

Prayer & Activism

- All right, best night of the week-

- Whoo!

- Best place to be, best guys in town, amen? Hey, welcome to Real Men. We're honored to have you, we love you, we're excited to see you, and if you guys are new, you just made an incredibly good decision. You're surrounded with the best guys, amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- We're in this together, gentlemen. The world has lost whatever is left of its freaking mind, and we are the last guns at the Alamo for sanity, amen?

- Amen.

- All right, so welcome to Real Men and thank you to everyone who's joining us online. And let me say, we are here to build men up to bless women and children. And so if you are here, you are here because you matter. You matter to me, you matter to our church, you matter to our leaders, you matter to our God, men, your life matters, your marriage matters, your kids matter, your grandkids matter, your legacy matters, your business matters, and if we can get the men, I'm convinced we can win the war, so thank you for giving the honor of being with us. Tonight what we're doing is a little series on spiritual disciplines for regular guys. And so disciplines are just sort of healthy habits. How many of you guys have some healthy habits for your body, right? Where are my gym bros, where are you protein shake, tank top, AXE body spray bros, where are you guys at? You got some healthy habits, we still love you, man, we're praying for you, you know, we're all in process, no judgment. But please just, you know, get a towel on in the locker room. Anyways, some of you guys have got some healthy habits for your body, and oftentimes we don't know how to have healthy habits for our soul. You're a body and a soul, most men take better care of their body than they do their soul. And so for us, the spiritual disciplines are what are some healthy habits for your soul? And so today we're gonna look at two, and then we're gonna spend time around the table and in prayer. And let me say this, your table leads are the best of the best guys, they love you, they pray for you, they're gonna pray for you tonight, they'll follow up with you this week, if you need guys to come alongside, these are the guys who are here to help. And we want to be the guys that if you need a job, we wanna help you find a job, if you want to get married, we're gonna help you not marry Satan's ex-wife, get the right girl, get it lined out, get it teed up and off to a good start. You want to be a dad? We're here to help you learn how to be a dad. you wanna figure out your finances? We're here to help. You wanna buy a house? Mortgage brokers are here. You wanna start a company? Those guys are in the room. We're here to do life together and we're here to do life better.

- Amen.

- And part of that starts just individually pursuing what I'm gonna call the spiritual disciplines or healthy habits. The two today are what I'll call prayer and activism, and there are notes at realfaith.com, and if you're a note taker, you can find it all there. In this regard, prayer is preparing us to then be active. And I was thinking about it, my first two pastors, as a new Christian, were bow hunters. Any of you guys bow hunters?

- Yip.

- All right, yeah, it's great, you guys, it's good to eat protein that you've killed. That's just a general good rule. So my first two pastors one was a guy, he was a Navy vet, my second pastor was a big guy, African American, looked like Mr. T., played linebacker for a bit for the Dallas Cowboys, and they both loved to bow hunt. So my first two pastors were bow hunters. And one thing you'll learn about bow hunting, at least if you've ever done it or seen anybody do it, before you go backward, you gotta go? Before you go forward rather, I went to public school, I make errors, I apologize, before you go forward, sometimes you need to go?

- Backwards.

- You got to go backwards. So, like, in bow hunting, you need to retreat from the place that you think you'll have the best shot and you're going backward, and then what you do, when you see something in your line of sight, you pull the bow backwards so that what? You can then move forward with your arrow and then move forward with your feet to go observe what you've killed. Most men like to go forward, we don't like to go backward, but sometimes the key to going forward is going backward. It's like pulling a bow, it's like getting more strength and tension so that when you move forward, you move forward with more strength and intensity. And so prayer, what I'm gonna say is, like, pulling back, and activism is launching forward. So we're gonna look at these two twin disciplines. First, prayer is pulling back. I'll talk a little bit about prayer. I've got a whole series called "Pray Like Jesus," I've got a book called "Pray like Jesus." If there's some in the bookstore, take a copy for me for free if you'll read it. But prayer is communicating with God. Prayer is hard for men 'cause there's two things we don't like, emotions and words. How many of you have heard that from your wife, right? So prayer is where we learn to have emotions toward and conversations with God our Father, to build our relationship. So there are various ways to pray. Praying includes speaking to God. You could do this audibly or quietly. If you're at work and you can't pray out loud, you can pray silently, God knows your thoughts, and Satan can hear your words but he can't read your mind. And so, sometimes if there's something you really needed to talk to the Lord about but you want a secure line of communication like in some sort of battle condition, silence is where you're thinking something and God alone can hear it. So it can be audible, it can be speaking, and it's listening to hear from God. Prayer is both listening and speaking. Prayer can happen anywhere, anytime, not just in church, in your car, at work, at the gym, wherever you happen to be, and often includes other spiritual disciplines. So you might be studying the Bible and say, "I need to stop and talk to God about this." Journaling, "I was praying and some thoughts come to mind, I need to write this down." Or worship, you may be praying and then just start singing. And also when we sing together, that's

a form of prayer. So how cool was it just a few minutes ago to hear all these guys sing together? It's awesome, right? We put the base in it and that's the way it should be. And as we sing together, that's how we are praying together. So prayer is a lot of ways to communicate with God. But let me say this, prayer is absolutely essential to you growing and maturing as a man. You can't be emotionally or spiritually healthy unless you pray. And in addition, if you can talk to God and listen to God, this is gonna have a real side benefit to your relationship with your gal. If you can talk to her and listen to her, it's going to open up that relationship. Many men struggle with these relationships because they struggle with this relationship. If you don't talk to Him, you're probably not gonna talk much to others. If you don't listen to Him, you probably won't listen much to others. If you don't have some sort of healthy, emotional connection with Him, you'll have a difficulty having a healthy, emotional connection with others. So a couple things about prayer. Number one, prayer is something you get to do, not something you have to do. One of the worst things that religious guys do, they'll take things that we get to do and they'll turn 'em into things we have to do. Like when I was first married, somebody came up to me and they said, "You have to have a date night." I was like, "Don't say it like that, I'm hoping that there's a pot of gold at the end of that rainbow, I'm looking forward to it." You know, taking my wife on a date is not something I have to do, it's something I get to do. Talking to my God and hearing from my God is not something I have to do, I get to do. As soon as we take something you get to do and we make it something you have to do, it tends to become something you don't want to do. In addition, number two, God doesn't need your prayers, you do. Hey, let me just say this, God's gonna be fine tomorrow whether or not you pray today, God's not gonna wake up tomorrow and be like, "Dang it, Tony, you ruined my whole day, you didn't talk to me or listen," God's fine either way. God doesn't need our prayers, we do, it's not for God's benefit, but for ours. In addition, number three, prayer is not informing God but it's inviting God. Sometimes guys pray, they're like, "Why should I talk to God? He already knows everything." Well yeah, you're not telling God anything in prayer He doesn't know, but you're inviting Him into your life, your ups, your downs, your wins, your losses, your struggles, your questions, your decisions. And I'll explain all of this in a moment, but God doesn't need prayer and God isn't informed by prayer, we need prayer and prayer is how we invite God in. And let me say this too, sometimes guys will pray and they'll say, "I prayed and it didn't work, which means God didn't do what you said." Just so you know, it doesn't work like that. How many of you have got a son? Hey, how many of you have a son? How many of you don't obey the commands of your son? If you do, you're a terrible father and you should spank yourself. Hey, God is a father, you are a son. Sons don't boss dads around, sons open their ears and do what their dad says. And so, sometimes guys will say, "Well prayer didn't work, I prayed, I told Him what to do and He didn't do it." That's 'cause He's God. One of the benefits of God, you do what you want. And so, prayer isn't commanding God, but oftentimes prayer is how God changes us. 'Cause sometimes we're in something we're like, "Okay, God, here's what I want you to do." He's like, "That's not what I'm gonna do, but I'm gonna use these circumstances, son, to make you like my Son, Jesus. These may not be the things that you wanted, but these are the things that you needed. And as your dad, I'm gonna use them to bless and benefit you." A couple of ways to pray, just practical. How many of you are verbal processors? Okay, I am, I've turned it into a career. Yes, half of what I say, I just thought about a second before. And prayer is verbal processing. So some guys think

that prayer needs to be very formal, it can be very informal, it could be verbal process, you're like, "Okay, I just," and for me, how many of you guys, I'm not the lotus position first of all, I can't do it, I'm 52, I'm at the point if I drop something, I'm ordering another one on Amazon. I'm not going down for it, that's just too much of a commitment. So what I like to do, I like to talk to God while I'm driving or while I'm hiking or going for a walk, I like to be moving and physically active and I'll just verbal process and I'm just talking to God. And sometimes the verbal processing, if you talk to Him, it prepares you to talk to them. Like, before you have a big conversation with your wife, have that conversation with God, before you got a big conversation with your boss, have that conversation with God. It's verbal processing, it's also unburdening. There are times as men that you all carry responsibilities. Some of you have got a wife, you've got kids, you've got a business, maybe you've got some prodigal kids, maybe you've got aging or elderly parents, maybe you've got employees, you've got a big burden on you as a man, you're carrying a lot of weight. And then all of a sudden your wife gets sick, your dad goes to the hospital, your wife is suffering postpartum depression, your kid goes apostate, like, man, I'm carrying that load as a man. There are certain things that will crush you and you need to transfer the burden to the Lord. And prayer is where it's like, "God, I've done everything I can do. I've said everything I can say, I can't carry this." This is where Jesus says, "Come to me all you who are weighed down with load, my yolk is easy, my burden is light." What He's saying is, "I'm gonna help carry that load for you," or, "I'll carry all of that load for you." What men tend to do when they're overburdened, let's just be honest and have a conversation, men that are overburdened, they're overwhelmed, they're over-extended, what are some negative things that they tend to do to cope with it? Drink, drink, right? You're like, "I'll get drunk, that'll fix it." How many guys have gotten drunk and could testify to the other guys that that didn't help? I've never seen anybody say, "I got drunk, whoo thank you, Lord, that really helped, that was great," right? Like, if you're having a hard day, you know, if your accountability group is like Jim Beam, Johnny Walker and Jose Cuervo, I'm just telling you it's not gonna end good. What other things do men do when they've got a lot of burden on them?

- [Congregant] They look at porn.

- They look at porn, they are then self-medicating. Sometimes they isolate, they're like, "I have a lot of people and things bothering me so I'm going to avoid all those people and things." And when men get isolated, it's very dangerous. God told our first father, "It's not good to be alone," and he was perfect and we're not. And if it's not good for a perfect man to isolate, it's not good for sinful men to isolate. What are the things the men do when we're really burdened?

- [Congregant] Take it out on others and get angry.

- Take it out on others and get angry. Some guys, here's their emotional spectrum, asleep and angry. That's it, that's all you get, okay? So if you're carrying a burden, what do you do? Do you self-medicate? Do you isolate? Do you get angry or do you bring it to God who can carry it and say, "Okay God, here's what I'm struggling with," and literally pray that burden off of you. Some years ago, my pastor, Jimmy Evans, who's gonna come preach for us in March, he asked,

"How's your prayer life?" I said, "I'm doing great, I'm talking to Lord all the time." He's like, "How are your burdens?" I said, "I'm freaked out, I'm stressed, I'm anxious, I got a nervous eye twitch, I'm very stressed out." He's like, "Then you're not praying to God, you're complaining to God." He said, "It's not prayer until you've transferred the burden." I said, "Well, thank you, Barnabas, for that tremendous encouragement," you know? But it was like, it's true, if all I'm doing is telling God, I'm being crushed, but I don't transfer the burden to Him, I've actually not done what I need to do and what He wants me to do. In addition, prayer is unburdening, it's also forgiving. Sometimes you're just like, "You know what? I can't talk to them, I'm frustrated with them, I'm hurt by them, I'm sick of them, but I'm not gonna engage with them, 'cause if I engage I will enrage. Instead, I'm gonna go talk to the Lord and I'm gonna forgive them and I'm gonna bless them, and I'm gonna let it be between them and the Lord." Sometimes in prayer, 'cause sometimes there are things and people and conflicts and issues and situations, the more you talk about it, the worse it gets. And if you talk to that person, it's only going to deteriorate. So what do you do to get closure? Go talk to the Lord, forgive them, say, "Lord, it's between you and them now. I forgive them, I bless them, I let you deal with them." Sometimes we pray too, to receive power. You're going through something, you're like, "I've never been through this, man, I don't know how to do this." And this happens all the time in a man's life. He's strong in one season and then he enters into a new season, like, "I've never been married before, I don't know what to do. Never had a kid before, never lost a job before, never been in the hospital before, never had to start my career over, never been here." Prayer is where you're like, you pray and you invite God to empower you. "Father, I need your help, I need your Holy Spirit, I need your presence to get me through it." Couple of others. I think one of the most powerful prayers is a thankful prayer, we practice this all the time at my house. Dinnertime at our house usually a Bible is open, we have some sort of conversation wherever the kids want it to go, but I've always asked my kids, "Who's got a thankful prayer?" We always start with thankful prayer. And what I love is my kids are thankful kids because they've always prayed thankful prayers. My wife is a thankful woman. If you wanna change the temperature in your home, just increase the attitude of gratitude. If dad and wife and kids are thankful and they verbalize their gratitude and the specific people and things they're thankful for, that's a pretty awesome place to be. And so thankful prayers, I pray pretty much every Thursday is my prayer day. I go up to the mountains, I hike. So I'll jump in the Bronco, I go up to the mountains and I hike and I verbal process and I talk to the Lord and I always start my hike with thankful prayers. "Hey God, thanks for this, thanks for," and I'm just thinking about people and things that I'm thankful for. And I'll be honest with you, recently I think I did about a 12 mile hike, and I was gonna do thankful prayers and then talk to God about other things, I had so much to be thankful for, that I hiked the whole 12 miles just with thankful prayers. And I'll tell you what, nothing in my life changed, but everything in my soul changed. I was like, "You know what? I've got some issues and problems and complications and needs, but look at all that God has done in my life." Like, I was just overwhelmed. I called my wife, I was like, "Honey, I just hiked 12 miles and I just thank God the whole time and I thank God for you and the kids." And actually I'll be honest with you guys, I thank God for you guys. I was like, "Thank you that I can walk into a full room of men that want to be like Jesus." 'Cause I've been in a lot of rooms, but I've never been in that room. So much to be thankful for. And lastly, just to ask God, "What do you want me to do? What is my calling?"

What does obedience look like as a son?" So let me explain prayer, how many of you guys, let's just be totally honest, we're in church, how many of you guys struggle with prayer? How many of you guys are like, "Yeah, I kind of suck at prayer?" Okay, there's, and if you didn't raise your hand, you're a liar and you're lying in church. I've never met a guy who's like, "Oh, my prayer life is amazing." I was like, "Oh, you need to pray for humility." But here's the key to prayer, the key to prayer is knowing that God is a father and you're a son. That's the whole key to prayer, this is the whole theme of "Pray like Jesus," the book. Luke 11:1 and 2, Jesus was? He's praying at a certain place, apparently a place He goes to, to pray. When He finished one of His disciples, guys come up, here's what they ask Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Men don't naturally know how to pray, men don't just figure out prayer, men need to be taught how to pray. That's why we're here. As John taught His disciples, He said to them, "When you pray, say, 'Father.'" Okay, this is where I wanna land, this is massive, this is massive, this is massive. Most men struggle with prayer, and the key is, don't focus on how to pray, focus on who's the father. Because the disciples come, they're like, "Okay, Jesus, we're believers, we're Jews, we memorize the Bible, we grew up in church, we're spiritual, we believe in God, here's the thing though, we don't how to pray." Man, is that kind of humbling to admit that? Some of you guys, that would be you. You're like, "I've been at church my whole life, but I really don't know how to pray." Don't be ashamed of that, just be honest about that, they were, and what I love is Jesus doesn't shame them, He helps them. He doesn't beat 'em down, He builds 'em up. And here's what Jesus says, "Don't worry about how to pray, worry about getting to know God as your father." Okay? This is the key that unlocks prayer for men. God is our father, we are His sons. How many of you are a dad and you've got a kid? One of the most life altering experiences for a man, he becomes a dad. As soon as you become a dad, you have a whole new revelation of God. Like, "The Bible says He's a father, now I'm a father." Oh, now I have some understanding of how my father feels about me." How many of you held your kid, you were overwhelmed? How many of you held your kid and you just love them? How many of you pursue your kids? How many of you listen to your kids? How many of you serve your kids? How many of you sacrifice for your kids? And here's what I know, men, if you're a dad, you all do because you're those guys, we're those guys who bless our kids, we're the guys who believe that life comes from God, and we're not just sirening our children, we're fathering them. I still remember holding my kids just like, 'Oh my goodness, I have a love for them that I don't know if I've ever had this kind of love before, and I'm concerned for them in a way that I've not really been concerned for others before." How many of you, your child started talking, do you remember those days when your child started talking to you? How amazing was that? When you were little, let's say, when your child was little, I just kind of see this in my mind, how many of you holding your child, your child was little, you're a dad and they're trying to talk. Remember that? And you could tell they're like, like Pentecostals, you're like, "I need to interpret that. I don't know what we're talking about." And how many of you just in your heart, you're like, "They're not good at communicating but they're trying." You remember that? That's how God feels when you learn how to pray. At first you're gonna feel like a child, you're gonna be like, "I don't know how to do it, I don't know what I'm doing." And God's like, "You know what, you're my son." And you know, what I didn't need from my sons, my sons are in the room, I didn't need my sons to be articulate, I just celebrated the fact that they wanted to have a relationship with me and they were trying. I didn't need syllogisms, just mumbling was

enough for me. Guys, it's like a kid learning to talk. When you learn to talk to God, it's gonna be a little mumbling at first, that's okay, the hard part for men is to learn new things. We like to do things that we're good at. And if we're not good, we don't, this is why once you turn 40, you don't try anything new for the rest of your life, never. If you've not done it by 40, like, "I'm not trying it 'cause I'm not gonna be good at it and I'm a man and only do things that I'm good at," okay? But it's okay to start. Let me ask you this question, how many of you dads, how many of you when your kid pursues you and wants to talk to you, you drop everything to have that conversation?

- Amen.

- Amen? You're like, "My kid loves me, my kid trusts me, my kid wants to talk to me, my kid wants me to give them advice." God's a, father, you're a, son. This changes prayer. It doesn't matter how old you are, you still need your father, right? You still need his wisdom, you still need his presence, you still need his affection. Jesus, lemme say this to you, most men don't see God as father. So let me just ask you a question, Permission to speak freely. How do many men or most men wrongly perceive God?

- Judge.

- What's that?

- Judge.

- Judge. How many men you say, judge? like He's not there to help, He's there to judge. He gives you commands and orders, and if you disobey, He drops the gavel and punishes you. If God is a judge, does anyone love the judge? Does anyone pursue the judge? When you've messed up, how many of you are looking for a judge? How else do men wrongly perceive God?

- Untouchable.

- Untouchable, far away, busy, distant. Because some of you, your father abandoned you, and you've projected your earthly father onto your heavenly Father. Like, "My dad didn't care, he walked out, he didn't want anything to do with me, and that must be how God is." No, it's not how God is. God is like a father who loves His son, is present for His son, is proud of His son, and is there to help His son. Other wrong perceptions or misperceptions than men often have of God?

- Genie.

- Well, He's just there for the miracle, the genie in a bottle. And that is, "You know what? I live my life and, you know, in case of emergency, break glass and try God." So it's like, "Oh gosh, I think my girlfriend's pregnant. Lord, if she's not pregnant, I'll be a missionary." You know, you're trying to negotiate some sort of hostage negotiation at the last minute, right? And so in that,

what it is, you only invite God at the last minute and He is not there at the beginning. And many men see God as a boss. He gives you a job description, and then He gives you a performance review. If you did good, He'll reward you, if you did bad, He'll punish you. God is not a judge of His sons, God is not a genie for His sons, God has not abandoned His sons, God is not a boss to His sons, God is a father to His sons, He's a father to His sons. I'll prove it to you, in the Old Testament, there's a lot of fathers listed, it's a patriarchal book, father, son, father, son, father, son, father, son, but rarely in the Old Testament is God referred to by His people as a father, perhaps on 15 occasions, Jesus comes along, we just read the words of Jesus, Jesus is the what of God? It's the Son of God. Do you know what that means? He's our big brother, He's our big brother. How many of you wanted to be like your big brother when you grew up? Okay, Jesus is our big brother, we want to be God's sons who grow up to be like our big brother, the Son of God. Jesus comes and He starts teaching about God. Now, if you've been here for any length of time, you know the answer, but what do you think the most common name that Jesus used to refer to God? Father. Again, we looked at it, Our Father. So I just feel inclined in the Spirit to say this. Jesus says, "When you pray, pray like this," whose father?

- Our Father.

- Our Father. What this means is you're one of His sons. You need to have that identity on you, and then you will live up to the name that He has given you. Paul says this in Galatians and Romans, "You are the sons of God." You are the sons of God, God is your father and He has adopted you to be His son. This changes everything for a man. How many of you wish you had a loving, powerful, wise, generous, constantly available father who pursued you? It'll change our whole life, right? Well, we wanna be those guys for our kids, but the Father is that way to His kids. This is why, I'm way off on a rabbit trail, men struggle with the love of God, because we tend to think of God as something other than a father. If you are a son and He is a father, how many of you understand that there is a special unique love between a father and a son? Not speaking anything negative of daughters, I've got two I love with my whole heart, but there is a love connection that is masculine, that is strong, that is dignified, that is honorable between a father and a son. For you to love God, is for you to be a son who is loved by a father, and in return loves your father. So Jesus comes along as the Son of God, His number one title for God is Father. 65 times in Matthew's gospel, as well as Luke, Matthew, Mark and Luke, I should say, about 65 times, He refers to God as Father, over a hundred times in the Gospel of John, Jesus refers to God as Father. Why does Jesus call God in the four gospels Father 165 times? Because He is and we tend to forget, we tend to take our earthly father and then project that onto our Heavenly Father. What we need to do is get to know our earthly father by first knowing our Heavenly Father. Once you know what that Father is, you know what Father should be like. Jesus calls God Father in the four gospels 165 times, there is zero evidence that any individual before Jesus called God, Father. And then Jesus says, "He is the Father, I am the Son, and when you pray, pray, Our Father, now you are an adopted son, part of the family." Let me say this, men, you're not an orphan, you're a son, you're not a problem, you're a son, you're not a failure, you're a son, you're not damaged, you're adopted, you are the sons of God.

- Amen.

- Everything in this culture wants you to think that you are something else than the Father says that you are. You are not daughters of God, you are sons of God.

- Amen.

- I want that on you and I want that in you because that will help you to learn how to pray and live in relationship with the Father. Jesus changed the course of world history. Before Jesus nobody was saying, "God's my Father." And Jesus says, "He is my Father and He is our Father." And this is where, I'll say one other thing with prayer. Oftentimes, the Bible talks about praying with one specific action added to prayer, the laying on of hands, okay? Let me say this, to become a Christian, to become a son of God means that the Father has put His hand on you. He has said, "This is my son in whom I'm well pleased, the Holy Spirit is going to dwell in this man and he is going to become like his big brother, the Son of God." And then what God does, because you men are heads, you're the heads of your homes, if you're a single man, you're the head of your life, if you're a married man, you're the head of your home. God gives us the opportunity to lay hands and pray over people. Guess what that is? That's a fatherly ministry. What we're gonna do at the end of our time together, for those of us that are here, and you're welcome to do this if you're with a group online, we'll lay hands and pray over each other. You know why? Because the Bible says that there's a special impartation that comes. How many of you, you don't just tell your son you love him, but you hug him.

- Amen.

- You kiss him on the head, right? You give him a piggyback ride, you touch him. This is ministry of presence, this is spiritual fathering. Some of you guys, I just would so love for you to do this one thing that'll change your marriage and change your family, pray for your wife and your kids, lay hands on and pray over your wife and your kids. You want your wife to trust you, bring the presence of God, if you want your wife to feel safe with you, bring the presence of God, you want your kids to love you, to adore you, to trust you, to pursue you, to listen to you, bring the presence of God. Get with the Father in prayer, have Him put His hand, and of course I'm talking there about the Holy Spirit on you, and then go to people and lay hands and pray over them. Something supernatural is gonna happen in this room in a little bit. Men who have never been prayed for are gonna be prayed for, and by putting a hand on someone, here's what you're saying, "I'm here with you, you matter, I care about you, there is a God and I am interceding for you before Him, and I am inviting my Father to do for you what my Father does for me."

- [Congregant] Amen.

- Okay, that's what we do when we pray. And you guys should see it, I'm way off my notes, but I like to stand in the back, and here's what I like to see, I like to see your wives and your girlfriends walk in, take a deep breath, shocked and start crying because their husbands, their

brothers, their sons, their grandfathers are being prayed for and praying. It's amazing. I'm telling you, men, something happens in the unseen realm when there is prayer, especially when it is initiated by the sons of God who have the Father's heart.

- That's right.

- So prayer, I've got six minutes, which means nothing. So to start with my original analogy, prayer is like pulling the bow back, and then activism is launching forward with the full confidence and power of God's calling on your life. You can't proceed forward until you've gone backward, you can't have strength until you've spent time in the Father's presence. So I'll close with this, Matthew 26. This is activism, this is the firing forward, and the reason I belabored the point of the pulling the bow back, I think that's where all the work is, I think it's pretty easy to let the arrow fly. Matthew 28, here's what Jesus says, these are kind of His last words, this is near the end of His life on earth. "The eleven disciples went to Galilee, the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw 'em, they worshiped Him." We'll talk about worship in a few weeks, "But some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them," How much authority?

- All.

- You need to know this, Jesus Christ has all authority.

- Yes.

- Okay. "All authority in heaven and on earth." That's the invisible and the visible realms. It's been given to me. "Go therefore," literally in the Greek, as you go, "Make," what? "Disciples." Disciples are those who have discipline. The root for disciple and discipline, same thing. You can't be a disciple unless you're disciplined. So the spiritual disciplines are how we make disciples, it's disciplined lives. Of what? "All nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit." If you've not been baptized, let your table lead know, we'd love to sign you up for baptisms, we got a big one coming for Easter. "Teaching them to observe or obey all that I," what? "Have commanded you. And behold, I'm with you always to the end of the age." Here's what He's telling us, Jesus has all authority, Jesus has commands and we need to obey Him. And if we seek to obey His commands, He will go with us and help us, He'll never leave us nor forsake us, He'll be with us always until His second coming. So this issue of moving forward, until you get with God, you're like, "Okay God, what do you want me to do? Where do you want me to go? What do you want me to say? God, you want me to move forward, but first, I need to pull backward and get with you, and I need to hear from you and I need to know, and then when you tell me, then I will be active." Our entire culture is dominated by weak, neutered, castrated, effeminate, passive, weak, woke, inactive, worthless men.

- Whoo!

- That's our world. Okay? And if you're on the internet at your mom's house posting a critique,

thank you for proving my point, okay? So Satan wants two things. First, he wants you to be completely compromised and to deny your God, and if he can't get you to do that, his second move will get you to be passive, inactive. Passive men are the problem-

- That's right.

- Passive men watch evil men rule and reign, passive men watch the wrong men make the decisions. You can't be passive in your life, you can't be passive in your marriage, you can't be passive with your children, once your daughters hit their teen years, you sure as hell can't be passive, when your children make the second most important decision of their life, who they're going to marry, you must be active.

- Come on.

- And the key is this, passive men are a problem since Genesis 3. Our first father Adam, Satan shows up and what does he say? Nothing. What does he do? Nothing. And here's the big idea, if you won't be active, Satan will, if you won't lead yourself, Satan will lead you, if you do not lead your family, Satan will lead your family. The question is not, will there be a leader? The question is, will it be you or will it be your enemy? Will it be the one who comes to steal and kill and destroy? And the reason why so many men are passive and not active? Couple of reasons, number one, you've been brainwashed. You young men with a woke, apostate, ridiculous, insane agenda that old masculinity is toxic, it is not. There are strong men like Jesus Christ, there are courageous men like Jesus Christ, there are focused men like Jesus Christ, there are called men like Jesus Christ, there are anointed men like Jesus Christ. Masculinity is not toxic. God made you as men, you're men. You're God's men, you're God's sons.

- Whoo!

- You have the same Spirit in you that raised Christ from the dead, you have the same calling on your life as the Son of God did, you belong to your Father, you are loved by your Father, you're adopted by your Father, you're called by your Father, you're never leave, you're never forsaken by your Father.

- [Congregant] That's good.

- More than anything, we need men, healthy and active.

- Amen.

- Not just active, but healthy. The pulling back, prayer, listening, spending time with the Father, in the presence of God makes you healthy. And then you get active. Like "Father, send me into the fight. Where do you need me? What am I supposed to do? Where do I lead? Where do I take responsibility? Where do I make decisions? Where do I make a dent? Where do I make a

difference?" Passive men are not godly men, they're cowards. There's a little line I remember in Revelation, talks about all the people who don't make it into heaven, one of 'em is the cowards. There's no room for cowards in heaven, there's no room for cowardly sons of an almighty God. Men, you're more important than you think you are, you're more needed than you think you are, you're more rare than you think you are, your life matters, your decisions matter, your marriages matter, your children matter, your grandchildren matter. God loves you with a father's heart, God has a destiny for you as His sons, God has things to be done by you that only you can do. Men, I'm telling you, this whole world is just trying to make men castrated, passive. All of you young guys, here's what you've been told, "Just sit on the couch and bitch about being a victim." I'll just tell you, that's why your whole generation's got mental health, 'cause you're freaking crazy.

- [Congregant] Amen.

- And at the end of the day, if we just sit back and let this culture raise our kids, and let the spirit of this world rule our lives, and let the sex and gender and sexual nonsense determine our identity and our future, then nothing will change and everyone will suffer. Here's what I'm telling you, prayer, get with the Father and get His heart, get His courage, get His confidence, get His calling, activism, where you need to be active. Where are you passive, men? Is it fear? You just don't want the conflict? You don't need to be a bully, but you need to be active and present. Is it bad teaching? You've been told that the weaker you are, the better you are. We've got a whole generation of men that have got half the testosterone of a few generations ago, the average man today has got the same grip strength as his grandma did a hundred years ago. Literally. I mean, it is an absolute devastation of masculinity, too much passivity. It's time for you guys to meet with the Father and get active.

- Amen.

- Some of you are already doing it and I honor you for that, some of the guys around the table, it's new for them, you're gonna help them. So I'm gonna pray for you and you guys are gonna get some time together. Couple of things. Here's what we're gonna discuss around the tables. Number one, who would benefit from you regularly laying hands and praying over them? Guys, don't lay hands on your kids for violence, but for prayer, don't lay hands on your wife to control her, but to bless her.

- Amen.

- Okay? And then number two, how can we pray for you? And if some of you guys are like, "I don't know what to do," that's okay, you gotta start. Some of you guys are like, "It feels weird." Yeah, you'll get used to it. Some of you guys are like, "I'm not sure it's gonna work," give it a try. Father, thanks for an opportunity to be together, and Father, I thank you that we're your sons and I thank you that you call us sons. God, in a world where masculinity is under attack, where men are castrated and neutered, where passive men are celebrated and active men are canceled, we pray against these, the demonic spirits at work in this world. God, we pray against

the the Ahab spirit of just passive, indifferent, weak, effeminate, feckless, worthless men. And God, we pray that you would fill us with your Spirit, that you would give us courage and strength, that we would know when to be tough and when to be tender, that we'd know when to speak up and when to be silent. God, I pray that every wife of these men would have the best version of them. I pray that every child of these men would have the best version of them. And Lord God, when all is said and done, give us a tender heart, but a thick hide until we stand before our Father. It's not judgment day, and so we don't have ears to hear until we hear from Him. Lord, I pray for those men who have been passive, they've not been active. Maybe they're active in areas of their life, there's active areas where they're succeeding, but there's passive areas where they're just watching. God, I pray that they would be active. Father, I pray a special anointing on the prayer lives of these men, that they would hear from you, that they would have courage and clarity and confidence from you, and that when you tell them to move, they would be disciplined as disciples, they would do what Jesus said, they would obey everything that you have commanded us to be and to do. And Lord God, we pray, we pray for the sick culture we're in, God, where we're killing our kids, we're gender mutilating our sons, we're handing them screens to be raised by Chinese propaganda on TikTok and pornography and brainwashing and re-hardwiring, then we're wondering why they're depressed so we put them on medication, then they self-destruct with addiction, and then they're dependent on the government, and then they kill themselves. Lord, the world in its wisdom does not know God, and so God, we want to have our eyes open, we want to have our ears open, we want to have our hearts open so that we could hear what you would have to say, and we could do what you've called us to do. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

- Love you guys.