

# Lenten Prayer Group Guide

## Week 5

As usual, there are four sections to this guide in addition to the option to listen to or sing a song. Plan to spend about a quarter of your time on each section, adjusting accordingly whether or not you choose to use the song.

Also, it is important that you make sure that everyone understands at the beginning of each prayer time that anything said during the time is confidential and should not be shared outside the group without permission.

### Praise

Again, we begin with praise because it helps us to focus on God's character and tune into His presence with us.

Go around your group having each person read a single verse from the psalm and immediately follow their reading with a brief prayer of praise to God. Feel free to go through the psalm multiple times as you have time.

Psalm 22:22-24,27-28,30-31 (NIV)

22 I will declare your name to my people;

in the assembly I will praise you.

23 You who fear the Lord, praise him!

All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!

Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

24 For he has not despised or scorned

the suffering of the afflicted one;

he has not hidden his face from him

but has listened to his cry for help.

27 All the ends of the earth

will remember and turn to the Lord,

and all the families of the nations

will bow down before him,

28 for dominion belongs to the Lord

and he rules over the nations.

30 Posterity will serve him;

future generations will be told about the Lord.

31 They will proclaim his righteousness,  
declaring to a people yet unborn:  
He has done it!

## **Confession**

The first place the word "worship" is used in the Bible is in Genesis 22:5 where Abraham has chosen to obey the LORD's command to sacrifice his son Isaac. In this context, worship is synonymous with great sacrifice, complete surrender. Abraham would not withhold even his own son from God. And Abraham didn't just **say** that he would obey. He followed through, right up to the point where Isaac was bound, Abraham's knife was in hand, and he was poised to slay his son.

Last week we saw Jesus make a conscious choice to sacrifice Himself. If consecration is giving something to God, then this is the ultimate act of consecration. Jesus would withhold nothing from His Father, not even His life. This week we see Jesus walking out this choice.

While making the initial choice to consecrate ourselves and our lives to God can be challenging, the really tough part is continuing to make that choice every day, each hour, moment by moment. There are so many temptations, so many opportunities to not follow through or to change our minds.

Francis Frangipane said, "Satan dines on what we withhold from God." Our choices are never neutral. They either feed and sustain God's reign in and over our lives or they provide a foothold for the enemy.

Take some time to consider what you have been withholding from the Lord. Then, together confess this to God and ask for His help to surrender these things to Him.

## **Consecration & Thanksgiving**

Jesus also had multiple opportunities to change his mind, to back out of his decision to die on the cross. He could have chosen not to go through with it at any moment.

"Put away your sword," Jesus told [Peter]. "Those who use the sword will die by the sword. Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?"

Matthew 26:52-54 (NLT)

Then Jesus said [to Pilate], "You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above..."

John 19:11 (NLT)

The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. "Ha! Look at you now!" they yelled at him. "You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well then, save yourself and come down from the cross!" The leading priests and teachers of religious law also mocked Jesus. "He saved others," they scoffed, "but he can't save himself! Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down from the cross so we can see it and believe him!" Even the men who were crucified with Jesus ridiculed him.

Mark 15:29-32 (NLT)

Those who mocked Jesus were correct; he could have come down from the cross and saved himself at any moment. But he resisted temptation and chose not to.

C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity*, "Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. ... We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means."

Let's give thanks for Jesus's choice to not succumb to these temptations and to steadfastly see the crucifixion through to its bitter end.

### **Asking**

Read the following scripture aloud.

Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!" And with those words he breathed his last.

Luke 23:46 (NLT)

Talk about trust! Where many translations use the word "faith," the Complete Jewish Bible frequently translates the same word as "trust." Really, that element of trust is what makes faith different from simple belief or mental assent. We act on it.

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"

Matthew 16:24-26 (ESV)

Take this opportunity to ask that we, as individuals and as a church, would entrust ourselves more and more to God in faith by not withholding anything from Him. Pray that we would take up our crosses and to lay down our lives for His sake.

## **Song** *(optional)*

Conclude with a song of intent to lay down our lives to God. Click on the song title to hear the song.

### The Old Rugged Cross

#### Verse 1:

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross  
The emblem of suffering and shame  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and  
best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain

#### Chorus:

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross  
'Til my trophies at last I lay down  
I will cling to the old rugged cross  
And exchange it someday for a crown

#### Verse 2:

Oh, that old rugged cross, so despised by the world  
Has a wondrous attraction for me  
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above  
To bear it to dark Calvary

#### Verse 3:

In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so  
divine  
A wondrous beauty I see  
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died  
To pardon and sanctify me

#### Verse 4:

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true  
Its shame and reproach gladly bear  
Then He'll call me someday to my home far away  
Where His glory forever I'll share

Source: Musixmatch

Songwriters: George Bennard

### At the Altar

#### Verse 1:

I'm removing  
All of the things that would move me further from You  
A thank you could not be enough  
It's not lost on me what You saved me from  
I'm running  
Stumbling, I know but I'm coming  
To give You this offering  
My worship, I'll never withhold  
Broken, but You call it beautiful

#### Chorus:

Where the tears of the desperate  
Reach the feet of the Savior  
Nothing I wouldn't offer  
There's no waste at the altar  
Where the heart of surrender  
Meets the hands of the Maker  
Nothing I wouldn't offer  
There's no waste at the altar

#### Verse 2:

Things I've treasured  
Oh, couldn't come close to Your presence  
Grace upon grace, who could measure?  
No, nothing could measure  
I'm returning  
Oh, back to the One, I am running  
To give Him my love  
'Cause He took a sinner like me  
Washed me with grace and then set me free

#### Bridge:

Come lay your broken dreams at the altar  
And every victory at the altar  
Fear and anxiety cannot live here  
There's no waste at the altar  
Let your heart sing out and tell Him you love Him  
Don't make it perfect, just let it be honest  
He can use anything, sit back and watch Him  
There's no waste at the altar

Source: LyricFind

Songwriters: Abbie Simmons / Davide Mutendji / Josh Holiday / Tiffany Hammer

At The Altar lyrics © Essential Music Publishing