

WHO DO I LIVE FOR GOD? PURSUE GOD!



LEARN • VOLUME 5 • SESSION 2

I. Introduction

SLIDE 2



We are in the information age. Our intake of data is absolutely insane.

I was considering my childhood and perhaps we were the first true generation of intake of information through screens... the screen of the TV and then later the screen of cable television.

We as children of the 60s, consumed information in **limited, scheduled, curated doses** —

This was mostly passive, mostly communal, and mostly controlled by adults.

- **One screen in the home** — the TV was the “electronic fireside,” central to family life.
- **Scheduled programming** — children watched when networks decided: Saturday mornings, after school.

Learning was **linear**, slow-paced, and reinforced through repetition.

Watching TV was **communal** — siblings gathered, parents supervised, and families shared the same content at the same time.

SLIDE 3



Children today consume information in **constant, personalized, algorithm-driven streams** —

This is interactive, fragmented, and mostly unsupervised.

- **Multiple personal screens** — tablets and smartphones are often owned by children as young as age two.
- **On-demand content** — YouTube, TikTok, streaming apps dominate children's media diets.
- **High volume, high speed** — short-form videos, rapid cuts, endless scrolling.
- **Interactive consumption** — likes, comments, shares, gaming, messaging.

Children increasingly are now using AI tools and also digital apps for learning .

Learning is non-linear, fast-paced, and often mixed with entertainment.

- Media consumption is **individualized** — each child watches different content on their own device.
- Socialization happens through **digital communities**, not shared family viewing.

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Being a parent or grandparent is a real challenge today in 2026!

We are a result of constant bombardment of with information from our kids and from our very own digital footprint!!

- One child might be describing something that happened to her at school,
- Another could be going on and on about a favorite video he just watched or created
- Then a different child is demanding more snacks.
- Children dogmatically explaining why they were fighting with each other and whose fault it was.

In those moments, a parent can be left scrambling and wondering, “What do I do with all this information?”

You may be feeling the same way.

In society, we’re constantly blasted with information and competing agendas.

- What should you do with all these facts and opinions?

If you’re feeling that tension, this week is for you!

SLIDE 4

This summer we are looking at the Bible Engagement Project and last week we look at

We’ll be looking at Scripture for answers as to how to integrate this information as we ask the all-important question:

How do I live for God?

Pastor Tony started us off last week, with answering the question on how to **Put God First**

Life is the constant chase – We pursue dreams, we pursue ambitions. We pursue desires. All with unwavering determination!

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We hope to grasp any one of these with our hands... only to find these are forever eluding!

It is said that the closer we get to these it seems the farther the way they are... it even at times looks as if they are running away!

SLIDE 5

Today as we look at Jesus' answer to this How do I live for God— **HOW DO I PURSUE GOD?**

And his answer has not changed today in 2026 in the information age either! This is how he answered:

SLIDE 6

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. MATTHEW 6:33



Honestly, he saying – **PURSUE GOD!**

So this morning shut your phone off, do not multi-task and try not to think of anything else by JESUS!

let's sit at the feet of the master for a moment and check out what He believes we should be doing with all of that crazy and wacky information coming in pursuing God!

SLIDE 7

II. I PURSUE GOD!

One has to truly appreciate Matthew and his ability to capture great amounts details and data in this Gospel.

Matthew for me is like the information age Gospel!

SLIDE 8

Within Chapter 5,6, and 7, Matthew captures with great detail Jesus most Famous Teaching!



The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, and 7).

It is a great session by Jesus where He's teaching His disciples and the crowd what His kingdom is all about.

- Sharing wisdom and guidance on pursuing God through fasting and prayer.

What he was offering was in absolute and direct conflict to the religious landscape of His time! Specifically in the two following areas:

- outward behavior
- strict rule following.

Jesus does not waste time with useless information, does He? Like ever?

He is a careful speaker

- when with a crowd
- with a group
- or even with one individual

Jesus knew the way people lived and why that truly matters!

Yet in contrast for the reasons, we just covered, Jesus more importantly wanted to ensure that they then and we now know

the right way and how we live matters even more.

This Sermon of the Mount remains a blueprint of discipleship!

- Jesus painstakingly was trying to help folks with the nuts and bolts on how to live!
- a vision of a restored world
 - where justice, mercy, and love prevail

The Sermon on the Mount has been described as an “upside-down kingdom” because it reverses worldly expectations of power and success!

So let’s get into the most quoted parts of the Bible. No not John 3:16!

The Lords Prayer!



SLIDE 10

Yet first I want to offer the book ends the Lords Prayer

Bookends of the Lord’s Prayer

Jesus begins with this:

When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites... *Matthew 6:5–8*

And He ends with this:

When you fast, don’t make it obvious... *Matthew 6:16–18*

5 “When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. 6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

7 “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. 8 Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! MATT 6:5-8

16 “And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. 17 But when you fast, comb your hair[d] and wash your face. 18 Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. MATT 6:16-18

Jesus sandwiches His famous teaching on the Lord’s Prayer with examples of religious hypocrites and how people were fasting for all the wrong reasons.

Why?

Because praying to impress others makes prayer about **us**, not God.

Fasting to be seen goes against the very purpose of fasting — forgetting oneself and focusing intensely on God.

Church family, we need to remember something essential about prayer:

We cannot bind God.

We cannot name it and claim it.

We cannot push God, pressure God, or persuade God into our will.

That is not prayer — that is superstition dressed up in religious language.

Jesus teaches us a better way.

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We pray out of obedience. Because He told us, ‘When you pray...’ — not *if* you pray. Prayer is part of discipleship.

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We pray out of gratitude. Because God has already been good, already been faithful, already been present.

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**We pray because Jesus gave us access to the Father. **

SLIDE 13

- The veil is torn.
- The door is open.
- The Father listens because the Son made a way.

But hear this clearly:

- **We never pray to inform God.**
- **We never pray to convince God.**
- **We never pray to manipulate God.**

God is not unaware. God is not undecided. God is not waiting for us to say the magic words.

Prayer is not about controlling God — **prayer is about aligning ourselves with God.**

It is the posture of a child coming to a Father who already knows, already cares, and already sees.”

Now let’s break down the Lord’s Prayer — the model Jesus gave us.

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A. ADDRESS GOD — GOD-FOCUSED PETITIONS



Slide 15

Jesus begins:

**Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.
¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven. MATT 6:6-10**

Jesus starts the Lord's Prayer with the phrase, "Our Father in heaven."

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All prayer begins with recognizing **who God is** and **who we are**.

Prayer is an act of humility for our God who is to be approached as HOLY.

God's holiness is His absolute purity, perfection, and separation from all sin. It's not just one attribute — it's His essence.

And Jesus teaches us to approach Him as:

- **Our Father** — we're part of a family
- **Father** — He loves us
- **In heaven** — He sees perfectly and acts powerfully



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We're fully dependent upon God. Jesus knew the importance of prayer.

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¹⁵ Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. Luke 5:16

He often went off on His own to talk to God (Luke 5:16).

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If He needed prayer... how much more do we?

Slide 19

B. Human-Focused Petitions



Slide 20

Jesus continued:

**¹¹ Give us today the food we need,
¹² and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
¹³ And don't let us yield to temptation,¹
but rescue us from the evil one. MATT 6:11-13**

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Our food for today, our forgiveness from sin, and our freedom from temptation.

We need:

- provision
- forgiveness
- protection

Slide 22

Can anyone argue that food is pretty important and yet what is our greatest need in this section?

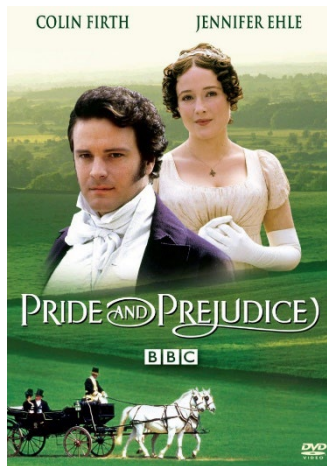
- Our highest need is for our heart to be forgiven and freed, and we can't do that for ourself.

Some of you might remember the opening line of Pride and Prejudice.

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Jane Austen begins her novel with a sentence that is dripping with irony —

- a line meant to expose what society thinks is most important.



She writes this:

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." Jane Austen

Austen is poking fun at the world's priorities — the assumptions people make, the things they chase, the values they elevate. She is saying, 'This is what society thinks matters most.'

Thought this was very funny and if you are a single man well...

Can we really talk???

The world has its own 'truths universally acknowledged.' And many are well ludicrous!

- It tells us what to chase, what to value, what to fear, and what to pursue.

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But Jesus gives us a better truth — a kingdom truth. As we read before...

"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." Matthew 6:33

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- Seek first the kingdom.
- Seek first the Father.
- Seek first the presence of God.

Austen exposes how people chase the wrong thing.

- Jesus redirects us to the right thing.

Austen shows us the world's priorities.

- Jesus gives us heaven's priorities.

Austen reveals what society assumes is essential.

- Jesus reveals what actually is essential.

Everything else — every need, every provision, every direction — is added after the priority is straight.

- We don't pursue fortune.
- We don't pursue status.
- We don't pursue applause.
- And We don't pursue a spouse

We pursue God.

And when we pursue God, everything else finds its rightful place.

Here Jesus offers here that it important that as we pray, we should come to God with open hands and an open heart.

Asking - *to be* changed, not to *see* change.

Prayer isn't just about bringing a list.

Prayer is our opportunity!

- An opportunity for to surrender
- An opportunity to say I am the clay and you are the potter God!

Prayer is making ourselves available for whatever work God wants to do in us and through us.

SLIDE 25

C. FORGIVENESS OF SINS



Slide 26

Jesus teaches something remarkable here:

¹⁴ “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

MATT 6:14-15

Our unforgiveness toward others is an obstacle to receiving His forgiveness for our own sins.

If we can’t or won’t forgive people who have sinned against us, what does our action say about our relationship with God?

Just prior to this Jesus had already addressed this

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Leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift Matthew 5:24

The “gift” here can be understood as a sacrifice, offering, or act of worship.

The key point is that worship should not be offered while there is unresolved conflict with another person.

If you are about to present something to God but remember that someone you love has something against you, Jesus commands you to first reconcile with that person before continuing your worship.

According to Jesus we are:

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- Pause worship if you have unresolved issues with someone you care about.
- Seek reconciliation — this may involve honest conversation, apology, or making amends.
- Only resume worship once peace has been restored.

This principle applies to all relationships, not just religious ones — it reflects the Christian value of peace and unity.

Jesus teaches us that those who know they have been forgiven much, and therefore are enabled to love much (Luke 7:47).

If we refuse to forgive others, we reveal we don't truly understand the depth of forgiveness necessary to restore us to God.

Everyone spends their time and energy pursuing something or someone.

- It may be a promotion at work or the approval of a person or group of people.
- You probably know someone who seems to have built their entire life around the pursuit of power, control, or influence.
- Many pursue pleasure and comfort through expensive vacations, enjoyable entertainment, or harmful substances.

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Whatever or whoever you pursue most is your true god.

Prayer is one very important way we can pursue God.

In prayer, we approach God and pursue His will and His ways.

- We pursue His blessing and His strength for the day.
- We pursue becoming more and more like Jesus.
- We pursue God knowing He first pursued us.

When we end our prayers with the phrase, "In Jesus' name, I pray,"

We're recognizing we can approach God confidently and consistently only because of what Jesus did for us!

SLIDE 29

D. THE PROPER MOTIVE IN FASTING



Jesus closes the section with fasting.

Why?

Because in Jesus' day, fasting had become a way to atone for unintentional sins.

Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Wisdom of Solomon all emphasized fasting as a way to deal with sin.

But Jesus corrects the motive.

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Fasting joined with prayer sharpens spiritual focus, weakens the flesh, strengthens the spirit, and aligns the believer more fully with the will of God.

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So Jesus says:

- Don't fast to be seen
- Don't fast to look spiritual
- Don't fast for admiration

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Instead:

- Fast privately
- Fast humbly
- Fast to be seen by the Father alone

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Because the reward of fasting is not human applause — it is **divine attention, divine intimacy, divine strengthening.**

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This is why Jesus says:

“Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” Matthew 6:18

Slide 34

That reward is not material — It is spiritual!

Pursuing God results in spiritual power, clarity, breakthrough, and intimacy with God, Himself!

III. CLOSING

SLIDE 35

Church family... most Christians struggle with prayer.

Our minds feel like multilane highways of information intake.



SLIDE 36

Slow down. Breath in and out. Be intentional. Follow David's words here

Be still, and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10

To truly pursue God we need to be still and know that He is God!

To pursue God, we must slow down.

We must be intentional.

We must carve out time for private prayer.

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If you don't already do this daily, your next step isn't to start praying two hours every day!

Instead, your next step may be finding five to ten minutes each day to pray and become consistent doing so.

SLIDE 37

Ask yourself:

- *How does God's pursuit of you inspire you to pursue Him?*
- *Do you see any wrong motivations in your prayer or fasting?*
- *What obstacles keep you from a vibrant prayer life?*



SLIDE 38

And remember what Jesus is teaching today to PURSUE GOD:

- *When you pray, start by thanking God*
- *Share your burdens*
- *Be still and listen*

Prayer Is Your Access to Pursuit of GOD

And He teaches us how to approach the Father

SLIDE 39

<let's pray>