

VISION 2026

What is in a Name

Introduction:

1. Dick Eastman says it well, *"We can't possibly know all there is to know about prayer, but we all have heard stories of God-on-the-move as He responds to the prayers of His people. When people pray is an account of what happens when people actually pray."*
2. Before we begin together, consider these questions:
 - "So, what happens when people pray? What happens when a man, woman, youth, or child pauses to pray to the God of Heaven?
 - What happens when couples and families pray together?
 - What happens when a city or state unites in prayer?
 - What happens when business owners seek God for creative ideas to generate wealth and impact others?
 - What happens when a nation cries out to God?
 - What could happen when every country and people group on the planet is covered in day and night prayer?"

When People Pray:

1. In September 1853, a small three-masted ship slipped out of the harbor in Liverpool with a wide-eyed 21-year-old aboard.
2. At the time, there were only a handful of missionaries who dared to venture to the faraway land where difficulty was promised, food was strange, and the language and culture had proven to be more than challenging.
3. Just twenty years before, there had been a young Methodist couple, James and Amelia Taylor, who were so passionate about the advancement of the Kingdom of God to the unknown Far East that they had regularly prayed that their newborn son might be raised up for that purpose.
4. After his death, China Inland Mission gained the notable distinction of being the largest Protestant mission agency in the world.
5. They had often been heard praying, *"Grant that he may work for you (God) in China." The effect of the prayer of one couple – the good news brought to China*

There is NO power in Prayer:

1. Consider this: Can you drive your car keys?
2. Just like there is absolutely no power in your car keys, there is NO Power in Prayer.
3. Too often, we misplace the power source of prayer.
4. It is not the WORDS we say, it is to whom we are speaking.
5. It's not the Bible, but the author.
6. *"Prayer is powerless on its own, but it gives you access to Jesus, who is the power of God. Put your faith in Jesus, not in prayer."*
7. Even knowing all these things about Jesus, we sometimes struggle to believe. Why?
8. *"Prayer is more about the object of prayer - Jesus - than it is about the outcome of prayer."*
9. There is a powerful moment of transition that happens in our lives, when we come to the understanding that we can be saved when we believe in JESUS.
10. But our believing does not and cannot stop at salvation.
11. TRUST goes well beyond that threshold.

12. A life surrendered to Jesus will push us and propel us forward into a POWERFUL partnership with the King of Glory.

Your Breakthrough is in your Praise.

1. Prayer is no picnic... Prayer is Warfare.
2. But we are not now, nor have we ever been on defense.
3. *"Prayer must be your first line of offense against the enemy, not your last line of defense."*
Life is Hard sometimes, isn't it?
4. Life is hard sometimes, isn't it?
5. Prayer is the way that we interact with the source of POWER.
6. Whether we know it or not, or are willing to acknowledge it or not... we are amid a battle between two kingdoms.
7. *"Sometimes we don't feel like praying, just like a soldier doesn't always feel like training or going into combat. But what matters is that you show up for duty. It's the same with prayer. Showing up for prayer is half the battle."*
8. So, Jesus comes to us in the middle of our comfortable position, and He lays out an opportunity that will require us to GIVE everything to GAIN everything.
9. **Acts 16:25** tells the story of Paul & Silas in prison. Their story teaches us that ultimately *GIVEing our Everything isn't about GAINing Anything.*
10. *But their breakthrough was in their Praise.*
11. The missionary Jim Elliot said this before his death at the hands of the Auca Indians from Ecuador - those he went to proclaim the gospel:
12. *"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."*
13. His wife, many years later, went back to that same tribe and told them about Jesus
14. She wrote this: *"I am not a theologian or a scholar, but I am very aware of the fact that pain is necessary to all of us. In my own life, I think I can honestly say that out of the deepest pain has come the strongest conviction of the presence of God and the love of God."* - Elizabeth Elliot
15. Tertullian's words from the second century remain true: *"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."*

Open your Hearts today:

1. So it is my earnest prayer that each of you will open your hearts this morning and hear our Father speak to you.
2. I honestly believe that if we really grasp the magnitude and majesty of Father God, His precious Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit who has come to guide and lead us, then we would live life completely differently.
3. Unfortunately, I believe that some are in fact practicing a version of Christianity, and you feel it is not giving you anything anymore; there is just nothing of substance anymore
4. I hope that you will be revitalized and challenged, and inspired to live the Christian life you are designed to live
5. So, let me ask you this - what if it is time for a new phase in the unfolding mission God intends for those who seek to know, love, and serve God?
6. What if our personal experiences of frustration are surface manifestations of a deeper movement of God's Spirit?
7. Folks there is a new way of living – it is not religion, but relationship.

8. Unfortunately, too many start a relationship with God but soon sink back into religion and ritual

In Search of Man:

1. When we understand that God is in search of man, our spiritual experience is greatly enhanced, but what does this mean?
2. We try to hear God's voice to find direction and spend hours in search of Him, only to find that He was always close by.
3. We consider God mysterious and almost unattainable, but the great mystery is that God is in search of *you*
4. Biblical history demonstrates how God "reveals" Himself
5. The history of the world, taken as a whole, is a story of sadness – a story of humanity without a father.
6. For many, the word father speaks of pain, hurt, and abandonment.
7. Too many people have lived without the nurturing, sustaining, strong, loving relationship with a man who is worthy of the title 'Father' and who has earned the right to be called Father.
8. Think with me – how do you think Our Heavenly Father sees this world, and what I am talking about is humanity – people
9. Surely that is where we need to start when we pray – asking Him to show us, people as He sees them?
10. I will say that when you ask this, your prayer life will change
11. For me, it seems important that we should keep in view the world in which we live today.
12. A world that literally is groaning under the weight of sin and oppression.
13. A world of war and violence and confusion and destruction.
14. It is a world that is not safe for little people, it is a world where 40% of children in the United States are born out of wedlock.
15. In the US, 7/10 girls and 4/10 boys are abused in the US
16. It is a world where trafficking is at epidemic proportions.
17. Where more than 105,000 people die from an overdose
18. We live in a fallen world in desperate need of a Savior
19. He says to us, *"I know you live in a world of wounds and sickness and war, and pain and sorrow and hopelessness and loneliness and abandonment."*
20. The questioning about that son, daughter, friend, parent, neighbor, He says I am with you in all that confusion and pain

What is in a Name?

1. ***1 Timothy 2:1-4 "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."***
2. Paul tells us to pray for all people – who are your "all people?"
3. At present, there are about 8 billion of us, and no generation alive has ever prayed for every person alive in their generation.
4. But in **Revelation 21**, there's an Angel, and there's a book called The Lamb's Book of Life, and he's writing down names – individual names, not people groups.

5. Let me say this - God is not a grandpa. He's the father - He only has children who come one at a time.
6. **Matthew 22:37 – “What's the greatest command? “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength, and the second commandment is like unto it. Love your neighbor as yourself.”**
7. Love them well, because love wins and prayer works.
8. He wants to use you to be a missionary with your family, at your work, and in your community
9. So we're undertaking this mission with other churches from around the world, to pray for 8 billion people by name.
10. You may be thinking – That is totally insane.
11. But we have a really simple strategy.
12. Think about 5 people you can pray for - can you do that?
13. So, the idea is that every believer prays for five people
14. So, here's the simple strategy – using this acronym B-L-E-S-S.
15. These letters stand for
 - **B. - Begin with Prayer.**
 - **L - Listen to them.**
 - **E. - Eat with them**
 - **S. - Serve them**
 - **S. – Share with them**
16. Are there 5 people you can pray for just 5 minutes a day?
17. If you're not ready for five, start with one.
18. Imagine if each of you reached one person for Christ. The church would double in one year.

Commitments:

1. I know **Romans 11:6 says, “I'm not ashamed of the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.”**
2. But start with the command **Love your neighbor as yourself.**
3. So I want to ask you to make 5 commitments today.
4. I am going to give you 5 verbs, 5 actions, 5 commitments.
5. Let love lead the way as you listen to them, eat with them, serve them,
6. Let the Spirit move you and lead you as to where and how and when to share the gospel.
7. Start with your 5 and BLESS THEM
8. Because prayer changes everything.