

THE POTENTIAL & POWER OF PRAYER



A CHURCH EQUIP RESOURCE

Welcome to the exciting study of prayer.

Welcome to this exciting study of prayer. We serve a God who graciously not only allows us to speak to Him, but who also wants us to come to Him. In fact, we can approach His throne boldly through Christ (Heb 4:16). There are ten total lessons in this equipping module.

You will need the following essentials for every lesson:

- **Prayer.** Please take time to pray before you begin a lesson. Ask God to open your mind and heart to His truths for your life. This task is obviously important in a study on prayer!
- **Bible.** Keep your Bible near and open as you study.
- **Workbook.** You are reading the workbook now. Please take time to respond to the applicational questions at the end of each lesson. This exercise will go a long way toward helping you remember and retain the riches of each study.
- **Video courses.** They are brief, but they will guide you to understanding prayer and implementing it in your life.

For additional study, we encourage you to purchase the book, *The Potential and Power of Prayer* by Chuck Lawless. The videos are brief summaries and commentaries on specific issues and topics, but the book covers them more fully. Each chapter of the book is brief, so you will be able to read them alongside the video lesson.

Thank you for being a part of this equipping study. We pray that you will not only be informed, but that you will be blessed—and challenged to pray more!

Now, let's begin!



LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

Reflection Notes:

- This course should lead you to pray.

- This course should help you see the significance of prayer.

- This course should help you see the power of prayer.

- This course should provide you with a tool to help others to pray.



LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

Applicative Questions:

- What do you hope to learn and to do from this study of prayer?
- On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest, how do you rate your prayer life today as you begin this course?
- What are your greatest obstacles to prayer?
- What spoke to you about what the instructor shared from his story of learning about prayer?

Additional Study (Optional):

- Describe what is meant by making prayer a part of the DNA of a church (see page 4 in the optional book).
- Name the motives behind our prayers as listed by the author (see pages 3-4 in the optional book).
- List some Old Testament references about prayer (see pages 13-14 in the optional book).
- Identify the five presuppositions that the author lists for studying prayer (see pages 19-20 in the optional book).



SUMMARY: CHAPTER 1: “WHY NO POWER?”

Below is a chapter summary of Chapter 1 of the optional book, *The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church*, by Chuck Lawless:

In the opening chapter, author Chuck Lawless reflects on his early pastoral experiences, candidly admitting, “I had no idea what I was doing.” He describes leading a small congregation that, despite limited training, was committed to preaching, evangelism, and prayer. This dedication led to remarkable growth: “Within two years, our little church of nineteen saw more than one hundred baptisms of new Christ-followers.”

Lawless identifies four primary motivations that drove their prayer life: desperation for God's intervention, acknowledgment of their own inadequacies, a deep burden for the salvation of loved ones, and the understanding that prayer was an accessible act for every member. He emphasizes, “Desperation is a good thing when it drives us to our knees before our heavenly Father.”

Despite their fervent prayers, Lawless acknowledges that becoming a praying church is challenging: “Becoming a praying church is not as easy as it sounds.” He observes that as churches grow, they may rely more on programming and less on prayer, leading to a decline in spiritual vitality.

He also notes that many believers struggle with prayer because they haven't been taught how to pray effectively: “Many believers have never learned to pray because no one intentionally taught them to pray.” This lack of instruction can result in prayerlessness, which Lawless warns is “simply idolatry of the self.”

Ultimately, Lawless calls for a renewed commitment to prayer, urging churches to move beyond merely talking about prayer to embedding it into their very DNA. He challenges readers with the question: “Is prayer in the DNA of my church?”



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LESSON 2: WHAT EXACTLY IS PRAYER? AND A QUIZ FOR YOU AND YOUR CHURCH?

Reflection Notes:

- Prayer is communicating with God.

- Prayer is a cry for relationship with God and a confession of dependence on Him.

- Prayerlessness says, "God, I don't love you like I say I do, and I don't need you like I claim I do."

- Consider the questions from the quiz about prayer.



LESSON 2: WHAT EXACTLY IS PRAYER? (CONTINUED)

Applicative Questions:

- Before this lesson, how would you have described prayer?
- Who taught you how to pray (if anyone)? What was most helpful to you in learning to pray?
- Do you have a favorite example of prayer in the Bible? What is it and why is it your favorite?
- What one practical step will you take to pray based on this lesson?

Additional Study (Optional):

- Identify some Scripture passages that speak to God wanting us to seek Him and come to Him (see pages 27-28 in the optional book).
- Identify the reasons that prayer matters (see pages 33-41 in the optional book).
- Which of the reasons listed for why prayer matters encouraged you the most (see pages 33-41 in the optional book)?
- What are some ways that you can apply what is taught in Chapter 2 of the book, *The Potential and Power of Prayer* (see page 42 of the optional book).



SUMMARY: CHAPTER 2: “WHAT PRAYER IS, AND WHY IT MATTERS”

Below is a chapter summary of Chapter 2 of the optional book, *The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church*, by Chuck Lawless:

In Chapter 2 of *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, titled “What Prayer Is, and Why It Matters,” Chuck Lawless delves into the essence of prayer and underscores its critical role in the life of a believer and the church. He begins by addressing common misconceptions, emphasizing that prayer is not merely a ritualistic activity but a profound communication with God. Lawless asserts that understanding the true nature of prayer is foundational to experiencing its transformative power.

He explores various biblical definitions and examples, highlighting that prayer encompasses adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. By examining the prayers of biblical figures, Lawless illustrates how genuine prayer reflects a deep dependence on God and a desire for his will to be accomplished.

Furthermore, Lawless discusses the significance of prayer in fostering spiritual growth and unity within the church. He emphasizes that a praying church is one that recognizes its reliance on God's guidance and strength. Lawless challenges readers to evaluate their personal and corporate prayer lives, encouraging them to move beyond superficial practices to a more intentional and heartfelt engagement with God.

Throughout the chapter, Lawless provides practical insights and challenges, urging believers to prioritize prayer not as a last resort but as a first response. He contends that when prayer becomes central to the life of the church, it unleashes God's power and aligns the congregation with His purposes.

In summary, this chapter serves as a compelling call to rediscover the true nature of prayer and to recognize its indispensable role in the believer's life and the health of the church.



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LESSON 3: JESUS, THE EARLY CHURCH, AND PRAYER

Reflection Notes:

- At the baptism of Jesus, the Spirit descended on Jesus as He was praying.

- Jesus often withdrew from the crowds in order to pray.

- The early Church was united together in prayer.

- The early Church prayed for boldness.



LESSON 3: JESUS, THE EARLY CHURCH, AND PRAYER (CONTINUED)

Applicative Questions:

- What are some of the challenges for us to withdraw to pray?
- If Jesus wanted to prepare himself for life and ministry through prayer, what does that say about our need to pray?
- What are some ways that your church might be united together in prayer?
- What are some areas of your life for which you can pray for God to make you bold?

Additional Study (Optional):

- What are the ways that Jesus modeled prayer for us (see pages 49-50 in the optional book)?
- What four questions can you ask about your prayer life based on Luke 11 (see pages 54-55 in the optional book)?
- Review the list of the of Scripture passages which demonstrate that prayer was at the heart of the early church (see pages 63-64 in the optional book). Which of these passages speaks to you the most?
- What are some ways that you can apply what is taught in Chapter 3 of the book, *The Potential and Power of Prayer* (see pages 65-66 of the optional book).



SUMMARY: CHAPTER 3: “PRAYING LIKE JESUS AND THE EARLY CHURCH”

Below is a chapter summary of Chapter 3 of the optional book, *The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church*, by Chuck Lawless:

In Chapter 3 of *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, titled “Praying like Jesus and the Early Church,” Chuck Lawless examines the prayer practices of Jesus and the early Christian community, offering insights for contemporary believers.

Lawless begins by highlighting Jesus as the ultimate model of a prayerful life. He notes that Jesus often withdrew to solitary places to pray, emphasizing the importance of personal communion with the Father. Lawless underscores that Jesus' ministry was marked by a rhythm of engagement and retreat, teaching us that “prayer was not an afterthought for Jesus; it was His lifeline.”

Transitioning to the early church, Lawless illustrates how the first Christians were devoted to prayer, as seen in the Book of Acts. He points out that “the early church prayed fervently and frequently, seeking God's guidance and power in all aspects of their communal life.” This dedication to prayer, Lawless argues, was instrumental in the church's rapid growth and resilience amid persecution.

Lawless also addresses the communal aspect of prayer, emphasizing that both Jesus and the early church prioritized praying together. He states, “Corporate prayer was a cornerstone of the early church, reflecting their unity and dependence on God.” This collective approach to prayer fostered a sense of community and shared purpose among believers.

In conclusion, Lawless challenges readers to emulate the prayer habits of Jesus and the early church. He encourages believers to cultivate both personal and communal prayer practices, asserting that “to experience the fullness of God's power, we must become people of persistent and passionate prayer.”



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LESSON 4: WHY WE STRUGGLE WITH PRAYER

Reflection Notes:

- Sometimes we struggle with prayer because no one has taught us to pray.

- Sometimes we struggle with prayer because we have been taught wrongly.

- Sometimes we struggle with prayer because we can hide in our prayerlessness.

- Sometimes we struggle with prayer because we are “too strong.”



LESSON 4: WHY WE STRUGGLE WITH PRAYER (CONTINUED)

Applicational Questions:

- Several reasons were provided as to why we struggle with prayer. What is the number one struggle for you when it comes to prayer?
- How do you handle unanswered prayer?
- Is your church able to (seemingly) operate without the power of God?
- What one practical step will you take to pray based on this lesson?

Additional Study (Optional):

- Read the introduction to Chapter 4 (page 69-70 in the optional book). How does it help to identify the “good guys” and the “bad guys”?
- Read Colossians 2:15. Describe how Jesus has already earned victory (see page 70 in the optional book).
- What are some reasons that Christians struggle with prayer (pages 70-73 in the optional book)?
- Which of the twelve reasons given for why Christians struggle with prayer reflects why you do not always pray like you should (pages 70-73 in the optional book)? What is your plan to overcome that obstacle?



SUMMARY: CHAPTER 4: “THE BATTLE OF PRAYER”

Below is a chapter summary of Chapter 4 of the optional book, *The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church*, by Chuck Lawless:

In Chapter 4 of *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, titled “The Battle of Prayer,” Chuck Lawless delves into the intrinsic connection between prayer and spiritual warfare, emphasizing that prayer is not merely a passive act but a critical engagement in the believer’s ongoing spiritual battle.

Lawless begins by acknowledging the challenges many face in maintaining a consistent prayer life, stating, “Why is it a struggle to pray?” He attributes this struggle to the unseen spiritual warfare that seeks to hinder believers from accessing God’s power through prayer.

Drawing from Ephesians 6, Lawless highlights the Apostle Paul’s exhortation to “put on the whole armor of God,” emphasizing that prayer is integral to this spiritual armor. He notes, “Prayer is the battlefield where we engage the enemy and assert God’s victory.”

The chapter also addresses common obstacles to effective prayer, such as busyness, distraction, and self-reliance. Lawless warns, “When we neglect prayer, we fight today’s battles based on yesterday’s power,” underscoring the necessity of daily dependence on God.

To overcome these challenges, Lawless advocates for intentional and disciplined prayer practices. He encourages believers to recognize that “prayer is not preparation for the battle; prayer is the battle.” This perspective shifts prayer from a routine task to an active engagement in spiritual warfare.

In conclusion, Lawless calls the church to awaken to the reality of spiritual conflict and to prioritize prayer as the primary means of experiencing God’s power and protection. He asserts, “A praying church is a victorious church,” urging congregations to embed prayer into their very DNA to stand firm against the schemes of the enemy.



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LESSON 5: SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND PRAYER

Reflection Notes:

- The spiritual armor that we need belongs to God.

- Paul speaks with urgency regarding prayer and spiritual warfare.

- Jesus is making intercession for us today.

- Romans 8 teaches that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us when we don't know how to pray.



LESSON 5: SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND PRAYER (CONTINUED)

Applicative Questions:

- How have you thought about the armor of God in the past? Has that changed since completing this lesson?
- How can we develop a sense of urgency in our prayer life?
- Why should we pray for each other in spiritual battles?
- What one practical step will you take to pray based on this lesson?

Additional Study (Optional):

- Describe what is happening in Daniel 9-10 (see pages 73-74 in the optional book).
- Identify three reasons the enemy fights against prayer (see page 77 in the optional book).
- How do we prepare ourselves for battle through prayer (see pages 77-85 in the optional book)?
- What are some ways that you can apply the teachings of Chapter 4 in the optional book (see pages 88-89).



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LESSON 6: HINDRANCES TO ANSWERED PRAYER

Reflection Notes:

- Scripture for this lesson: Proverbs 28:9, John 15:7, Isaiah 59:1-2, Psalm 66:18, 1 Peter 3:7, Mark 11:25, Matthew 6:14-15, Hebrews 11:6, Matthew 17:20, James 4:1-3

- We don't pray at all.

- We have unforsaken sin in our lives.

- We have an unforgiving heart.

- We ask amiss for ourselves.



LESSON 6: HINDRANCES TO ANSWERED PRAYER (CONTINUED)

Applicational Questions:

- Think about a season where you didn't pray much. Why do you think you were lacking in prayer during that time?
- Why would unforsaken sin hinder our prayers?
- What does the Bible say about someone who is unwilling to forgive others? How does this align with what we see in the culture around us?
- Is it selfish to petition for ourselves in our prayers? Why or why not?

Additional Study (Optional):

- What are one or two truths that stuck with you, after reading Chapter 4 in the optional book (pages 69-80)?
- Reflect on the section of the book entitled "The Battle in the Heavens" (pages 73-77). How do you think most people think about spiritual warfare?
- Why is waiting on God in prayer so important (see page 75 in the optional book)?
- How does Paul tie prayer into spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6 (see page 82 in the optional book)?



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LESSON 7: LEADERS WHO PRAY, AND PRAYING WHEN PRAYER IS DIFFICULT

Reflection Notes:

- Get someone else to pray for you to start praying again.

- As you pray with another person, together ask God to show you your hindrances to prayer.

- Start somewhere; do something.

- Do the same with the prayers of the Psalms or the prayers of the Apostle Paul.



LESSON 7: LEADERS WHO PRAY, AND PRAYING WHEN PRAYER IS DIFFICULT (CONTINUED)

Applicative Questions:

- What biblical character caught your attention when it came to prayer? Why is that?
- Who is someone that you would be comfortable asking to pray for you? Why are you comfortable asking that person?
- What are the elements of the Lord's model prayer? How can this prayer guide you?
- How might you pray more for your pastor(s)?

Additional Study (Optional):

- Why do leaders matter in prayer (see pages 92-95 in the optional book)?
- Study the biblical examples of leaders who prayed (see pages 95-102 in the optional book). Which stands out to you? Why did they stand out to you?
- What are the reasons that some leaders struggle with prayer (see pages 104-106 in the optional book)?
- What step can you take to improve your prayer life after reading Chapter 5 of the optional book?



SUMMARY: CHAPTER 5: “PRAYING LEADERS”

Below is a chapter summary of Chapter 5 of the optional book, *The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church*, by Chuck Lawless:

In Chapter 5 of *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, titled “Praying Leaders,” Chuck Lawless emphasizes the critical role that prayer plays in effective church leadership. He asserts, “Praying leaders are best at casting a vision for prayer,” highlighting that leaders who maintain a robust personal prayer life are more capable of inspiring their congregations to prioritize prayer.

Lawless underscores the importance of integrity in leadership, stating, “Leaders who pray can—and will—call others to pray with integrity.” This integrity ensures that calls to communal prayer are rooted in genuine personal practice, fostering authenticity within the church community.

Furthermore, he discusses the impact of public prayer, noting, “Leaders who pray often model and teach prayer by their own heartfelt, humble public prayers.” Such demonstrations serve as practical lessons, encouraging congregants to develop their own prayer lives by observing sincere and humble communication with God.

Lawless also highlights the transformative effect of prayer on leaders themselves: “Praying leaders show the work of God in their lives as he conforms them to his image.” This personal transformation not only enhances their spiritual growth but also sets a compelling example for others to follow.

Biblical examples and stories from scripture are given of leaders who prayed, and he challenges pastors and leaders to incorporate prayer into their lives.

In conclusion, this chapter serves as a compelling call for church leaders to embody a deep commitment to prayer, both for their personal spiritual development and as a foundational element of their leadership. Lawless’s insights underscore that a leader’s dedication to prayer can profoundly influence the spiritual vitality of their congregation.



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LESSON 8: PRAYING TOGETHER, AND PRACTICAL WAYS TO PRAY (PART 1)

Reflection Notes:

- The ACTS paradigm.

- Focused ACTS.

- Calendared praying.

- Church calendar or bulletin praying.

- Church-focused praying.



LESSON 8: PRAYING TOGETHER, AND PRACTICAL WAYS TO PRAY PART 1 (CONTINUED)

Applicational Questions:

- How do you think your church does with prayer? Why?
- What are tips about prayer that have helped you over the years?
- Which of the tips shared in the lesson appealed to you most? Why?
- What matter of prayer do you believe is most important to your church during this time?

Additional Study (Optional):

- Describe why praying together with other Christians matters (see pages 116-122 in the optional book).
- How can praying together teach us how to pray (see pages 121-122 in the optional book)?
- What is the life cycle of a church (see pages 123-124 in the optional book)?
- Why should lay leaders (volunteers) also lead the way in prayer (see pages 127-128 in the optional book)?



SUMMARY: CHAPTER 6: “GETTING STARTED: PRAYING TOGETHER”

Below is a chapter summary of Chapter 6 of the optional book, *The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church*, by Chuck Lawless:

In Chapter 6, Chuck Lawless underscores the critical importance of initiating corporate prayer within the life of the church. He encourages churches not to be overwhelmed by the concept of becoming a “praying church,” but instead to simply begin by praying—together. Lawless acknowledges the tendency to overanalyze or wait for the perfect strategy, yet insists that the real key is taking intentional first steps. He writes, “Just pray. Do something. Take one step,” emphasizing action over perfection.

Lawless offers practical and accessible ideas for integrating group prayer into church life. These include short prayer segments in worship services, targeted prayer for specific families or community groups, and dedicated prayer gatherings. He also suggests praying during leadership meetings and scheduling prayer walks. Each approach aims to normalize prayer within the congregation’s rhythms, fostering both participation and spiritual sensitivity.

The chapter highlights the importance of simplicity and consistency. Lawless warns against complicating prayer initiatives, advising that churches focus on “doing something consistently rather than sporadically launching new efforts that don’t last.” He also reminds leaders that even small efforts can lead to significant spiritual transformation when grounded in a desire to seek God’s presence.

Ultimately, Lawless’s goal is to demystify corporate prayer and encourage churches to build a culture of prayer, not by waiting for revival, but by humbly and faithfully beginning the work of praying together.



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LESSON 9: PRACTICAL WAYS TO PRAY PART 2

Reflection Notes:

- News-focused praying.

- Prayer surveys.

- Drive-by praying.

- Pray before and after each task.



LESSON 9: PRACTICAL WAYS TO PRAY PART 2 (CONTINUED)

Applicative Questions:

- What are some issues in our world at this time that captures your heart for the need for prayer?
- In addition to what the instructor recommended, what are some other ways that we can remember to pray for others?
- How do you think your neighbors or co-workers would respond if you asked them how you could pray for them?
- What would be the best time of the day for you to devote ten minutes in prayer?

Additional Study (Optional):

- What are some ways to prioritize prayer in your worship service (see page 129 in the optional book)?
- Identify at least three ways to incorporate an emphasis of the priority of prayer into your membership classes (see pages 131-132 in the optional book).
- How can you use your church calendar as a prayer list (see page 136 in the optional book)?
- Which truth or piece of encouragement impacted you the most from Chapter 6 of the optional book?



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LESSON 10: COURSE CONCLUSION

Reflection Notes:

- Tell others what you have learned.

- Make a sustained effort to be a prayer warrior.

- Recognize your hindrances to prayer, and deal with them.

- Live in the miracle that God allows us to talk to Him—and then hears us when we pray.

- Just start praying.



LESSON 10: COURSE CONCLUSION (CONTINUED)

Applicative Questions:

- After completing this course, how would describe prayer? How is that different from how you would have described prayer before this course?
- What is the greatest lesson you've learned through completing this course?
- What steps will you take to improve your prayer life?
- What is the most important way that you could pray for your church? Spend some time in prayer now for that need.

Additional Study (Optional):

- What does the author mean when he says that prayer by itself is insufficient (see page 139 in the optional book)?
- Identify some times when prayer by itself is insufficient (see pages 139-141).
- Reflect on the words from A. W. Tozer (see pages 141-142). How do his words encourage you in the area of prayer?
- Describe two impactful truths you learned from the optional book.



SUMMARY: CHAPTER 7: “ONE CAUTION AND A FINAL CHALLENGE”

Below is a chapter summary of Chapter 7 of the optional book, *The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church*, by Chuck Lawless:

In the concluding chapter of *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, Chuck Lawless issues a stirring call to action for believers and church leaders to prioritize prayer in both personal and corporate settings. He emphasizes that prayer is not merely a church program but the very heartbeat of a faithful, Spirit-filled community. Lawless urges readers to move beyond theoretical appreciation for prayer and step into consistent, obedient practice, writing, “You learn to pray by praying.”

The chapter reflects on the deep spiritual implications of prayerlessness, equating it to prideful self-reliance and spiritual stagnation. Lawless warns that without prayer, churches may become efficient but powerless. He challenges leaders to examine whether their ministries are marked more by strategy than supplication. “We’ve strategized ourselves into a corner,” he writes, “and left God out of the planning.”

To counteract this drift, Lawless advocates for humility, repentance, and a renewed pursuit of God’s presence through prayer. He encourages readers to establish sustainable habits of prayer—both privately and collectively—highlighting that no great movement of God has occurred apart from prayerful groundwork. The chapter also affirms that anyone can take part: “You don’t need a seminary degree to kneel.”

Ultimately, the final chapter serves as both a challenge and an invitation—to rekindle passion, seek revival, and believe again in the miraculous potential of a praying church. Lawless closes with urgency and hope, urging believers to begin now, one prayer at a time, trusting God to do the rest.



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