

Pray Like Jesus #1 - Jesus' Secret To Prayer

- I'm super excited to see you guys. We kick off brand new series today, "Pray Like Jesus". Really excited and honored to have you. Good news, you made it through 2020. Congratulations. You did it. Bad news, 2021 is pretty much the same. Amen. It's like "The Purge" part one and "The Purge" part two. It's hard to pick which one was worse. And this is where this time between last year and what appears to be this year is the perfect time for this sermon series on prayer. Last year, it was prayer that God really used to supernaturally lead me, my family and our church family. It was about this time last year, and I know many of you are new. And I was thinking, Hey, everything's healthy. The economy's strong. Nobody's wearing a mask. We get to go outdoors, crazy stuff. Remember the days? And I thought, you know, it's probably time to look at new real estate for the church and to take on some other, you know, more risky, maybe opportunities. And I prayed and God spoke to me and said, "Son, no. "Something is gonna happen." He didn't tell me what, probably because He loves me. And He didn't want me to be anxious in the meantime. And what God said was, no, there is going to be some changes coming. And this is not the time to take risks. This is not the time to buy real estate. You need to hunker down. You need to focus on the Scottsdale Campus and you need to make plans to do some facility and some technology upgrades. HVAC, sound, light, video, all of these things. And I remember saying, Lord, how can we do that? We meet every week. I don't know if you remember last year. And so the Lord was like, trust me, son the money will come if you obey and prepare. So I told Grace and I told my kids and I told the team here at the church, all right, here's what we're gonna do. We're just gonna prepare for a bunch of work and we're gonna multiply our effectiveness in Scottsdale. And then literally we had everything sequenced. All of the construction, all of the technology, all of the HVAC, literally scheduled for the exact time that we had to close the church. So the time that we were close, we had everything prepared. And I was like, Lord, how is this gonna be paid for? All of the money came in supernaturally. It was God's supernatural provision. So last year for most churches was one of the hardest years they've ever had. One in five churches, 20%, pray for them 'cause we love them all. They're at risk of dying and closing this year, the average church is running 36%. We doubled last year, we ran 200 ish percent. I went to public school, so that's a rough number, but God was super gracious. And people asked, "What's the secret?" There was no secret. We prayed and God directed our steps. It felt like every time we hit an intersection God turned the light green just in time for us. I want that for you this year. I want you to learn how to pray to God. And part of prayer is listening to God. 'Cause I don't know what the year holds but I know the one who holds the year. And if we learned anything last year it's that we cannot predict the future. So we need to talk to God and to have him direct our steps into that future. That's part of prayer. The other thing that I'm really praying for you to learn in our time together in this series for this year is how to unburden. I believe for 2020, for me personally, prayer was a lot about direction. This year I believe it's a lot about unburdening. How many of you have sensed a little bit of burden lately? Right? Any of you have the internet, watched the news know that we had an election anybody feeling a little uncertain about the future. And what we're seeing is you can either be praying or writing. Those are your answers and those are your options. Writing is what

happens when you're feeling the burden and you don't know what to do with it. Praying is what happens when you're feeling the burden and you know what to do with it, give it to the God who can bear it because it's unbearable for you. I want this to be a year for you. And this is why we're starting this year together in the "Pray Like Jesus" series to unburden you. And then for God to direct you to have an incredible year even if the world is falling down, I believe God has an opportunity for you to be rising up. And so let me talk a little bit about prayer to set it up. A prayer is simply communicating with God. And the ultimate goal of prayer is building the relationship with God. God is a living God, God is a relational God, God is a personal God. And the way we speak to God is prayer and when we listen to God, that's also prayer. Prayer includes speaking and listening. And prayer can be done in any number of postures. Sometimes, it's okay to get down on your knees and pray. I do this all the time. I tend to do this before every sermon. You could actually go face down, just out of the posture of humility and surrender. Prayer is something you can do while sitting in a chair. So you can do that right now. Prayer is something that sometimes you just stand and we do this in worship, and worship is a corporate act of prayer. It doesn't matter where you pray or how you pray or when you pray, because ultimately the key is this. And this is gonna be the big idea. God is a father and He doesn't care where or how His kids enter into a conversation with Him as long as they're building the relationship. Some of you grew up in religious environments, you gotta be in church to pray. No you don't. Well, you need to kneel to pray. No you don't. When my kids were little, we've got five kids and I'm a father. And the whole backdrop of this sermon series is the father, heart of God. I didn't care what my kids wanted to do. As long as it built our relationship. Hey dad, can we go out to ice cream? Answer? Yes. I believe in Jesus and ice cream. I will do both. Sometimes it'd be dead, could we go out and play catch? We're a baseball family. Sure. Hey dad, can we go to the coffee shop and play cards? Okay. Hey dad, can we get in the car and just go for a drive and have just some talk time? Sure. Hey dad, can we snuggle up and watch a movie? Sure. I don't care what we're doing as long as we're connecting. As long as you're talking to me and I'm talking to you and we're building our relationship and getting to know each other better, I really don't care what we're doing. I just love being with you. God is a father, and prayer is talking to, listening to, connecting with your father. And He really quite frankly is always happy to listen to you. And He's always happy to talk to you. You can pray in the car. You can pray at work. You can pray at home. You can pray while you're doing the dishes. And if you're new to the Valley, you do need to pray while you're driving. Just this wasn't in my notes, but please let people know that the left lane is for going fast. And, Okay. Okay. And that a turn signal is not an option package on a vehicle, it's necessary. Okay. So when it comes to talking about prayer, how many of you, just be honest, if I say how's your prayer life, you immediately feel guilty. Even non-Christians think they should pray. Even irreligious people sense they should pray. I've never met anybody that said I feel like I'm doing amazing at my prayer life and I have no room for improvement. If they said that, my first will be, you need to pray about humility. All right. Then ultimately, I've never met anyone who felt that their prayer life had arrived. So let me say a few things about prayer. I don't wanna make you feel guilty. Number one, prayer is not something you have to do. It's something you get to do. Okay? Talking to a parent who loves you is not something you have to do, it's something you get to do. That's the father, heart of God. Prayer is not a burden giving duty, it should be a burden lifting delight. Prayer shouldn't be

a burden, it should be where you bring your burden and hand it to God. Number three, God doesn't need your prayers, you do. Somebody asked me recently and said, "Why does God need my prayers?" He doesn't, if you don't pray, He's still fine. God's not in heaven going, please fix it. Pray to me. He's doing fine either way. You're the one who needs the prayers. Okay? God doesn't need your prayers, you need your prayers. It's for your emotional, spiritual, mental health. Number four, prayer is not telling God anything but prayer is inviting God into everything. Some of you, you don't talk to God about things. You're like, I can't talk to Him about that. Let me let you in on a little secret, He knows. He knows. It's not like, God's in heaven going, I had no idea. And then they called me and then they've got a boyfriend. God already knows. How many of you, you're a parent, you've got a child, you know what's going on with the child. And they're just not talking to you about it, but you're their parents so you know. How are you doing? I'm doing fine. No, you're not. I know what's going on, you need to talk to me about it. Our father knows everything. He sees everything. And praying is not informing Him, it's inviting Him. It's inviting him. And number five, prayer is less about moving God's hand and prayer's more about God moving our heart. So that's really like I told God what to do and He didn't do it. I'll just let you know, He's God, so He's not really good at customer service. He doesn't take orders very well. He will take humble requests but He's not looking to be your assistant. He's looking to be your Lord. And so sometimes what we do, we will tell God what we want and what God is saying is, you're not here to tell me what to do I'm here to change your heart so we can have a healthy relationship and then you can listen to me, okay? And so ultimately prayer is not as often about moving God's hand as God changing our heart. So where to start with prayer. And I wanna start with big lessons from little kids. Okay. And how many of you have got little kids? You got siblings, you got kids. You got grandkids. Let me say this pray for the little kids here at the Trinity Church. The last four months of last year we added 928 little kids to the roster. Okay. Which is amazing and awesome. And we're gonna need to build a much larger classroom building. So thank you in advance for paying for that. All right. Don't laugh. That was a prophecy. All right, Matthew 18:1-3, "The disciples came to Jesus "saying who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Have you ever heard there's no such thing as a dumb question? This might be a candidate. Amen. Here's the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the maker of heaven and earth, whose mom was a Virgin and just went water skiing without a boat. And they're like, which one of us is better? Not you. "And calling to him a child." Isn't that interesting. "He grabs a little kid. "He put him in the midst of them and said, "truly I say to you, "unless you turn and become like children "you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." These men are sort of competitive religious leaders and they wanna know how do we become the greatest and what I love about Jesus, He doesn't rebuke them. He redirects them. He doesn't rebuke their pride, He redirects them toward humility. And He says, you know, this kid doesn't have your attitude. You need to be humble and teachable and relational. And you need to be more concerned about how we're doing and less about how you're performing like this kid. Similarly in Luke 18, this is one of the great verses of the new Testament that people tend to love. This is like the Jesus is like Santa at the mall. All the kids are coming to sit on his lap. Okay. Luke 18:15-17. "They were bringing even infants," little tiny guys, "to him that he might touch them." Can you see the picture? Moms are like, could you hold my baby? Jesus' like, I'll do that. Can you pray for him? I'll pray for him. Can you see Jesus, a healthy, single man

holding kids, kissing them on the head, laying hands and praying over them. Okay. Let me say Jesus is the perfect man. And I'll tell you what, man, if you're like Jesus the safest place on earth for a child should be with you. These hands are for blessing not beating. They are for loving, not harming. You know that Jesus is a safe, healthy man when women who have their first born baby, have you ever seen a woman with her first born baby? She's a bit protective. She walks up and hands the baby to Jesus. You know what that means? She thinks that He is safer than her. Okay. Your child is safe in the hands of Jesus. And this is what we do even in prayer and dedication we put our kids in the hands of Jesus. When the disciples saw it, they what? Rebuked them. You know what, sometimes church leadership is like this. God is doing something and they take a vote to stop it. If you've been in church, you know what I'm talking about. All the men get together, they're like, well, there's lots of children and they're distracting Jesus we need to stop this. Next thing you know, it'll be a movement. They'll just, Jesus will just be praying over kids all the time. Then what? Yeah. What a horror that would be. If all the children were loved and prayed for we need to stop this immediately. You need to know that sometimes religious leaders get in the way of what Jesus is trying to do. And no, don't say amen so quickly, I'm a religious leader. That's a little hurtful in my heart, but here's how the story goes. "Jesus called them to him saying, "let the children come to me." Jesus loves kids. "And do not hinder them. "Don't get in the way for to such belongs what? "The kingdom of God." He said, you know what, heaven is made for kids. Well, that gives me hope for aborted, preborn, passed away, stillborn, child death. That gives me a lot of hope. Maybe a whole lot of people in heaven, Jesus is going, I told you I had them. Including the miscarriage that we suffered. "Truly I say to you, "whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child "shall not enter it." A couple of things here. Number one, the Bible says that adults should teach children. But number two, the Bible also says that children have a lot to teach adults. Isn't it interesting. These religious leaders are arguing and what Jesus says is you need to be learning. These kids know some things that you forgot. And it's not that we don't learn these things, it's sometimes when we become adults and we become religious, we become too serious. And we forget the simplicity of what it means to just have a child like faith. That's my next point. God wants us to have not a childish faith but a childlike faith. That's what he's saying. A childish faith is immature. A child like faith is innocent. It's trusting, right? How many of you have seen a kid and if you tell them something they tend to believe you. So you gotta be careful what you tell your kid. So when Jesus says, you're gonna raise from the dead, a childlike faith says awesome. Right? Ultimately, Jesus wants us to come to Him with a child like faith. And so what I ultimately wanna tell you is this, if you wanna learn how to pray, don't look to religious people, the worst place to look how to pray is religious people. Here the negative example were the religious leaders and the positive example were the children. That ultimately, if you wanna learn how to pray don't look to religious people or leaders look to children who have a parent. But I would say in particular a father who adores and cherishes them. If a dad is a really good dad and really loves their kid and they got a healthy relationship just watch that relationship. For those of you who are dads, if you're a good dad, do you have to teach your children how to make requests? Any of you sat down said, if you ever need anything, here's how you do it. They just sort of pick that up on their own. Amen. Hey dad, I need ice cream and a pony and a bottle rocket. Pronto. Stat. Why? You'll see. They just, they let you know. How many of you if you're doing something very important your kid doesn't

care. They feel they're more important. They just butt right in. Have you raised that kid? There's like, Hey, I'm in the middle of something, like, I'm your kid. We have the same last name. I have your DNA. I always cut to the front of the line. I don't care. What happens if a child is loved, they just assume that they are priority, they just run to make their requests known and they feel just free to talk and true or false, if the child is loved sometimes the communication can be a bit emotional. They might cry. They might be scared. They're gonna run to their dad, here's where I'm at. Here's what I need. Here's what I feel. And ultimately the healthiest way to learn about prayer is to look at a healthy relationship between a father and a child. And this is where the whole sermon series is gonna go because God is a father and you're His child. Now let me say what makes this hard. Number one, we live in a world where there's not a lot of great dads. Or let me say this, there's not enough. There's not enough. Number two, many of the examples that people are given are promulgated by what I would call a false gospel, a false hope of media. And that is that 40% of children tonight go to bed without a father. For the first time in the nation's history the majority of children born to women ages 30 and under are born out of wedlock. They have no dad. So the average person, their experience is, at least for a season or for the duration of their life, no father whatsoever. And so there's something that the sociologists will call cultivation theory. Cultivation theory is that when you are perhaps not familiar with something, media cultivates for you a sense of what normal or reality is or should be. Okay. And so if let's say you didn't have a dad or a good dad, or you've not seen a lot of good dads, and let me say, if you're at the Trinity Church, you're in the right place. There is a high percentage of good men, godly men, here. Not perfect men, but men in process. Our largest ministry is men's and our men have the father's heart and they're trying to grow to share the father's heart with women and children. That's a big part of what we do. If you wanna see that, join me on Wednesday night. But this issue of cultivation theory let me share this with you. There was a sociological study that was done, it was published in the journal of psychology for popular media culture. And I believe it might've been republished in the American Psychological Association Journal. It was from a researcher at West Virginia. And here's what it says. The study focused on father child interactions of TV fathers in popular situational comedies in the 2000s. So from 2000 to about 2010, they decided let's look at all the sitcoms and see what kind of dads there are and what kind of view of fatherhood we are cultivating in the next generation. Yeah, not good. That was prophetic. You prophesied the future. They recorded 699 father child interactions across 10 situational comedies. Now here's, what's interesting the data survey finds, 99% of American households have at least one TV. I've read in another study that there were more TVs in America than people. Okay. And the average household has three. Now you add to that tablets, computers and phones. The number one consumer of screen time are children ages eight to 18, those most formative years. And the average home has the television on 8.5 hours a day. The average eight to 18 year old spends eight hours a day consuming screen technology and media. They spend more time in front of a screen than the classroom and now we've actually made the two one. And so what this means practically is if you are a person who takes their child to church every other week, which is a pretty regular church goer and let's say the sermon is 30 minutes. And if you're new, that's not here, okay? That's not here. But if the sermon is 30 minutes and you only go twice a month, your child is getting one hour of Bible teaching from the pulpit a month and they are getting 180 hours of media consumption

largely on television. It's 180 to one. Now here's what the data analysis looked at, all of the different sitcoms and then they scored positive and negative interactions and demonstrations of fatherhood. And this may not shock you, but here's the first data point. Working class fathers, how many are the blue collar guys? Okay. That was my dad. My dad is Joe. He was a construction worker. He would get up every morning. He would fill his thermos with coffee. He would grab his tool belt. He would jump in his truck and he would go to the job site to feed our family of which I was the oldest of five. That was my dad. It is my dad. My dad's watching. I love my dad with all my heart. My dad literally broke his back to feed five kids. So my mom could stay home with us. Okay. I just wanna publicly honor my blue collar dad. And in addition, I worship a guy who had a blue collar dad and he was blue collar. His name is Jesus. First 30 years of his life He's doing construction. Here's what it says. Working class fathers, i.e, Fred Flintstone, Archie Bunker, Dan Conner from "Roseanne" and Homer Simpson, have been shown to be failures who often need to be saved by their wives. In contrast to middle-class fathers who are shown to be successful and hardworking. What they said is of all the research, it's the blue collar fathers that are shown to be the most incompetent, the most bumbling, ultimately it's the mom, the kid or the family pet who saves the day. The worst of the worst are the blue collar fathers who are biologically raising their own children. So the story is, if your dad is still living with you and goes to work in a blue collar job, you've got the worst possible father. You may ask, what was the best category of fathers? Well, the person who did this data analysis they did a survey in a research study and then a report outside of this journal. It was gay fathers that scored the best. Gay fathers, they said in a separate interview, there was no record in any of the sitcoms that they watched with gay fathers where they said or did anything negative to their children. It was a hundred percent positive portrayal. Compare that to Archie Bunker, compare that to "Roseanne", compare that to Homer Simpson, compare that to Fred Flintstone. And so what you're being told is, if your dad is still in your life and goes to work to feed you, you've got the worst case scenario. If you have a gay dad, you've hit the bonus round. Now here's what I'm telling you is this, many people don't have a father, we'll talk about it in a moment, they also have a father wound. In addition, if you grow up and you go to media the portrayal of fatherhood is not going to be positive. And it is certainly not going to be biblical. And so what this causes is it's hard for us to take big lessons from little kids because when we think of father, we don't think of God as father and we don't think in the biblical category of father. And so what it leads to is what I have often referred to as a father wound. I'll explain this to you. This here is the conclusion of the old Testament. Your Bible's two parts, old Testament, 39 books, new Testament, 27 books between the writing of this last chapter of the old Testament and the coming of Jesus is 400 years. So imagine that you're on your death bed, right? I'm pastor I've been at people's deathbed. You know what they say on their death bed, whatever is most important. As we always say, you save the best for last. Whatever God has to say through this prophet is going to carry the family of God for 400 years. Imagine that you're a man on your death bed or a woman on your death bed, you bring the family around, you're like, I'm gonna tell you something that you need to repeat for generations. This needs to carry the family for 400 years. So they're waiting for Jesus to come. Question. What do you think would be on God's heart through the prophet's lips at the end? Here's what He says, "Behold, I will send you the prophet." That is John, the baptizer, Jesus' rural, homeschooled, eccentric cousin. He was,

he lived on a diet of bugs and honey. He wore a Jedi robe and he lived in Jerome. He was an eccentric kid. He was. He was rural. "Behold, I will send you the prophet "before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes." Before the Lord Jesus comes, the precursor, the forerunner will be this prophet, John, the baptizer. And here's what he will do, "He will turn the hearts of "fathers to their children." One of the most important ministries, prophetic ministries, mine is a prophetic ministry, I speak to men all over the world. I've spoken to stadiums of men. One of the most important things of prophetic ministry is to get the hearts of the men and to have them connected to the father, heart of God, so that He can turn their hearts toward what? What's it say? Their children Their children. Dad's let me tell you this, you don't need to get it perfect. Your children just need to know that you have the father's heart for them. And the father's heart is I do love you. I am trying. It was my fault, I am sorry. Please let me fix it. Okay. When a child knows that their father's heart is for them, it's healing. He goes on to say, "He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children "and the hearts of children to their fathers." Who goes first? Ideally it would be the fathers. Once the father's heart opens to the child, the child feels safe and their heart opens toward their father. "Lest I come and strike the land "with a decree about a destruction." Some of your translations will say a curse. You know what He's saying? If you have a culture where men don't love their kids then the result will be kids don't love their dad and then the whole nation is cursed. We call that America. The leading cause of death last year and this year is not COVID, it's abortion. I'm not saying God can't forgive it. But I'm saying when the most dangerous place to be is in your mother's womb, the hearts of fathers are not toward children. And it's no surprise then that the hearts of children would not be toward fathers. And the result is we live in a nation that is cursed. What I'm gonna say is really controversial and I'll do it again next week if you're new. But what He's saying here is that curses have far less to do with witches and they have far more to do with fathers. A lot of times we hear of a curse and you're like, Oh, I don't want to which to curse me. It's more likely that a father would be the one to put a curse on you. We call this in the Bible a generational curse. A generational curse. In addition, there are three kinds of fathers. There are physical fathers. This is the one who gives birth to you. Your biological dad. There are also spiritual fathers, can be pastors, mentors, leaders, and they introduce you to the Lord. So the apostle Paul, he didn't seem to have any biological children. He calls Timothy, Titus and Onesimus in the new Testament, my sons. John, in first, second and third John, he talks about my dear children. He's acting like a spiritual father. Paul tells the Corinthians, he says, "You have many teachers, you don't have many fathers." I'll tell you what, teachers have a hard job because fathers aren't doing theirs. It says you have many teachers, you don't have many fathers. He said, I became your father through the preaching of the gospel. Your biological father causes you to be born. Your spiritual father is the one through whom God causes you to be born again. He brings you the message of Jesus. The third is, the third category is father figures. Our coaches, mentors, grandfathers, big brothers, maybe in the business world it could be a boss or somebody who is a mentor. We have these three categories of fathers. And what I am saying is that, let me say this too, this family systems analysis explains America. Do you know what the problem is in America right now? We can't find a good dad. Our nation is one big, broken, dysfunctional, fighting family. And we just got presented with two options a tough father or a tender father. And we're just like a divorced family. And one's like, I like the old dad. I like the new dad. And it's a war, my friends. And I'll tell

you that God is not a tough or a tender father, He's a tough and a tender father. He's tender with the kids and He's tough for the kids. He protects them from harm but He provides love and emotion and presence for them. That right now our country is one big, broken, fractured family, looking for a savior father. And I'm telling you, He is in heaven, not on earth. And that ultimately the healing that is needed is not going to be provided by a mirror man, it's only provided by Jesus the God man. And it's interesting because even in politics, we talk about those who began our country as our founding fathers. We use this language a lot. And so what a father wound is it's a hurt from a physical, spiritual or other father. And let me say this as well, the lack of fathers in our country is what is pressing the next generation towards socialism. If you have a father you realize I've got protection, I've got discipline. I've got help. I've got a safety net. If you don't have a dad you want the government to be your dad. The whole generation that is pushing towards socialism is the result of a father wound. They don't have dads, so they vote for government to be their new dad. Hey, just pay off all my debts, take care of me, protect me, call it all a human right. There's a lot of other humans that never had that right. That ultimately the brokenness in our culture can only happen when men receive the father, heart of God and God turns the hearts of fathers toward children and then heals and turns the hearts of children to their father so that this curse that we live under can be removed. And the result are various kinds of father wounds. So I wanna get into this. I'll share with you in a moment why. But just think about this. Here are some categories of father wounds. The missing in action man. This is not a dad who intended to leave you but he's absent, he died. He got very sick. He got injured. He's gone. It's not that he doesn't wanna be with you, it's that he's not there. The deadbeat dad, he doesn't care. He doesn't show up. He doesn't unburden. He's not generous. He's not helpful. He doesn't care. And you would think when life hurts this bad, he'll make his entrance now. No. The addicted guy. He's so consumed by his addiction that he has no room for you. Drugs, alcohol, food, sex, gambling, whatever his thing is, he doesn't have any time, energy or money left for you. The Mr. Nice guy. He's very kind. He's very sweet. He's very nice. If you're his daughter, he doesn't protect you from harm. He gets run over at work. And a lot of people like him but men don't respect him and they won't follow him. He's very nice, but sometimes he is the one who allows the harm. Mr. Nice guy thinks this, I don't harm anyone. No, but you're passivity and your cowardness allows others to do harm. Number five, the selfish dad. He's so busy with his hobbies, his fishing, his hunting, his buddies, his events, his fantasy league. He has no time for you. He's got work. He's got hobbies. He's got stuff to do. The game's on could you just please be quiet. The party hearty pop. This is the guy, he's the life of the party. Everybody likes him. Nobody respects him. He is fun. He is the, he has a good time. He's always got a joke. If you're throwing a party, he's there. If there's an event, he's gonna be the star of the show. But the problem with this guy you can't depend on him. So he thinks he's good at telling jokes, he doesn't know that he's the biggest joke of all. And he thinks, man, everybody likes me. Yeah, but nobody respects you because nobody's following you. Just like a clown at a circus. Just because there are people there doesn't mean they're impressed with you. The domineering dad. Overbearing, domineering, loud, sometimes harsh, religious. These are your military dads. These are your high-performance dads. These are, you suck it up. Rub some dirt on it. Do better. Try harder. They're just pushing all the time. They do well in military. They do well in business. They do well in sports. They don't do well in relationships. That's why they're at

work all the time. That's where they win. When it comes home to people, that's where they lose. The Mr. Nice guy, he wins at home and he loses at work. And then the good dad. The good dad, and I didn't say the great dad, 'cause any dad will tell you, we've not yet met the great dad. Any honest dad will be like, I hope by God's grace I'm a kind of a good dad. And if you think you're a great dad ask your kids and then they'll correct that. Okay. And as our kids get older I always gotta look at them and say, where have I failed? What do I need to own? How do I apologize? What did I blow? What did I miss? I do love you. I'm sure I made some mistakes. I'm sure I did. And I know some that I'm aware of and there's others that I may not even be aware of. The good dad is not perfect, but he's present. The good dad doesn't get it all right but he wants to. And the good dad says things like, I'm sorry. That's my burden not yours. What can I give? How can I help? How can I bless? How can I add value to your life? Not take energy from your life. That ultimately we all have varying kinds and degrees of father wounds. Now a father wound is an unhealed hurt from a physical, spiritual or other father. What a father wound does, it opens you up to an orphan spirit. Jesus says it this way in John 14:8, "I will not leave you as orphans." If you have a father wound, you have an orphan spirit. An orphan spirit is one of two things. You either feel lonely or needy. Lonely, you can be in a crowd. You can be loved, but something in you just feels like you're always out not in. Or needy. Some of you are gathering people because you need a family. You've got a wound and you're trying to just create a family. And it's out of a woundedness. It's not a healthy place. It's a broken place. That's an orphan spirit. And then number three, what happens is a father wound on earth blocks your view of your father in heaven. Your father in heaven is very large, but your father on earth is very near. And if the father wound is in front of you, it obstructs and blocks your view. It creates a soul equivalent of an eclipse, the inability to see your heavenly father. What happens out of this, our entire philosophical and religious ideologies. I'll give them to you. Let me say this, what I'm sharing with you is out of 25 years of Bible teaching. I was 19 years of age. I was walking in the woods, God spoke to me audibly. I didn't even know He did that. He said, "Marry Grace, preach the Bible, "train men and plant churches." That's what I've been doing since I was 19. God spoke something else over my life that day, it was a prophetic word that I don't know if I've ever shared publicly, but he said I've called you out from among many to lead men. The first half of my ministry, I did that as a big brother. This half of my ministry, I do it as a big father. That's my hope and prayer and goal not to be a big brother, but to be a father. There was a prophecy over me before we started the Trinity Church from somebody who didn't even know me in a pastors conference of 4,000. And he said, stand up. I have a word. I was like, Oh gosh. I don't like words from strangers in stadiums. I'm not a big fan. And he said, you've ministered as a brother. You're gonna take a break. You're gonna come back and you're gonna minister as a father. That's the season I'm entering into. I believe that this is the beginning of fulfillment of that prophetic ministry. And the way I see things is from the perspective of a father. And here's what I see. Atheism says, I have no father. It's a father wound. Agnosticism says, I may or may not have a father but I'm not looking for him. He's not looking for me. I don't need to know him. I don't care. That's a father wound. Deism says, well, I have a dad, he's far away. He's not involved in my life. He doesn't care about me. That's a father wound. Deism is a father wound. It's like the dad who walked out when you were little, you feel like God is like that because I'll tell you what, oftentimes our view of God it's either a projection or a rejection of our view of our

earthly father extrapolated out to the heavenly father. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world at current rates because their fathers are having children and Christian fathers are not. It'll be the largest religion on earth by 2050. Their view of father is that he's cruel. He's mean. He works through imposition, not proposition. He's a bully. That's a father wound. And you know what's interesting is that men tend to father out of their view of God, the father. If you think God is a bully, you're not gonna be a good dad. Liberals tend to see God as a permissive dad. He buys my beer, lets me smoke weed, make my own decisions. And what he is, he's more like the idiot, big brother. Some of you had a dad like that. He acted like the idiot big brother, not the wise father. He enabled you. He didn't lead you. That's the view of liberal, progressive, red letter Christianity. In addition, there is feminism which says we've been so hurt by men, we're just gonna worship God as mother. That's a deep and profound father wound. We saw this week, there was a Congressman he's a Methodist clergy. He was praying. And I put that in quotes. And he closed his prayer with amen and awoman Which is asinain. Just to tell you what I'm thinking. And they asked him why. And you know why he demonstrated a deep and profound father wound. Well, if we're gonna say man we need to say woman. Sir, not to get all binary on you, sir, amen is a Hebrew word that means, yes, Lord I agree with you. Has nothing to do with gender. But when you have a father wound, the word man becomes a trigger. And all of a sudden you go into critical theory, feminism, your women's studies course spelled with a Y and you act like a drunk. Okay. So amen and awoman, it's like. There are whole and he's part of the United Methodist, which is a post state. You could go to some of these churches and their translation of the Bible intentionally omits any reference to masculine attributes of God or us. So you will not hear that God is father or that you are a son of God. They'll use something called the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. The Old Revised Standard Version was a great version. The version of that I preach out of, the English Standard Version is built on that foundation. The New Revised Standard Version started off with a father wound as the translation command. Remove all masculine language. So it doesn't see the God as father and you're a son of God. You can go to one of those churches and they can read the Bible to you, you can be there your whole life. And because the father of lies was overseeing the translating, he's lying to you that you have a real father. And as a result, the father wound dominates the reading of the Bible in whole denominations of what is supposed to be Christian faith. God is not father he's creator and you're not a son of God, you're a child of God. And that's not what it says. And our job is not to be God's editors but God's messengers. And if we disagree, then we're wrong. And we do something called repent, which is saying, you're right, I'm wrong. If one of us needs to change, I assume it's me. This is what happens when God is a father. He has authority to tell you you're wrong and to tell you to change. And as soon as you remove that, you remove Christianity. And let me say this as well, this is the most loving thing I can tell you, because if you don't understand the fatherhood of God, and if you're unwilling to heal from your father wound, you will lose God's anointing on your life. So here's how you overcome a father wound. You forgive the father that hurt you so you can be healed by the father who loves you. Until you forgive your earthly father, that bitterness keeps you connected to the father of lies. And by forgiving them, then you're inviting God, the father, you're inviting the heavenly father to heal the wound that was caused by your earthly father. I'll give you an example. This is where some of you, your problem is not prayer, your problem is father. Once we fix the father problem,

the prayer problem will fix itself. Kids talk to dads who love them. If you don't know your dad, or you don't even know that your dad loves you, talking to him is not something that's going to come very naturally to you. There's a story in the old Testament, a guy named Joseph. His brothers betrayed him. He was thrown in a hole. He was sold into slavery. He was falsely accused of rape. He had a political career that was very complicated. He rose up to be the second in command, literally in the Jesus seat, at the right hand of the Pharaoh in Egypt. I preached on this at the end of Genesis some years ago. And they say that the reason that Joseph was so blessed is because he forgave so much. And they would say the degree of the forgiveness is commensurate to the degree of the anointing. Meaning the more you forgive, the more anointed you will be. The reason that Joseph could raise so high is because he forgave so deep. Here's the key to the Joseph story. Everyone knows that he forgave his brothers. The key is he had to forgive his father. The whole problem in Joseph's life was that his dad played favorites. Here's my favorite. You guys go to work. You stay home. You guys good luck. I'm buying him a brand new coat of many colors and he's gonna parade around like a peacock. And if that's your little brother, you're gonna beat him. And what happens is not only did he need to forgive his brothers, he needed to forgive his father. Here's what I'm telling you. If you have conflict with a sibling, it is probably because of the failure of your father. Oftentimes like why don't we get along? Well, it's because if your dad played favorites or your dad allowed your mom to play favorites it led to rivalry, dissension, and faction in your family. And ultimately you need to forgive your father because he architected a family system that set you up for conflict and failure, not relationship and success. So the key is forgiving. Overcoming the father wound and lifting the curse is forgiving the one who hurt you and then welcoming the one who can heal you. So let me talk about healing a father wound. Jesus gets into this in John 14:1-18. I'll just read it and make a few observations. And again, Jesus is the what of God? He's the son of God. See if we lose this language, we lose everything. God is a father, Jesus is the son of God. "In my father's house," so here's the big idea. Housing should come from dads, not governments. "In my father's house are many rooms. "And if I go," Jesus was in the father's house. The son of God came down to the earth. He's gonna die for our sin and rise as our savior and return, "To prepare a place for you. "I will come again and take you to myself "that where I am, you may also be. "Jesus said to him, I am the way the truth and life. "No one comes to the father, except through me. "If you had known me, you would have known my father also "from now on, you do know him and have seen him. "Philip said to him, Lord, show us the father. "And it is enough for us." You can't show the father, He's invisible, immaterial. It'd be a graven image and a violation of the 10 commandments to do that. "But Jesus said to him, "whoever has seen me has seen the father. "Believe me that I am in the father and the father is in me. "And I will ask the father "and He will give you another helper to be with you forever. "Even the spirit of truth, you know him "for He dwells with you and will be in you. "I will not leave you as what? Orphans." A couple of things. Jesus is our big brother. God is our father and heaven is the father's house. So let me say this man, one of the first things that we need to make sure is that the environment of the father's house is in our house. Men will come in and they'll say, I'm the King of my castle. You're not a King and this ain't your castle. This is an outpost for the King in his castle. And we wanna have the culture of the father's house live in our house. Number two. The spirit brings us to Jesus, Jesus brings us to the father. First time I said this was in a stadium with maybe six or

7,000 men. And they all took a breath. It was a shocking moment. Jesus says something that's very familiar to Christians. And that is, I am the way the truth and the life. What's the next part? No one comes to the father, but by me. The Holy spirit brings you to Jesus for forgiveness. Jesus brings you to the father for healing. I believe that the problem that many of you have, you are Christians. You do belong to Jesus. Your sins are forgiven, but you don't know the father. You don't trust the father. You're not warm and intimate in your relationship with the father. And that journey of salvation is that the spirit brings you to Jesus. And Jesus brings you to the father. Some of you need to complete that journey by getting to know God as father. That many churches will focus a lot on the Holy spirit, Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Many of angelical and reform churches will focus on Jesus. Basically no one focuses on the father. There are far less books written on the father. There are far less sermons preached about the father. And as a result, there is a profound father wound. Number three, like father, like son Jesus is the perfect reflection of the father on earth. When He says you've seen me, you've seen the father. It tells us in Genesis 1, that we're made in the image and likeness of God. It tells us in Colossians 1, I think around verse 15 off of memory. It says that He is the image of the invisible God. The word there in the original Greek is icon. Some religions are like, we have icons. We don't, we have Jesus. If we wanna see God we don't look at something made by man. We look to the one who made man, His name is Jesus. And when you and I look in the mirror, a mirror has one job and that is to accurately reflect our image. God made you and I to be His mirrors. We are to reflect His character to the earth and we sin and we don't do that. Jesus comes as the perfect unbroken mirror and He reflects the father. How many of you love Jesus, like Jesus, trust Jesus, appreciate Jesus and not sure you feel the same way about the father? If you love Jesus, that's the father's love. If you trust Jesus, that's ultimately the same character of Christ is in the father because like father like son. I meet people all the time like, I could pray to Jesus. I can't pray to the father. I feel like the Holy Spirit's the weird one. Jesus is the nice one. And the father is the mean one. That's not how this works. Jesus says, everything that I am, say and do is a perfect reflection of the father, heart of God toward you. Some of you didn't know that. I know that there are people in this room, I know that there are people online, I know that there are many women who can't even pray to God as father, because that word is a trigger for trauma. And it needs to be a place of healing, okay? That the father needs to heal the place that the other father damaged and stained. In addition, Jesus was orphaned so you could be adopted. He says, I will not leave you as orphans. The context here in John is that in this section, this is the final week of Jesus' life on earth. I preached the whole gospel of John. We're into the last week of Jesus' life. He's gonna go die on the cross. You know what Jesus, the son of God is going to do on the cross? He is going to be orphaned so that you could be adopted. He went to the cross and he cries out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" You know what that was? That was the orphan spirit came upon Jesus. Jesus, the son of God. God loves you, my friend. Jesus Christ was orphaned so that you could be adopted. He took your place as an orphan so you could take his place as a son. That's why the language of the Bible oftentimes is that to become a Christian is to be adopted. Jesus was orphaned so that you could be adopted. Lastly, God replaces the orphan spirit with the Holy spirit. Okay. He replaces the orphan spirit with the Holy spirit. Here's Jesus' secret to prayer. Luke 11:1 and 2, "Jesus was praying." If Jesus needed to pray, do we need to pray? Yeah. Yeah. "In a certain place."

Sometimes you gotta shut your phone off, you gotta go for a walk. You gotta find a quiet place in your house. "And when He finished, one of his disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray. "John, the baptizer, he had a class for his disciples. "And he said to them, when you pray say," What's the first word? Father. You know what? When you know, God as father, prayer just happens naturally. If you don't know God as father, prayer is completely unnatural. My kids talk to me in a way that strangers that have never met me don't and I don't have a class for them. Every church that has a class on prayer, I love them and I know this sounds a little judgy. I feel like if they taught everybody who the father was they wouldn't maybe need that class. In the same way we don't have a class for children in the back, how to talk to your dad. We just assume they're gonna figure that out if their dad loves them and is present in their life. Your heavenly father loves you and He's present in your life. You need to focus less on prayer and more on Him. And you'll find yourself just talking to Him. And he says, so the first important word of prayer is father, what? Hallowed, respect, reverence be your name. That prayer is ultimately like two pedals on a bike. It's knowing who God is. And it's knowing who you are. Once you know who God is and who you are, then that relationship starts to gain some forward progress and momentum. Now what's really interesting with the words of Jesus Christ here is that in the old Testament, there are many fathers. There are whole genealogies with fathers. Names of father, after father, after father but in the entirety of the old Testament God is only referred to as father some 15 times. And it's always nationally for the people of God, it's not personally for an individual meaning it's not an individual saying he's my father and we have this warm, personal relationship. History is forever altered on the lips of Jesus Christ. Jesus comes. What do you think his favorite title for God is? Father. Because he's the son of God. There is no indication that any religious leader of any significance or note in the history of the nation of Israel ever referred to God as father personally and publicly until Jesus. Jesus' words changed the world. And it forever altered our view of God. 65 times in Matthew, Mark, and Luke what it's called the synoptic gospels, Jesus refers to God as father. About a hundred times in John's gospel, He refers to God as father. In the first four books of the new Testament, 165 times Jesus refers to God as father. Jesus refers to God as father. And he tells us when you pray, pray like me, father. Now Jesus can pray to God as father because he is the son of God. And you and I are put in the position of sonship so that we too can pray that way. And sometimes this word will get translated as abba. Scholars used to think that this word father meant daddy, it doesn't. It means father. More recent scholars from the semitic origins of the original word indicate it's not just a word that little kids use to refer to their dad but also grown adults. So my oldest daughter, you'll meet her in a moment, she's married. My son's engaged. Here's what they don't call me, daddy. My six foot two son, can call me dad or father. But if he's calling me daddy with a binky, I've failed. Right? Like, I failed. A father is a warm, respectful term that you can refer to your dad throughout the whole of life whether he's 80 and you're 60 or you're two and he's 22. And that's the language that Jesus is using. Let me do these last two things. And this is gonna be long. You're welcome. That wasn't an apology. That was a recognition of this blessing to you. Here's the two things. How do you see God? And how do you see yourself? Is God your father or your master? "Because you are sons," Galatians 4:6-7. "God has sent the spirit of his son. "He replaces the spirit of orphanship "with the spirit of sonship, "in our hearts, crying Abba father." The Holy spirit causes you to cry out to God as father. "So you're no longer a slave but a son

"and if a son an heir through God." God as master versus father. A master uses you, a father blesses you. You serve a master, a father serves you. A master motivates you by fear, punishment. A father motivates you by love. I believe the best for you. A master beats you down. A father builds you up. And a master has no grace for you or an inheritance. A father has full grace for you and a complete inheritance. Do you see God as master or father? Number two, do you see yourself as son or slave? Romans 8, we'll get here when we get back into Romans after Valentine's day. "All who are led by the spirit of God are sons." Now I know there's some feminist somewhere right now and she feels like we just threw water on a cat. See it's sexist. No, actually, in that day the son had a legal right, authority, status and inheritance that a daughter did not in Roman culture. And what God is saying is they treat boys and girls differently in Rome, but not in my house. I have the same status. I have the same inheritance and the same legal rights for the sons and the daughters. I don't play favorites between the boys and the girls. In their culture, the men were actually offended because this promoted the women. In our culture because of our father wound, we interpret everything through the lens of feminism and women's studies degrees and a father wound which is why we don't have a national organization for men. And it's why you can't get a degree in men's studies. Just throwing it out there. Something to pray about. "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery "to fall back into fear. "But you have received the spirit of adoption." God chose you. He loves you. "As sons, by whom we cry Abba father. "The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit "that we're children of God." A slave is in a controlling relationship. A son is in a loving relationship. A slave is powerless. A son is empowered. A slave has a works based lifestyle. A son has a grace based lifestyle. And a slave is forever out of the family. You're never in. And a son is forever in the family. Never out God is a father, not a master. You are a son, not a slave. This is the big concept between the "Pray Like Jesus" book. I'm gonna bring up the co-author and we're gonna have a little bit of a conversation. She happens to be my oldest daughter, Ashley.

- Hi, Daddy.

- Give me a kiss.

- Just kidding.

- That's awesome. Your daughter can call you daddy. Yeah. You never call me that. And so you are our oldest daughter. We love you. We're so proud of you. You were married here about a year ago, on this stage just a week ago, and you're the oldest of five kids and you and I wrote this book together. And maybe just tell them a little bit about it. And then I wanted to ask you a few questions.

- Yeah. Sounds good. Yeah. So super exciting. Hopefully everybody got a free copy in the lobby but there's a study guide along with it. So we started this, well, you started this a couple of years ago as a YouVersion plan actually. It's been completed about 90,000 times, which is awesome. 90,000 people have learned about God as father in prayer. And we decided to turn it into a book. So last summer we started writing and you would send me ideas and I would send you

ideas back. And it was a really fun process just to reflect. And I think we both learned a lot just about our relationship with each other and reflecting on that and trying to make that helpful for ways that we've healed and worked through things. So that's, I mean, that's really the main idea is literally just all that you talked about learning to pray to God as father. That's the biggest part.

- And I just wanna say publicly, I'm so proud of you. I'll cry. I always cry talking to my girls. I know. And any man who says you shouldn't cry he's not had a daughter yet. But you're a godly, strong, brilliant, young woman. It's an honor to do the project with you. And we just wanted to maybe give an example of father child love and affectionate relationship. So maybe we take a seat and, I was just gonna start with a story and I just wanted to publicly thank you. Do you remember the wrap you up like a burrito story? So when Ashley was little, maybe you'd talk about our bedtime routine when you were a little girl.

- Yeah. So every night it included prayer but you would read me a Bible story. We would pray together. Just talk about the day and make sure I was doing okay before I went to sleep. And then you would wrap me up like a burrito.

- She always told me to tuck her in with a, yeah, so.

- I dunno why, but that's what you called it. So that was pretty fun. And we had a special conversation one night if you wanna talk about that.

- Yeah. So every night I would, I would sing with her. And so I just wanna publicly apologize for that. Yeah, this is not the lead vocalist voice and we would pray together and we would read the Bible. And when you were little, I remember there was one year every night, I would read the Bible and you'd be like, okay read the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter. So we read the raising of Jairus, every night she's like bring her back. So this little girl got resurrected every night. How old were you when...

- That's back when you had bangs.

- That's back when I had bangs. Yeah. Oh, the good old days. Yeah. I'm just sort of living my glory. Yeah it's good. But I didn't have a beard, so yes or no on the beard?

- [Ashley] I like the beard.

- Okay. All right. I prayed about that. Good. All right. Cross and the beard. Okay. How old were you when you first read through the entire ESV study Bible?

- I was in third grade. You tried to bribe me by telling me that I would go to Disneyland if I did. I didn't need the bribe. I told you I didn't wanna go to Disneyland. We ended up going anyways, but I did it on my own. Yeah.

- Yeah, we're coming out with a parenting book, "Bribing Kids God's Way." It's great. It's gonna be a best seller. It's gonna be great. And so there was one night I was tucking you in and, I prayed and you prayed. And then you looked to me, you probably don't remember it, I quoted it in the book and it was, it was a revolutionary moment in my life. And I believe it was tucking you in as a little girl that has led to this book in the sermon series. And you said something in the effect of, "I'm glad that I have a daddy on earth "and a daddy in heaven who love me. "It's nice that I can talk to either of you anytime I want. "And you will hear me and help me. Goodnight." And you went to sleep. And it hit me in the moment, I'm not just your dad, I'm His son. And if I can learn how He fathers me then I can learn how to father you. And so at that moment I was turning out the light in your room. And I felt like God was turning on the light in my soul. Like my little girl, you know, from the lips of infants, you know, the Bible talks about praise has been ordained. That at that moment it was like, I'm not just a father, I'm a son and I have a father. And that you were willing to call me and God father, it put this huge sense of opportunity on me that I needed to treat you in such a way that when you heard the word father it wasn't a trauma trigger, but it was a treasure trigger. You knew you were treasured. So I was gonna ask you, for parents that are, they've got little kids, we got a lot of families here at the church, healthy habits for a spiritual environment to help raise their kids to learn about the Lord and prayer.

- Yeah. I think you and mom did a really good job of modeling a life of prayer. You prayed with us and for us. And it was constant. It wasn't just that we prayed when something went really bad or when something was really good. It was pretty much every day we would pray like on the way to school. Thank God for things, pray for dinner. We had a journal that we would write out as a family, people and things that we were praying for. And we could keep track and see and cross things off and thank God for things. And we always read the Bible before we went to bed and prayed then and prayed that God would teach us. So the Bible reading and the prayer were always very connected. We'd do devotionals during dinner and things like that. And, but it was just constant. And I remember both of you just stopping in the middle of day and praying for us. And sometimes we were like, what's going on? And it felt a little weird. But now I appreciate that, you know, God brought something to mind for you to be praying in that moment and that you and mom were faithful to do that. Even in public places or in front of our friends sometimes. I remember mom praying for a lot of things like parking spots and, you know, He always seemed to answer her. I'm not sure what the deal is there, but it was good because we would pray for so many things and constantly but you taught us that even if God didn't answer in the way that we expected or in that exact moment it didn't mean that He wasn't listening. It just meant that He had a different answer or a different timing and that we didn't have to worry that God wasn't hearing us. But it was always a very unified thing that the family would do together. And that we would just keep praying until we felt like we had an answer. And sometimes that took awhile but it taught us to be patient.

- So you're bilingual, you've got a master's degree in Spanish. You love Spanish speakers. How is for a kid learning prayer kind of like teaching a kid a second language?

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don't have to teach them. You know, if you're not scary, they just wanna be around you and they wanna talk to you. And it's similar with just learning to pray to God as your dad. I mean, I learned Spanish starting when I was really little which helped, I guess your brain is more malleable and things like that. But prayer was like that. Like languages kind of just make sense to me, prayer just kinda made sense to me. And it wasn't difficult. There was no like formula or specific way of praying. There's things like the Lord's prayer that give us a model but I was never reprimanded for praying the wrong thing. I know we prayed some pretty silly things sometimes but they weren't wrong. And you always were just, you and mom were always very encouraging of just making progress and little steps here and there. And if we wanted to prayer on our own, that was great. You would encourage us. And just every little step we made and every time we wanted to pray, you would just encourage us to keep doing it.

- Let me ask you a couple of specific examples in your life. We were in the hardest season as a family we were transitioning from another ministry. There was a lot of safety issues. It was a very complicated, very difficult season. I prayed, God spoke to me and said that we couldn't move until you graduated. And so I came home and told you that, and you burst into tears because that was the desire of your heart. And that's what you'd been asking God. And I asked God and He told me, you know, Ashley needs this. And I was like, okay, then I'll do this. And then when it came to graduation, you were a great student. You were, I think president's award winner, best scholar, athlete, leader. And everybody was getting ready for college and you'd driven your whole life to go to college and get your scholarship. And we were moving. We had no idea where we were moving. We didn't know we were coming to Arizona. We didn't know we're gonna plant this church. We had no idea what we were doing. And so everybody in your school and your class they got to put on their college sweatshirt for their declaration day. Maybe tell that story.

- Yeah, so I wore a GAP t-shirt because I wanted to take a gap year.

- 'Cause we didn't know where we were going.

- I was just really like exhausted from being in high school just a lot of drama going on. And so we were praying about it and the desire of my heart was to like heal up and grow and grow in my faith 'cause I'd been to private Christian school my whole life. And I knew I wanted to go to a big university but I wasn't sure if I was spiritually ready for that. And so I just wanted to take some time, solidify my faith. And so I was praying about it. You were praying about it. And we came together and came up with the idea, God kind of showed us at the same time to take a gap year and go to Costa Rica to go to Bible College.

- And if your dad had ever said, hey, we're in a crisis, please go to another country, an 18 year old daughter by herself.

- Yeah. I went alone. And I was really surprised that you were on board, but we both felt like that came from God. So we had confidence in that, but it was very creative. I mean, we'd been

praying for these desires of growth and for me to just have a solidified faith and that's how He came to make it happen. I mean, it was a really cool way of everything.

- And how did that season, just with the Lord to focus on prayer and Bible reading and as a young woman, your own relationship with the Lord. So you obviously you borrow your parents' faith until you get your own, you had your own from a young age, but this really solidified it.

- Yeah. I learned a lot about, we didn't have internet cell service, I didn't have wifi. I only talked to you guys like once a month. I was there for four months.

- I know, we were freaking out.

- Yeah. I mean, I flew there alone. Like nobody spoke English. I had to figure out the currency. Like there were a lot of things, I'd just turned 18. And I think it was really cool just to like actually be disconnected from, I mean, first of all from drama and pain and just hard things that were going on but then all the only thing I could connect to was God. Like we had time that was set aside at Bible school for like two hours every morning that we had to just pray and do our devotional time. And there was nothing else that was expected of us. We had to just sit there and do it. And so I learned that was like a good habit that I would just heal a little bit every day. I talked to God a little bit every day and progress was slowly made in that process.

- And then lastly, you got married last year. How did prayer as a young woman, 'cause you better hear from God for certain things?

- Absolutely. Yeah. So again, I wanted to leave the country after college.

- Go to Argentina.

- I wanted to move to Argentina and be a missionary. So the desire was good. The desire to be a missionary and serve God was good but I kind of had some issues, I didn't ever wanna get married. And I just was kind of angry at a lot of men for different reasons. That's a different story. But thankfully Landon, my now husband, and I were friends and I felt like God, he's nodding right now. He's really proud of himself. So I was praying about being friends with him and what that was supposed to look like. And I'm a very black and white person. So I was either like, okay, God, I'm gonna marry him or I'm never gonna talk to him again. That's just kind of how I am. And so there wasn't like a lot of gray area for me. And so I'd applied for this job in Argentina and I opened up the rejection email and literally, Landon's cheering. I opened it up and I literally heard a voice in my head that said you're gonna stay here and you're gonna marry Landon. And I was like, but God, I wanna be a missionary. And He's like, you're gonna do that right here in Arizona. And so that's what I've been doing since then. And he works at the church here and I work for you at Real Faith. And so we've done our ministry together and the desires of my heart have been granted in different ways and translating things into Spanish and all that. I've been using all my gifts there, but it's just cool. Like every time I have a desire that I bring to God He

answers it, but usually in a different way than I expect. So it's been great to be just United with Landon in our ministry and see how that's even more fruitful than I could have just done on my own.

- Well, and I just wanna publicly honor and thank you since you're the Executive Director of Real Faith. The ministry doubled this year, December, due to, well, you set it all up. I just, I yell and then you make things happen. That's how we do this. But December I got to get out more sermons and Bible teaching than any month in my entire life, under your leadership and architecting.

- Millions and millions and millions of people.

- Millions and millions and millions. And so I just wanted to say what an honor it is to get Bible teaching out with my daughter and have you translating into Spanish, having you write with me. And then this week, Wednesday morning, you're gonna teach Real Women, here.

- Yeah, so during the sermon series, I'm gonna be teaching on Wednesdays, which is super exciting. A little scary but, yeah, it should be good. And so I'll just keep expanding on everything that you're saying in the sermons.

- So she'll apply it to the women here on Wednesday morning. We're gonna air it online Wednesday night and I'll teach Real Men on Wednesday night. So Real Women will air just before Real Men on Wednesday. I love you. We've gone far too long. We can cut a song. I'm gonna ask you to close our time in prayer, if you'd hold your daddy's hand and pray for the series and for the book.

- Dear Lord. Thank you so much for the gift of prayer that you give us Lord, that we can come to you at any time with any requests and you'll hear us Lord. I thank you for all the prayers that you've answered in my life and I pray for everyone that's listening to this sermon series, Lord, that you would start to heal any father wounds that they may have. I know we all have them Lord, so I pray that you would open those up and just come in and be a healing presence, Lord that you would just surround everyone with the Holy spirit and that you would just work mightily through your word and through the gift of prayer. Amen.

Q&A: How can parents model prayer for their kids and how do you incorporate prayer when choosing a spouse

- Hi, daddy.

- Give you a kiss.

- Just kidding.

- That's awesome. Your daughter can call you daddy. Yeah, you never call me that. And so, you are our oldest daughter. We love you, we're so proud of you. You were married here about a year ago on this stage, just a week ago, and you're the oldest of five kids. And you and I wrote this book together, and maybe just tell them a little bit about it. And then I wanted to ask you a few questions.

- Yeah, sounds good. Yeah, so super exciting. Hopefully, everybody got a free copy in the lobby, but there's a study guide along with it. So we started this, well you started this a couple years ago as a YouVersion Plan actually. That's been completed about 90,000 times, which is awesome. 90,000 people have learned about God as Father in prayer, and we decided to turn it into a book. So last summer we started writing, and you would send me ideas, and I would send you ideas back. And it was a really fun process just to reflect. And I think we both learned a lot just about our relationship with each other, and reflecting on that, and trying to make that helpful for ways that we've healed, and worked through things. I mean, that's really the main idea is literally just all that you talked about, learning to pray to God as Father. That's the biggest part.

- And I just want to say publicly, I'm so proud of you. I'll cry, I always cry talking to my girls, I know. And any man who says you shouldn't cry, he's not had a daughter yet, but you're a godly, strong, brilliant young woman. It's an honor to do the project with you. And we just wanted to maybe give an example of father, child, love and affection relationship. So maybe we take a seat, and I was just gonna start with a story, and I just wanted to publicly thank you. Do you remember the wrap you up like a burrito story? So when Ashley was little, maybe you talk about our bedtime routine when you were a little girl.

- Yeah, so every night included prayer, but you would read me a Bible story. We would pray together, just talk about the day, and make sure I was doing okay before I went to sleep. And then you would wrap me up like a burrito.

- She always wanted me to tuck her in with a, yeah, so.

- I don't know why, but that's what you called it. So that was pretty fun. And we had a special conversation one night, if you want to talk about that.

- Yeah, so every night I would sing with her. And so I just want to publicly apologize for that.

- It's all good.

- Yeah, this is not the lead vocalist voice, and we would pray together, and we would read the Bible. And when you were little, I remember there was one year, every night, I would read the Bible, and you'd be like, "Okay, read the story of the raising of Jairus's daughter." So we read the raising of Jairus every night, she's like, "Bring her back." So this little girl got resurrected every night. How old were you when?

- That's back when you had bangs.

- That's back when I had bangs. Yeah, oh, the good old days?

- [Mark] I'm just sort of living my glory. Yeah, that's good. But I didn't have a beard, so, yes or no on the beard.

- [Ashley] I like your beard.

- Okay, all right, I prayed about that, good, all right. A plus for the beard, okay. How old were you when you first read through the entire ESV Study Bible?

- I was in third grade. You tried to bribe me by telling me that I would go to Disneyland if I did it. I didn't need the bribe. I told you I didn't want to go to Disneyland. We ended up going anyways, but I did it on my own, yeah.

- Yeah, were coming out with a parenting book, "Bribing Kids God's Way." It's great, it's gonna be your best seller. It's gonna be great. And so there was one night I was tucking to you in, and I prayed and you prayed. And then you looked at me. You probably don't even remember it. I quoted it in the book, and it was, it was a revolutionary moment in my life. And I believe it was tucking you in as a little girl that has led to this book in the sermon series. And you said something to the effect of, "I am glad that I have a daddy on earth, and a daddy in heaven who love me. It's nice that I can talk to either of you anytime I want, and you will hear me and help me, goodnight." And you went to sleep. I will always remember that. And it hit me in the moment. I'm not just your dad, I'm his son. And if I can learn how he fathers me, then I can learn how to father you. And so at that moment, I was turning out the light in your room, and I felt like God was turning on the light of my soul. Like my little girl, you know, from the lips of infants, you know, the Bible talks about praise has been ordained, that at that moment, it was like, I'm not just a father, I'm a son and I have a father. And that you were willing to call me and God, Father, it put this huge sense of opportunity on me, that I needed to treat you in such a way that when you heard the word Father, it wasn't a trauma trigger, but it was a treasurer trigger. You knew you were treasured. So I was gonna ask you, for parents that are, they've got little kids, we've got a lot of families here at the church, healthy habits for a spiritual environment to help raise their kids to learn about the Lord in prayer?

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- Yeah, so I wore a Gap T-shirt, because I wanted to take a gap year.

- Cause we didn't know where we were gonna live. I was just really like exhausted from being in high school, just a lot of drama going on. And so we were praying about it, and the desire of my heart was to like heal up, and grow, and grow in my faith, 'cause I'd been to private Christian school my whole life. And I knew I wanted to go to a big university, but I wasn't sure if I was spiritually ready for that. And so I just wanted to take some time, solidify my faith, and so I was praying about it. You were praying about it. And we came together and came up with the idea, God kinda showed us at the same time to take a gap year, and go to Costa Rica to go to Bible College.

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- After college, I wanted to move to Argentina, and be a missionary. So the desire was good. The desire to be a missionary and serve God was good, but I kind of had some issues, I didn't ever want to get married. And I just was kind of angry at a lot of men for different reasons. That's a different story. But thankfully Landon, my now husband, and I were friends, and I felt like God, he's nodding right now. He's really proud of himself. So I was praying about being friends with him, and what that was supposed to look like. And I'm a very black and white person. So I was either like, okay, God, I'm gonna marry him, or I'm never gonna talk to him again. That's just kind of how I am. And so there wasn't like a lot of gray area for me. And so I'd applied for this job in Argentina, and I opened up the rejection email, and literally, Landon's cheering. I opened it up, and I literally heard a voice in my head that said, "You're gonna stay here, and you're gonna marry Landon." And I was like, "But God, I want to be a missionary." And he's like, "You're gonna do that, right here in Arizona." And so that's what I've been doing since then. And he works at the church here, and I work for you at Real Faith. And so we've done our ministry together, and the desires of my heart have been granted in different ways, and translating things into Spanish, and all that. I've been using all my gifts there, but it's just cool. Like every time I have a desire that I bring to God, he answers it, but usually in a different way than I expect. So, it's been great to be just united with Landon in our ministry, and see how that's even more fruitful than I could have just done on my own.

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