



## *SPIRIT-FILLED MEN PRAY*

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Spirit Filled Men | February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Sermon Link: <https://realfaith.com/sermons/spirit-filled-men-pray/>

Well, howdy, howdy, howdy, guys. It's the best time of the week. It's real men time. So make sure you park your monster truck, put away your machine guns. It's time for church. And, uh, a bunch of dudes all over the world are gathering together tonight, um, to worship, to pray, to learn more about how to be a better man. Um, and actually, surprisingly, a lot of women tune into this because they're hoping their men, their husbands become better men. So thank you. Thank you for tuning into Real Men this week. And if you're a senior pastor watching this right now and you want to figure out how to start this at your church, uh, email [hello@realfaith.com](mailto:hello@realfaith.com). We'd love to get you connected here in Scottsdale. And if you're a man watching, eating some nachos across the country and you want to eat those nachos at Trinity Church, come check us out. Come, uh, visit us at Real Men in Scottsdale, Arizona. Alright guys, get ready for an epic sermon. Here you go. All right, welcome to Real man. So good to see you guys. Best night of the week. Hey man. Hey, we're the new guys. New guys. Raise your hand. We love you. We're glad to have you. Welcome to all the new guys. You made a great decision. Your week in your life is about to change. I wanna honor and thank you men for joining us. It's a great privilege to see you and I'm happy to report for every man in the room, there's a thousand online all over the world as young men are tuning in so they can get built up to bless women and children. Amen. Amen. What a great thing we get to be a part of. It's an honor to see you guys. My name's Mark and uh, I'm gonna be teaching on, uh, prayer. That's what we're gonna talk about, spirit-filled men, pray. This is the last sermon in the four-part series on Spirit-filled men. And then after this little spoiler, we're gonna get into a guy named Gideon, and he's a mighty warrior of God. Struggles a little bit with cowardice at the end, gets a few too many wives, and we'll talk about that. And then after that, we're gonna get into Samson. I know this sounds crazy, but there was a political leader who was very powerful and anointed also like sleeping with prostitutes and porn stars and kept getting elected. So we'll talk about, his name is Samson, by the way. He's not currently a nominee, but anyways, we're gonna get into that coming forward. And those are the next few months and it'll be fun. But today, uh, we're gonna jump into prayer. So let me start with prayer and uh, we'll try to make this really practical for you men. Father, thanks for an opportunity to gather together, and I pray that our time together would really be blessed by you and it would be beneficial to us. God, I pray against the enemy, his servants, their works and facts that Lord God, we'd be able to focus and listen and hear, and I pray for every man live and, uh, in the room and online, that they would get a special word from their father to help them be a better son. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So I'm gonna talk a little bit about prayer. Here we are, we're those guys. And just so you know, we're the weird guys. We, we read the Bible, we're heterosexual. Uh, we wear boots, uh, we pray and, uh, we love studying the scriptures and learn about Jesus. Amen. We're those guys. We're the weirdos, but just so you know, we're the last hope for civilization. So, uh, that being said, I wanna talk a little bit about prayer. And for most men, prayer is something that is a little odd and a little foreign. Uh, because first and foremost it's about talking. And most women are better at that. Uh, and so as men, we tend to struggle with prayer. And for me, when I first became a Christian at age 19 in college, I didn't really understand prayer. It didn't make actually any sense to me. I grew up, uh, Catholic. I was Catholic. Any of you guys grew up Catholic? Yeah. All right, father Mark. Bless you. Okay. So, uh, I grew up Catholic and so we really only said prayers at mealtime and then sometimes at church, but they were kind of memorized prayers. And they didn't really have any conversational personal prayers. It was just formal and rote. And it was more like, uh, a good luck charm or a lucky rabbit's foot. I just say these and then hopefully God doesn't make my life painful. And he blesses me, but I didn't really know God and I didn't know about prayer. And then when I became, uh, a Christian, I was like, well, why do we pray? First of all, if I'm telling God something, he already knows it, right? It's not like God's in heaven going, I had no idea. Thanks for sharing. Like he already knows. And then in addition, if I'm asking him to do something, well he doesn't work for me and I don't get to give him orders. So for me as a man, I was like, well, if I'm not, if he knows everything, why am I telling him anything? And number two, if he does whatever he wants, I can't tell him what to do. So why are we having a conversation? And then something happened that changed my life. I became a dad. Any of you dads, okay? How many of you, right? And thank you, thank you, thank you for raising your kids. Amen. And so when I became a dad, I was like, oh, all of a sudden now I really wanted my kids, but let's say my sons, I've got three sons. I wanted them to talk to me and I wanted to talk to them so that we could have a

relationship. 'cause I love my sons. And uh, and I, I was thinking about this, something in my sons, they just wanted to talk to their dad. I could still remember, uh, my three sons who are now taller than me, which isn't a big accomplishment. But, um, you know, when they were really little boys and I first told them they were just trying to talk. You could tell they were trying to talk. And then eventually they started learning to talk. And then how many of you, as soon as your kids started talking, they never stopped, right? They're gonna talk to you about everything and they got questions. What about this? What about that? And I was thinking about that again today. I had breakfast this morning with one of my grandsons and uh, he's about four and a half months old and he just wants to talk to me. I was, I was holding him at breakfast with my daughter and he's like, he's making the noise and he's using his hands. You can tell he's got a lot that he needs to communicate, but he's not there yet. I can't wait for the day that he can articulate what he wants to tell me. And I can understand what he's saying. And I'm telling you that being a son of God is just like being a son. You don't just start when you're a little kid communicating. It's something that you grow into. And so for us as men, we need to realize that in addition to being men, we're still his sons. And the father wants to hear from us and the father wants to talk to us. And what this conversation of prayer does, number one, it builds our father son relationship. How many of you guys love your son? Love your son? And if your son came to you and said, dad, I wanna talk to you, he'd be like, that sounds great. Hey dad, I need your help. Fantastic. Hey dad, I just wanna run this by you and get your input. That sounds great. You've got a father in heaven who loves you, you're his son. And the conversation that we call prayer, it builds that father son relationship. In addition, God doesn't need you to pray. You need you to pray. I'm gonna talk about some reasons why. And when I, when I was a first a new Christian, I was like, why does God need me to pray? And the answer is, he doesn't. Whether I pray or not, God's gonna have a good day, but I won't. Uh, whether or not I pray God's going to continue with his plan, uh, but I may not. And so prayer isn't necessarily for God, it's for you. And it's not to communicate information, it's to build relationship. So lemme talk just about prayer from a a Christian perspective. And that is Christians, that's us, followers of Jesus Christ. We pray to the Father through the Son by the Spirit. Okay? So when Jesus taught to pray, and I'll hit this in a moment, he taught us to pray. Our Father, our Father, we're gonna talk about that in a moment. So we pray to the Father, through the Son, Jesus Christ is our God, our Lord, our king and our savior. The Bible says there's only one mediator between us and God, the man Christ Jesus, that God became a man to live without sin, to die in our place for our sins as our savior. And then he rose to conquer sin and death and to open heaven. So now Jesus came down, died and Rose went back up. And so now he is what the Bible calls our great high priest. He sits at the right hand of the Father and he intercedes for us and he hears us. And so he brings all of our requests to the Father because he's forgiven our sin and he's restored our relationship. So we pray to the Father, through the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. And God, the Holy Spirit lives in you. If you are a Christian or become one and, and the Holy Spirit, he knows how to pray because prayer is listening to and talking with God. That's all the holy Spirit's been doing for eternity. He's been talking to the Father and the Son, and he has been listening to the Father and the Son. So now he lives in you and he will help you learn how to pray. And some of you men, you've been praying to God for a long time and you've got wisdom to share with the other guys. Some of you, this is brand new to you. That being said, um, if you wanna learn how to pray, this is where I want to drive the conversation. Talk to God like a love child, not like a religious person. Some of you guys grew up in religious environments and you rebelled against it. You're like, it's too many rules, too much judgment, not enough relationship. It's cheerless and joyless and it's judgmental and it's just not enjoyable. I'm not talking about you becoming religious, I'm talking about you becoming relational. So when you think of prayers, don't think of the most, you know, holy, religious men you've ever seen a a story comes to mind. Some years ago I was in the airport and uh, there was a, a devout religious guy. I won't say what religion, but it was the time of day that he was supposed to pray. And so he stood in the middle of the airport and he was doing his prayers in some foreign language. And he was sort of back and forth rocking and making lots of noise and making sure that everyone saw him. And he had a religious covering on his head and he was wearing religious clothes and he was making religious, uh, gestures. And you know what? He didn't impress me at all because in that moment I realize he's just doing this. So people will think he's very religious and spiritual. If he was really religious and

spiritual, he wouldn't care what other people thought. He'd only care what his father thought. But I'm sure people walking through the airport thought, wow, look at that guy. He must be varsity. Actually, he's jv he doesn't understand God. And so he doesn't understand prayer. I don't want you guys to become religious guys. I want you to become the father's sons. So they came to Jesus and they asked Jesus a question and they asked him, uh, teach us how to pray, which is a good question. And what's interesting is it was a group of guys who asked another guy how to pray. Okay? So if you're here and you're like, I'm not sure how to pray, don't feel bad, Jesus had 12 disciples and they didn't know how to pray. This is where we all start. Prayer is like learning a foreign language. You're like, I don't know that language. Well, you'll pick it up over time, but think about how you would inform someone to pray. And here's what Jesus says, Matthew six, seven through nine. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do. Those are just spiritual, religious guys. They got big words and King James and they're beseeching stuff and it just, they sound very formal, but they're very, um, they're very ridiculous for, they think that they will be heard by their many words. Do not be like, who them for? Your father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this. Our father, the key is this to get to know prayer is just what happens when you get to know your father. As soon as you know your father and you understand that you're his son, you're gonna talk to him in the same way that a son who has a dad who loves him, he just talks to his dad. So again, those of you who are dads, how many of you during the day, if you're around your kids, they got a lot. They just keep talking to you. Do you ever need to look at your kid and say, Hey, if you ever want anything, ask me. They just do. Yeah, can I have a treat? Can I have ice cream? Can I stamp all night? You know, uh, can I tease you the dog? Can I have Red Bull for bedtime? You know, they got questions. And how many of you, you, you've got those inquisitive, curious kids that they got a question about everything. And if you got those kids, they're like, how does this work? How does that work? Why do we do this? Where are we going? When are we gonna be there? And what that simply means is this, they trust you as their father to be present and to listen and to communicate. As soon as a child knows that their love and their relationship's secure, they're gonna talk to their dad. God is a father. You're a son. If you wanna learn how to pray a couple of things. The most important thing is just really believe that God is your Father. And in the Old Testament, God is referred to his father only around 15 times, which is unusual for the length of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is about two thirds of the Bible just by volume. But only about 15 times is God referred to his Father. And it's always national. It's never personal. Jesus comes along. And honestly, world history changes and the number one word or name for God that Jesus uses, you know what it is? Father. Father. And so there are four gospels, Matthew, mark, Luke, and John that tell the story of Jesus' life in ministry. 65 times in Matthew, Jesus calls godfather a hundred times in John's gospel. He calls Godfather over and over and over. He knows that he is the son of God and that God is his father. And so when they come to him and they're like, okay, how do we pray? Here's what he says. Don't look to the religious guys. Don't look to the guys who are wearing the funny hats and kneeling down on the rug and getting in the lotus position up in Sedona, drinking herbal tea and smoking joints like Cheech and Chong. Don't look at those guys. Those are kind of the hyper spiritual religious guys. Instead look to children who have a good relationship with their dad. Okay? So when you go to the park and you're playing with your kids, when you're coaching a sports team with your kids, when you're uh, out and you see a grandpa who's really present with his kids, that's where you look to learn about prayer. Look to the relational guys, not the religious guys. And so Jesus is here revolutionizing the world because there is zero indication that any major religious leader in the history of planet Earth ever referred to God as father or taught God as a personal loving father until Jesus. And so for us as men, this changes everything for men. This is an unlocking game changer because when you hear that God loves you and he wants a relationship with you, it can be awkward as a man. You're like, I don't do conversation in relationship. But then as soon as you hear God's a father, you're his son, it unlocks something in a man. You're like, oh, well if he's a father, I'm a son. Well that's a different kinda love and that's a different kind of relationship. That's actually a masculine relationship, not a feminine relationship. And if you are a father or grandfather, your heart for your kid is only a fraction of God's heart for you. How many of you would do anything for your kids and grandkids? Anything? We all would. And God is a perfect father and his love exceeds your love infinitely. And once you know that, it

opens up your conversation and relationship about. And so, uh, when Jesus uses the word Father, it's Abba, which means dad or Father. Um, it was a word that grown men and young men would use for their dad. So my dad probably tuning in love you dad. I call him pops. My dad, uh, is in his seventies, so I don't call him daddy 'cause I'm not a weirdo, okay? Like if your dad's in his seventies, he's like, daddy, like you're a freaking weirdo is what you are. So God is not your daddy, but he's your father or he's your dad. And that's what the word means. Ava, it means dad. So a grown man could use that word because true or false, it doesn't matter how old you are, he's still your dad, earthly dad, right? Like I, I'm, I'm in my fifties, my dad's in his seventies, he's still my dad, he's always gonna be my dad. And so what Jesus is using here is a word that we can use for the rest of our life. Couple of things briefly, for those of you guys who are new to the faith and many of you are non-Christians, we're glad to have you. You can pray about anything, anywhere, anytime, anything. Some of you're like, I don't know if I should bother God with that. Let me just tell you, he's got big capacity, he'll be okay. And he also feels comfortable saying no. So just 'cause you asked doesn't mean he is gonna say yes anything, anytime. And what's really great about this is how many of you business is hard for you because certain vendors, certain employees, employers, certain companies, they're only open certain hours and you can't get access. God is always available anything, anytime, anywhere. And that means, so let me ask the guys that have been Christians for a while, can you pray in your car? Yes you should. Um, people here don't know how to drive. You should be praying the whole time. But let's say you're driving to work, can you just talk to God like, God, I got meetings today and Father, I'm kind of trying to figure out what to say here and decision there. Is it okay if you just kind of talk to your father on the way to work? Yeah. Okay. Uh, can you uh, talk to God if you're at the gym working out and you do so silently 'cause he can read your thoughts? Totally. Absolutely. What about if, uh, you just go for a hike? That's what I do on Friday is I do a prayer hike over the mountains. Can you just go for a hike in the woods and talk to God? Totally. And so God wants to hear from you in church, but he wants to hear from you outside of church. You can talk to God about anything. And that's what's awesome is some of you had a dad that you couldn't really talk to him about stuff 'cause he didn't care or he wasn't present. Or if he caught you, he would bust you. So you couldn't talk to him about what you were struggling with. God's not a father like that. You don't go to God and tell him something he doesn't already know. You're like, father, I'm your son. I screwed up today. He's like, yeah, I know, I know everything. Okay. So when you bring it to him, you're not telling him something that he doesn't know, but you are inviting him into something that you need him to be involved in. And so anything, talk to God about anything. Your work, your health, your spouse, your kids, your fears, your future, your job, any time, day or night, anywhere. Now that being said, I wanna talk about some specific benefits of prayer for men. And I was thinking about it as we were worshipping and true or false, at least for those of us that are in the room when you come together, tell me if this doesn't feel a little bit, um, I wanna use the right word, uh, but more of a spiritual army that's assembled. Does it feel like that? Okay. It does to me too. Does me too. So these are our brothers for the battle, okay? And as we were singing, I thought, you know, anytime, um, anytime, uh, a group of soldiers assemble the key for their success is a secure line of communication. Most of our technology regarding communication is started in the military. Whether it's cell phones or satellite phones or the internet or direct message. Uh, a lot of our communication, it started in the military and the military's always trying to find ways to create secure lines of communication. 'cause in any battle, if you have a secure line of communication, you have an advantage. Well, the Bible says that this world is not our home. And that when a man is in this world, he's actually in occupied enemy territory. And that every day you men are going not just to work, you're going to war, right? I mean, you go into work, you take your kids to school, you're trying to lead your family. Every day is war. And what prayer is, it is a secure communication line with your heavenly Father. He can read your thoughts and minds even in silence. And the enemy can't. Furthermore, when you pray and you pray in the spirit, you have a secure communication line to your father and he has a secure communication line to you. So I wanna talk about some specific practical benefits of prayer for men. Number one, in prayer, men go deeper in scripture. Lemme explain this. So I would encourage you guys to be reading your Bible. Amen. If you don't have a Bible and you're with us on the way out, just grab one. We love you. Tell your table lead. We'll give you one. Uh, if you wanna do a Bible reading plan, I've

got one on, uh, you version. It's a Bible reading app. It'll take you through the whole Bible in a year. And we put that together. But as you're reading, the best thing you can do when you read the Bible is just stop when you feel prompted and just talk to God. Okay? And then you're letting God and the Holy Spirit guide your conversation. What happens when you read the Bible is God shows up. The Bible's the only book that when you open to read it, the author meets with you to learn it. So the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible. He wants you to learn it. If you're like, father, I wanna learn it, please send the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will guaranteed show up and it'll help you learn it. And as you're reading it, don't worry about moving fast, but rather learning much. It's not about how many chapters you read, it's about how many truths you absorb. Okay? So some of you're like, I read 27 chapters. Okay, but do you remember any of it? Nope. I would rather have you read less and remember more. And in that it's just stopping. It's like you're reading, you're like, oh, that's a sin in my life, father. Okay, I'm your son, I'm stopping right now. I wanna talk to you about this. Father, I just read this in your word and this is a sin. Thank you Jesus for dying for it. God, I know you've forgiven me. Please let me walk in that repentance and, and next time, let me remember this scripture so I don't do that again. Sometimes you're reading it and it's like, encourage somebody. You're like, holy, just stop Holy Spirit. Um, anybody you want me to encourage today? And then if somebody comes to mind, assume what it's them. Just send 'em a text. Hey, I was praying for you today and want to check in. How are you doing? You'll just start to see that as you're reading the Bible, God is talking to you. And then as you pray, you're responding to him, you could be reading the Bible and it's like husbands love your wives. You can just go home and say, babe, I was reading the Bible today, said to love you. So how can I do that? How do you want me to love you? And what I'm saying is it gets you deeper in your Bible reading because now you're interacting and you're praying and you're obeying and you're activating. And sometimes you're like, I don't know what to pray. Just start reading and then just stop and talk to God about whatever comes to mind. Number two, uh, in prayer, men get a release valve. True or false, you men carry a lot of responsibility. Like if you're here, you carry more responsibility than most men because you're trying to take responsibility for yourself, for your wife, for your kids, for your future, for your company, for your ministry. So you men are taking upon yourself responsibility. The Bible calls those burdens, okay? And a good man loads himself up with a lot of burdensome responsibility. But at some point life gets to the point where it's more weight, more burden, more responsibility than you can carry. Any of you guys been at that place where you just feel kind of overwhelmed by your load of responsibility? Jesus says, when you get to that point where you're weary and heavy laden, he says, come to me. Uh, my yoke is easy. My burden is light. And in the ancient world, uh, if an ox couldn't pull something, they would yolk two ox together, it multiplies the the strength. And then together, two ox yolked together would be able to pull that plow, carry that load. And what Jesus is saying is, when the load gets too heavy, you need to talk to me and invite me in. And so as men, don't just let those burdens crush you. Invite Jesus in prayer to carry them with you. And this is transferring some of that burden to him. Like, Jesus, I'm doing all I can to find a job, but I'm needing you to give me an opportunity. Okay, Jesus, I'm gonna lead my family. But my wife and kids, there are a little resistance. So Jesus, I'm asking you to answer my prayers and to change their heart and work with me to get my family on the right path. And it's okay because let me say this, as men, I feel inclined to say this. Do we like to talk about our weakness, our struggles? No. Here's the classic guideline. How are you doing? Great. Great. You're great too. Right? And don't say no 'cause I don't have time to hear why. Right? Okay. But how many of you, if you had, let's say you were a kid that had a loving father, you would bring some of your weakness and struggles to your dad that you wouldn't tell to your buddies. True. If you have a good dad, you're like, I'm not gonna tell my buddies, but I will tell my dad, Hey dad, I'm really struggling and I need you to know this and can you help me? Prayer is where we bring our burdens to God and he helps us carry them. Um, in prayer. Men do something, uh, when they can't do anything. How many of you men, you're the fixers. God made men to fix problems. Some women would say God made men to make problems, but God also made men to fix problems. How many of you guys, when your wife comes to you, your kids come to you, they're talking and you're like, lemme just get through all the words so I can get to the action. Like, I don't need all the words. What do you need me to do? What do you need me to fix? What, what? Just tell me what to do. That's a lot of words. There's gimme the point. And so

sometimes as men, is it true there's nothing you can do? Like there's nothing you you can do, but you can pray when you can't do anything, you can pray about anything. And at least then as a man, you're doing something like, uh, I got a great, uh, text yesterday from a friend of mine. He's got a a little baby girl that got sick and she was in the hospital for days struggling and laboring with her breathing. Um, I love him. I love his family and I love his beautiful baby girl. Guess what? I can do nothing but pray. I'm not a doctor. I'm not in the hospital. I don't know what to do, but I wanna do something so I can pray. So I, I called him, uh, and just so happened in God's providence, God laid him on my heart and I called him at the very moment that he got some bad news about his daughter. And I was like, I'm just calling to pray. I prayed for him and I've been praying for him and we've been praying for him. And today we got, he's like finally sent me a photo. He's like, finally we're going home. Sent a photo of his baby girl in a stroller, you know, heading home with mom and dad. And it's like, at least we could pray. Amen. How many of you guys, when you're in it and, and there's like, there's nothing that anybody can say, there's nothing that anybody can do. But if they're praying, at least you're not alone. And God likes to hear an answer. Prayer. Just like a father likes to answer the request of his kids. And let me say this as well, sometimes lemme just make this very practical. So what if your wife or your child has something and it's not something you can fix? Can you pray? Yes. And what you're doing in that moment, you're doing something when you can't do anything in addition, uh, in prayer, men, verbal process. How many of you guys are like me? You're verbal processors. Okay, I've turned it into a career and also a way to get hated on the internet. So there's an up and a downside to this ability. How many of you guys you think out loud, you don't really have an inner voice? And if you, if you're gonna make a decision, you gotta kind of talk about it. So my wife didn't know this when we got married. My wife thought everything I said was something we were gonna do. Okay? So I'm, she's like, okay, that's what we're doing next day. I'm like, what are you doing? She's like, I'm doing that thing. I was like, well, I was just thinking about it. She's like, well you gotta tell me if we're doing it. 'cause if you're talking about it, I assume we're doing it. I was like, no, just 'cause I'm talking about it doesn't mean anything. I'm a verbal processor. That's how I come to my conclusions. And what I've learned is prayer is how I verbal process with God. 'cause sometimes before you talk to them, you need to talk to him, okay? And sometimes if you bring exactly where you're at in your process to your wife, true or false, you might freak her out. Have you tried this? She's like, talk to me. Tell me what you're thinking. You're like, I'm not sure you're gonna like that. Um, you know, let me get this cleaned up before I deliver it. You know? Um, and so for me, what I will do, I uh, I go every Friday on a i I pray in the morning. I pray throughout the day. Um, and uh, and I go for a prayer hike every week. And my prayer hike is usually a long multi-hour hike in the woods. This last week it was in the snow, which was awesome. And I just verbal process and I talk to the Lord just like a dad. I just feel like my father is here with me. We're going for a walk. I'm his son. I'm just gonna talk to my dad and I do it in the woods 'cause nobody's there. And then I don't look crazy, right? If I did this in the HOA, if I was the guy every Friday walking around like, why is this happening? Could you please my them fix this? They're like 9 1 1 9 1 1. But in the woods you're like, oh, that's just a charismatic guy. So, um, so I per hike in the woods and I verbal process. And what I find is sometimes when I verbal process to the Lord, I don't need to talk to anybody else. I kind of worked it out. There are other times that when I verbal process with the Lord in prayer, then I'll go home and I'll journal out my points and then I'll go talk to my wife or my kids or somebody or make a decision because I've already processed it with him. Now I'm ready to present it to them. Once you process it with him, then you can present it to them. And sometimes as well, I need to have a hard conversation with somebody. So I'll go on a prayer time with the Lord and be like, Lord, I need to have a hard conversation, but I wanna talk to you about it before I talk to them about it. So I'm not all worked up wrapped around the axle and emotional. And then if I talk to you, you'll tell me how to talk to them. And I think you'll prepare them to hear what I have to say. And a lot of times as men, we just want to get things dealt with and we want to check it off our list and we wanna move forward. And sometimes stepping back to talk to the father is actually the best way forward. 'cause if we just take a step, it could be a misstep. But if we meet with our dad, he could correct our steps. In addition, uh, in prayer, um, men get a lightning rod. Any of you ever lived in a place that has a lot of lightning? Okay, what happens if you don't have a lightning rod? Things blow up. Okay? You men, sometimes there's moments



and things in your life, it's like a lightning strike. You're stressed, you're frustrated, you're angry, you're agitated, you're anxious. Guess what? If you don't get a lightning rod to ground out your storm, you're gonna blow up. Or how many of you, like me, you've turned your wife into your lightning rod? Okay, the seasoned veterans chuckled. Okay? If you're a young guy, you're like, it's fine. When I'm upset I just dump it on my wife. Ho I'm just telling you that's a form of birth control right there. You don't want to do that, okay? You don't wanna do, probably shouldn't have said that, but that's what I'm thinking. Okay? Um, because then what your wife is getting is the most volatile, the most emotional, the most reactive, kind of the least, um, the least ready version of you. And it's gonna scare her or make her feel awkward in prayer. You can ground out your storm. And here's what I'm telling you. You can talk to the father in a way that you can't talk to your wife or your kids. You could be honest and raw and real. You father can handle it, okay? And he'll ground out your storm. So here's what I used to tell my sons. Bring it to your dad. Bring it to your dad. Whatever you're dealing with, bring it to your dad. And I would tell him I can handle it. Like I can absorb it and ground out your storm. 'cause that's what a dad does. Um, probably shouldn't tell you this story, but, uh, an example comes of mine. When we first moved to Arizona, my sons were not happy to be here. They didn't wanna move, they weren't happy to be here. And I picked him up first day of school and I took him out and I was like, all right boys, how was it? And dude, they told me, I can't tell you what they said. They were just like, and it was some colorful words and a lot of emotion. And I was like, thanks for being honest, right? I'm your dad. I can handle that, right? If you dump that on your mom, she's gonna have some struggles. But let your be honest with your dad. I can ground out your storm, okay? God is your father, he's your lightning rod. And I'm not saying you be dishonorable or disrespectful, but if you're already in a tough place, does he know? He knows. So come as his father, I love you. Here's where your son is at today. And you know, I'm frustrated, I'm anxious, I'm upset, I'm ticked off. I'm worked up, ground out my storm. So I don't blow up my family. I don't blow up my wife, I don't blow up my kids, I don't blow up my coworkers. And heaven forbid I don't go online to ground out my storm. Okay? And what I find is God can handle it. And if you wanna know what this looks like, read through books like Lamentations or the Psalms. There are some dudes in there that get real honest with God, super honest. And guess what? He can handle it. He can ground out your storm. In addition, uh, in prayer, men see their inner life. What happens when you pray? What's in here comes out here. Jesus says, out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. So when you start talking to God, informally, relationally, but respectfully, you're gonna learn stuff about yourself that you didn't know. You might be praying about your wife and all of a sudden you're like, I have bitterness. I didn't know that was in there. Sly tar, start talking about her. Um, maybe, uh, in you there's anxiety. I didn't know the anxiety was in there still. I started talking to the father about this thing and all of a sudden I realized like, I'm anxious. Like I have fear and stress here. Uh, sometimes it'll be pure joy. You'll start talking to God. And this is what I do on my prayer hikes, on my hike in I pray things I'm thankful for. I spend the first hour or so of my hike, here's what I'm thankful for. And what I find is what comes out of me is some things I wasn't aware about. Lord, thanks for my wife. Like, okay, I love my girl. I pray for each of my kids and thank God for them. And I thank God for my grandkids. And and honestly I thank God for you guys. I mean every, I guarantee this every Friday I'm thanking God for you. I really am. And so in my thankful prayer, I'm like, wow. Um, there's some things in there, some gratitude and some joy that, that i, i now learned about. And then other times things come out as well. So on, on my, on my way back, my return, on my prayer hike, those are all the things that I just wanna process with the Lord or request of the Lord or things I want to talk to him about. So on the way in, it's thank you. And on the way out it's, I need you and I'm inviting you. And when you pray, you learn about yourself. And let me ask you this. If you pray with your wife, things are gonna come out of her when she prays that you didn't know about. And let me say this, if you wanna go a level deeper, if you're praying with your kids, once your kids pray, you're gonna start to see their soul. See, right now you could see their body, but you can't see their soul. Once your kids start praying, you're actually gonna get to know who they are at the deepest level. So when you pray, you get to know you and whoever you pray with, you actually get to know them. Um, couple other benefits for men. Uh, in prayer, men create a non-anxious environment. And so what happens in any family system, husband, wife, kids, grandkids, things happen that bring anxiety into the system, okay?



And somebody stressed or worked up because there's an issue or a problem. The best thing you can do as a man is to receive that and intercede for that. And then what you're doing, you're taking the anxiety out of the room and you're the non-anxious presence when a wife or a child brings anxiety into the room. If you're a man and you multiply that with fear or control or judgment or ridicule, you'll take the anxiety and you'll just crank it up to a 10. And as men, we've all done this, right? Your wife's worked up, your kids are worked up, and so you just crank it up to 10. Now the whole family is very anxious and the environment is not very enjoyable. And what the experts will say is, you know, you have an anxious environment when there's no sense of playfulness, when there's no laughter and telling jokes and having fun. It takes a non-anxious environment for people to be playful and joyful and have fun. When there's an anxious environment, the playful, joyful disposition goes away. If as a man you can take those things and pray, just grab your kid. Hey, it's a hard day. I can see you're worked up. Hey, let's pray. Why don't you pray? I'll pray. Let me pray over you. Let me pray for you what you're just doing. You are reducing the anxiety in the family. Your wife is worked up, something's going on, babe. Hey, I love you. Come here, let hold you, hold her. 'cause here's the key. Most men want to touch their wife's body, but they don't know how to touch her soul. And if you really want to have a marriage that's deep, you need to learn how to touch her soul before you touch her body. And so if you pray for her when she's anxious or frustrated or stressed, what you'll be doing is you'll be inviting the Holy Spirit into your marriage. And what you'll be doing, you'll be connecting with and supporting your wife. Guess what happens to her? Anxiety goes down. 'cause now the man of God is here and the man of God reduces the anxiety for the women and the children. And it's simply by praying. 'cause oftentimes as men, when you get on our heels, you're like, I don't know what to say. I don't know what to do. I don't know how to fix it. I don't know what I, you can pray. And some of you men don't know how to be the leader or head of your household. The easiest thing is just be the one who initiates all the prayer. You don't have to be bible jeopardy winner, okay? You don't need to be. But if your wife and kids learn, when I have something that is good to rejoice in or difficult that I'm struggling with, I just needed to go to the husband and father and he is going to bless me, unburden me and reduce my anxiety. I'm telling you, you're gonna have a better household. In addition, uh, in prayer, men exercise headship, which is what I was just alluding to. If you lay hands and pray over your wife in love, you're the head. If you lay hands and pray over your kids, you're the head. Some of you guys need to know that. Um, your wives and your children have been waiting for you to pray over them. And uh, and some of you, the reason you've not done it is, number one, you think, well this feels weird. It only feels weird 'cause you've not done it. Once you do it, it won't be weird anymore. In addition, some of you men will be like, I don't know what to say. It doesn't have to be awesome, just needs to be honest. Hey God, this is my kid. Thank you. I get to be their dad. I love them with my whole heart. They had a hard day. Lord. I'm inviting the Holy Spirit to help them to calm down and help me as a father to know how to love and lead them. And God, I'm asking that we would have a growing, healthy relationship. And I'm asking God that we both would learn how to pray. All you gotta do is just be honest. 'cause here's what your kid and your wife don't need you to pretend that you're perfect. You just need to be who you are and then growing. And then they can be who they are and growing. And so lemme just say this, A bad prayer is better than no prayer. No true. A bad prayer. Prayer is better than no prayer. And, and praying is just, again, like a kid learning to talk. It's not always gonna be awesome, but eventually you'll get there. The last two in prayer, men get direction. And so before I make decisions, especially big decisions, I like to talk to my father. How many of you have got kids, maybe their teens, twenties, thirties? And as they're making decisions, they call you as their dad. Hey dad, can I run this by you? Hey dad, what do you think I'm thinking about buying a house, getting a job, marrying a girl? Um, you know, dad, dad, can I run this by you? How many of you, if your child in general, but your son in particular called you up and said, Hey, I need, I need you to help me put together a plan. How many of you guys would make that meeting you? Make it right? If your son's like, dad, I'm thinking about marrying a girl. Can we talk about that? Two things. Yay. It's a girl. And, uh, number two, yeah, I'd love to talk about that. Hey dad, I'm trying to figure out my career path. Can I meet with you? Could you gimme some wise counsel? Answer, thank you for inviting me in. Son. I'd love to have a relationship where I help you. You're a man, but you're also a son. And as a son, it's always good to ask your father for direction. 'cause here's what I know about our

father. He knows the future. We don't. So if you ask your father and he knows the future, he can direct you to prepare for that future. So what this looks like for me very practically, uh, this is my notebook. It's my backup brain. And uh, there are two, uh, there are two sections in it. One is the first section is for my family, the other section is for real faith. And trinity, my jobs and things I'm working on. And what I will do, I carry this around with me all the time. And, um, and as I'm thinking about people or God brings people to mind, I write those things down and I pray for them. I've got whole sections for each of my kids and my wife. And it's specific things that I'm praying for them, either that I feel burdened for or that they've told me to pray for. Awesome. Anything I could be praying for. Like, okay, dad here writing it down. I promise you I'll be praying next time I see you, I'm gonna check in and, uh, I promise you I'll be praying and I'll check in and see how it's going. In addition, in here, there are whole sections for decisions that I need to make about business or life or whatever the case may be. And I will actually put headers in my notebook and I'll pray about those things throughout the course of the day. And as I think of things or God brings to mind things or speaks through someone, guess what I do? I write it down. I find that planning and God's directing oftentimes doesn't come all at once, but a bit at a time. So if God's gonna remind me of something or teach me something, I wanna record it and report it so that I'm getting his plan and direction at whatever pace he wants to give it to me. And then what I find is as I'm praying and listening and he's revealing, usually by the time I need to make the decision, I've already spent a lot of time processing it through prayer and listening. And then I feel confident about the decision and, and the prayer I pray the most. This is the prayer I pray the most in my whole life. In James Walden, it says, if any of you lacks wisdom to ask God who gives in abundance, I pray that all the time. Like, God, I need wisdom here. I I need direction. I need an like, what do you want me to do? I don't. I'm not, I just stop and ask. And there's a prayer there that if you need wisdom, just ask and he'll give it in the same way. I know you men love your kids. And if your kid came up and again just asked you, Hey dad, I wanna do the right thing, will you help me answer? Absolutely. Thanks for inviting me. You're his son, he's your father. If you want to do the father's will and you ask him to show it to you, he will show it to you. And then lastly, in prayer, men uh, men learn to listen. Prayer is two things. Prayer is speaking to God and listening. 'cause that's a conversation. And sometimes men, I'll just tell you this, when you're driving in the car, turn off the talk radio. It's all about politics. It's not gonna help your soul when you get home. Don't just turn the TV on when you're in the course of your day. Don't be constantly listening to podcasts. It's fine to listen to my podcast. But other than that, turn those podcasts out. And it's, so sometimes what happens is God is speaking, but his sons aren't listening. Okay? And there's an occasion in the life of Elijah where he is alone. And uh, we looked at this back in our study of one kings and there's this mighty wind that tears apart a mountain and it says God wasn't in the wind. And then it says there was a mighty earthquake that shook the earth and God wasn't in the earthquake. And then there was a raging fire and God wasn't in the fire. And then God did show up. For those of you know the story, how did he show up with a, a still small voice or a whisper? And if Elijah had earbuds in, he wouldn't have heard it. And if Elijah was listening to talk radio, he wouldn't have heard it. And if Elijah had the TV on all the time in the house, he wouldn't have heard it. And I'm telling you that the father is speaking to you more than you think. And oftentimes we're just not listening. That's good. And sometimes it's a, it's a, it's a whisper, okay? And sometimes we think when God shows up, he's gonna show up a strike that power and might, and sometimes he does. But how many of you, when you're talking to your kids, if you raise your voice, that's not helpful. See, as a dad, I don't wanna be yelling at my kids. I don't think the father wants to be yelling at you. I want my kids to be listening so I could just talk to them. And, and sometimes the father is just a still small voice and he wants you as a son just to be listening. And and some of you are unaware of this, but it's called listening prayer. And it's something that the Holy Spirit wants all men to learn. And you need to know this. Um, you know, God says, uh, my sheep hear my voice and they listen to me. So let me give you this analogy that comes to mind. It's not my notes. In the ancient world, let's say out in a pasture there's thousands, tens of thousands of sheep, and each sheep is part of a different flock. And each flock has a different shepherd. What's amazing is every sheep only responds to the voice of their shepherd. Every sheep knows that's my shepherd. That's not my shepherd. So if all the shepherds call, then the sheep literally find their way to the right shepherd. What I'm saying is oftentimes God is speaking, we're not listening, but you need to, some

of you have a little anxiety, you're like, how do I know it's God? I know it's the voice of God. Check by the word of God, check by the people of God. But here's what I'm telling you. If you learn to listen to the Holy Spirit, you learn to talk to God in prayer and you learn to practice listening prayer, what I know is this, when he speaks, you'll be like a sheep who says, there's my shepherd. And you're gonna know his voice. And it's the most amazing thing in the world to know. We have a father who created the heavens and the earth. And he knows every day of our life, every long day of our heart, every hair on our head. And that he wants to not just speak to us in general, but he wants to speak to us individually and personally 'cause we're sons who are dearly loved and the Father is always communicating and sometimes we're just not listening. And it takes a little silence and margin to allow yourself to be ready to hear. Um, I'll just leave it. Um, I'll just leave it with that. Some of you need to have regular prayer time. Maybe when you wake up, maybe when you go to bed, some of you need to redeem your commute. Say, I'm gonna turn the radio off and just talk to God while I'm driving. Some of you guys need to go for a walk or a hike every week and just talk to the Lord. And listen, some of you guys need to hold your wife and just pray over her. Some of you just need to hold your kids and pray over them. And I'm just telling you that if you do, you're gonna be, uh, the best version of yourself and you're gonna be the most emotionally mature and healthy version of the husband and father that God wants you to be. 'cause you'll be a better son. And I love you guys with my whole heart. I truly do. And I don't want you to feel guilty about this. I want you to feel excited about this. You have a father who wants to listen to you and he wants to talk to you. You're not orphans, your sons. Here's a couple things for your, uh, group time. Are there any practical tips that some guys around the table would share with the men about what has happened in your prayer life? Don't get religious. Some of you guys are brand new. You're like, I have never prayed other. You guys are like, I've been doing this for a while. Here's what I've learned. Number two, what did the Holy Spirit highlight in the talk for you? And then thirdly, probably not shocking. We're gonna pray. And if you're new, you're like, ah, nobody's ever prayed for me. We're gonna fix that. Father, thank you for the men who join us live and in the room, thank you that you hear and answer prayer. Thank you for the Lord Jesus who has secured our salvation and adoption is sons. Thank you Holy Spirit, that you live in us and bring the spirit of sonship by which we cry. Abba, father, the scriptures say, and God, I thank you that we have prayer, that we can talk to you and you will talk to us. And I pray that that would continue to grow and mature in each of the men. And I pray that their homes would have growing joy and lessening anxiety as they invite the presence of the Holy Spirit and as they pray with their wives and their kids, and God, I pray for the single guys that they would only marry a woman who loves you and knows you, and that together they would serve you and pray to you, and worship you and walk with you. Because Lord, if we have a soul level connection with our wife, it's the deepest possible connection and it opens up all the rest of the relationship. So thank you for this transforming opportunity that you've given us as sons. In Jesus' name, amen. Love you guys. Thanks for letting me teach.