

The Gospel Project for Adults, Summer 2015
Extended Instructional Approaches for Session 7

Introduction: *Recommend a resource on prayer.*

Let your class know about this great resource, or go online ahead of time and print of these guides. Also, if you are able, then think about having some copies of *Valley of Vision* available for those they may not have it or have the resources to get it.

Sometimes it is helpful to find solid tools that can help us in the spiritual disciplines. One of these tools is the *Valley of Vision*, a collection of Puritan prayers. Joe Thorn, from Redeemer Fellowship near Chicago, has developed a reading/prayer plan to help people systematically walk through the entirety of the Valley of Vision. This helpful resource has been set up to pray 3 times a day/5 days a week for 13 weeks. You can head over to the JoeThorn.net to download a printable copy of this prayer guide (<http://www.joethorn.net/valley/>). Use this guide as a way to kick-start or renew your daily prayer life.

Point 2: *Discuss the point of prayer with your group.*

Read this example to your group and then ask them to discuss the question below:

In Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Ivan endures all the horrors of a Soviet prison camp. One day he is praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner notices him and says with ridicule, "Prayers won't help you get out of here any faster." Opening his eyes, Ivan answers, "I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God."

Ask the question "How often do we just assume God's will instead of actively praying with it in mind?"

[Source: *Our Daily Bread*, 29 December 1993.]

Point 3: *Point out how God uses prayer as a way for us to grow.*

If you have the ability then show a video, use this clip from *Evan Almighty* as a catalyst to discuss why we expect immediate answers and why we get discouraged about the way God answers prayer. If you cannot facilitate showing the clip, then feel free to describe it.

Why do we have a hard time praying consistently for what some might deem as personality flaws, like patience? This clip from the movie *Evan Almighty* talks about how God gives us an opportunity for growth in our prayers.

Set up this movie briefly and make sure your people know that this is a movie and to focus on the point about growth rather than the movie itself or other details about (such as the film's interpretation of Noah, etc.).

The movie clip can be found at WingClips (1 minute, 50 seconds):

<http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/evan-almighty/pray-for-the-opportunity>

Conclusion: *Pursue accountability regarding prayer.*

Use this story to spark a discussion about the necessity of accountability in prayer:

Early African converts to Christianity were earnest and regular in private devotions. Each one reportedly had a separate spot in the thicket where he would pour out his heart to God. Over time the paths to these places became well worn. As a result, if one of these believers began to neglect prayer, it was soon apparent to the others. They would kindly remind the negligent one, "Brother, the grass grows on your path."

[Source: *Today in the Word*, 29 June 1992 (<https://bible.org/illustration/well-worn-path>)]

Ask your group members if they currently have or have ever had people who would hold them accountable for their prayer lives, not just for sin issues.