because He's so anxious about what's before Him, He has this prayer request. In Matthew 26:39 Jesus says, "Father, if there's any other way, let this cup pass from Me." Now, the Father's answer to Him is not recorded, but we know how He answered because Jesus went to the cross. The Father told Him 'no.' Think about that for a second. In the times that we're waiting on God to answer our prayers, there was a time where Jesus Himself asked something of His Father in a prayer request, and the Father told Him, 'no' so that He can give us the ultimate 'yes' to our prayer requests and deepest longings. Because all of these finite things that we deal with in this world are all the result of the major thing in the sense that sin broke this world and it needs to be restored and redeemed and the only way that could happen is through the work of Jesus on the cross. This means He is for us. How are we not also graciously with Him who gives us all things?

The second anchor truth is we pray to a God who prays for us. I get tempted sometimes to think, 'okay, God, you've got so much going on. You say in Colossians that you uphold the universe by the word of Your power and then I think about the vastness of the universe and all that you're doing. That's incredible and then I think about all the billions of people that are on this earth. Do you really pay attention to me? Do you really have time to hear my prayer request? Do you really know what's going on in my world?' How do we battle that fear? We battle it with the fact that God's Word tells us that Jesus Himself and the Holy Spirit both intercede/pray for us by name. He is paying attention to you.

Romans 8:34 says [34] *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* He's praying for you. Romans 8:26-27 says [26] *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. [27] And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

I don't know about you, but there's so many times that things happen or I'm get exposed to somebody else's life and I don't know what to say or do or how to pray and I cling to these verses. Then I say, "God, I don't know what I'm supposed to say here. I don't know how to pray, but I know You know how to take my failings and my weakness so You pray the right thing that needs to be prayed." Jesus prays for you. The Holy Spirit prays for you. When we pray to God we are joining in a prayer meeting of the Trinity that's already taking place.

Anchor truth number three is God promises to work towards our good. Romans 8:28 says [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.* But this verse is often misunderstood. It does not mean that all things are good, right? There are evil, rotten things in this world. There are things that are destructive and we cannot say those things are good and God is not the author of those things. But what God is, is the Redeemer of those things. The greatest act in all of history is the crucifixion of God, and God uses that, reverses it, and redeems it to save all of His people.

Joseph says this to his brothers in Genesis 50:20, *[20] As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.* God redeems the brokenness to put things right, and He works towards our good and for His glory so no matter when we're waiting, anxious and worried, we have to remember God is for us to, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are praying for us and He's going to somehow in some way work this out for my good and I have to patiently wait while that happens. Remember that the ultimate good that God desires for you is to make you more like Jesus. We often quote Romans 8:28, but we don't follow it up with Romans 8:29.

Romans 8:29 says *[29] For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.* The ultimate thing that God wants from you and wants for you is that you be more like Jesus. In those times of waiting and of silence, He is working, conforming you to make you more like Him. He's teaching you humility and dependance. He may be drawing out sin in your life, distrust and disbelief. The closest times I am with the Lord is when there is suffering and trials because I recognize I can't fix these things and I'm dependent upon the Lord. So He's working in us. Bryan Chapell, in his book *Praying Backwards*, says, "Understanding that God's primary goal for our prayers is our spiritual transformation helps explain why He may delay His response to some request. We may want a change in our circumstances. When God wants a change in us."

Anchor truth number four is we have to check our motives while we wait. James 4:3 says *[3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.* What is he talking about? Basically, he is saying that God will sometimes say 'no' to your prayer request because what you're asking for will actually hurt you. It's not good for you and really you're desiring is the gift above the Giver. You're making an idol an ultimate thing out of the thing that you want, but if God gives you that it will not satisfy you like He will, and it will bring destruction in your life so He cannot answer that prayer. As we wait and are walking in dependance upon the Lord, we ought to ask ourselves, 'Will I be praying with the right intentions for God's will and not for an idol that I want to worship?'

We know this instinctively as parents, that your children will come up to you with some of the most interesting requests but because you love them, you will say 'no.' It's like when a son walks up to his father and says 'Hey, can I use that shovel right there?' The dad says "What are you going to do with that shovel?" The son says "Me and my brother are going to play sword fighting backyard." The dad says 'Sounds like a good time until somebody starts bleeding and then your mother will be mad so I'm going to say no to that.' Why? It's not because the dad doesn't love them or want them to be happy but because he knows that it will hurt them.

God does the same thing for us. He has infinite knowledge and the things that we want and desire that we may think are good, that there is destruction behind it, but we can't see it because we're not an all-knowing God and sometimes God says 'no.' We're praying and praying and praying for this promotion at work and we don't get it. We get passed up by somebody that we think is not deserving of it and we get frustrated and angry and say, 'God, why did you not give this to me? This would be great for my family. It would give us more money/income. It would help us in so many different ways.' What you don't know until you get to heaven maybe, is that God peels back and says, "If I would have given that to you this job would have become everything to you, the pressures of it, the frustrations of it, would have eaten you alive and you would have made your whole world about this work and your family would have suffered." You can extrapolate that into about a million different examples. Sometimes God says 'no' because we ask wrongly or because the thing we want unknowingly is wrong for us.

The last anchor truth is that sometimes His silence is because His answer is bigger than we can imagine. There's this prayer that Paul prays that blows my mind and is in Ephesians 3. Ephesians 3:20-21 says [20] *Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, [21] to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.* Paul is praying for the power of God to be unleashed in our lives in ways that we cannot fully grasp. That it is beyond even our prayer requests or beyond anything that we can desire and is so incredible we can't wrap our mind around it. Sometimes God's silence is because He is doing that and you can't quite get it.

Oswald Chambers says "Some prayers are followed by silence because they're wrong. Others because they're bigger than we can understand. It would be wonderful moment for some of us when we stand before God and find that the prayers we clamored for in early days and imagined were never answered have been answered in the most amazing way, and that God's silence has been the sign of the answer." When I read that I was incredibly encouraged and empowered to pray bolder prayers than I'm praying.

What prayers will we pray that will seemingly go unanswered here that when we get to heaven and God says, "You know those things that you were praying for? Let Me show you how I answered them. You weren't ready to receive that answer while you were on Earth, but now in glory let Me show you" and that encourages me to pray, that encourages me to ask Kingdom shaking prayers. What will God do when His people pray and pray with endurance.

Lastly what does the practice of prayer look like practically? We always talk about these truths, but what does this mean day to day? What does this look like for me? As I've already said, pray is a simple thing yet it's one of the hardest things I'll ever to do. I need like systems, models, structure, somebody to spell it out for me or I'm just not going to do it. I have good intentions but unless I have something that kind of can give me boots on the ground I'll miss it.

Here are two examples but realize there are lots of great ways to pray. I'll tell you what tends to work in my life, and I've seen work in others. Number one is so simple, but it's the A.C.T.S. prayer model. This is an acronym that means adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication. Adoration is a fancy term for praising God. Praise Him for His goodness, His mercy, His love, His justice, everything about His attributes. It works really well with a one sentence prayer – 'God, I praise You today because You love me. I praise You today because You have forgiven me. I praise You today because You're holy.'

The next is confession – confess your sins and be specific. Prayers like "Lord, I messed up today. I was angry at my wife and I shouldn't have been. I was anxious and worried, and I wasn't trusting You."

The next is thanksgiving which I think is so good for the souls. Thank Him for all the good things He's done in your life that helps us and guards us against bitterness. It guards us from wrong thinking about our life. It helps us to see all the good things that are taking place. Prayers like "God, thank You for my family. Thank You for my job. Thank You for my friends. Thank You for answering that prayer request two weeks ago." It builds this confidence in the Lord, as we express our thankfulness.

The last part of the acronym is supplication. This is another fancy word that just means you ask for things. Prayers like "God help me with my budget this month. I have a lot of bills this week, this month and I don't know how it's going to be paid for. Help me to be a wise steward. Help me to share the Gospel with my coworker in the cubicle next to me. I don't think they know Jesus. Help me parent wisely because it is difficult. We pray You would bless that missionary on the field sharing the Gospel." We ask God for things.

Somebody recently gave me this journal that outlines basically how to have a time with the Lord. I just think this is really good for cultivating this endurance, this lifestyle of prayer but it's prayer in the Word and it walks you through step by step which is really helpful to me because it brings structure which is what I need. This journal also goes through the A.C.T.S. prayer model. It's a little chart. I think structures and methods can be very helpful.

The second method that I'll tell you about is prayer note cards – a little three by five index card. Title it with the topic that you're praying for, maybe a Scripture that you want to claim towards that thing that you're praying and little bullet points. As you get a stack of these and rotate them as you pray through them. It's really simple. You can probably Google it somewhere on the internet which will also tell you how to do this, but we have to find methods that encourage us to do it, to give us accountability, to give us discipline. You have to know that it's worth it, that it's impactful, but you have to be disciplined to do it. I think things like this help us to pray, particularly in talking about the note cards.

I'll tell you one story of one person, of somebody that just modeled prayer and that encouraged so many people and that prayed for so many people. That was Barbara Barker. When we first moved here about nine and a half years ago, my wife had the privilege of being in Barbara's Bible study. Not only did she get to glean from her wisdom and her joy for the Lord, but every week Barbara would pass out a little note card. She would tell them to write their prayer requests for the week on the note card and turn them back in. Then the next week she would return them to the person with a handwritten prayer for them, the Scripture references, and they didn't get to keep their card for they had to update it with more prayer requests and send it back. She kept this rotation going. Barbara may have had a little accountability that helped her do this to know that she had to send in every week a handwritten letter to every person that she praying for. She had a method, she had a system. How many people in our church have been prayed for by Barbara Barker? What a legacy of prayer.

When Barbara went home to be with the Lord there was a group of people that went to her house to tidy things up and put things away and you know what was in her house? There were boxes and boxes of prayer note cards for people. Some of those found theirs, and took them home. Will we be a people of prayer? Do we believe in Jesus' Word that we ought to pray and not to lose heart? Why? Jesus is coming again and He's going to make all things right and new. He will answer some prayer requests now, but He's going to answer them all in eternity for His will, for His kingdom. So I'll end with this; Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth? Let's pray.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we praise and thank You for Your Word. We praise and thank You for this challenge to pray. I know when I think about prayer in my own life, I'm often discouraged because I know my lack of prayer. I know my desire, I know my own heart, but many times my follow through isn't what I desire it to be. I pray that I would have endurance in prayers knowing that You have ordained it to work in our world, to change me, to change others, to make us more like Jesus, and to proclaim Your Gospel. Father, let me have the right core beliefs and I pray that same prayer for everybody reading this, and that if anybody doesn't know this Jesus who answers our prayers, who has promised to make everything right, who has said He will forgive your sins, you just have to come to Him and lay it down. I pray that today is the day that you confess Him as your Savior. We ask this in Your Name, Amen.