



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

October 6, 2019

If ...

Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you. ... Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.

—Genesis 28:15, 20-21

All we like sheep have gone astray (Isaiah 53:6a). That truth hasn't changed in 2500 years—a truth that troubles our homes and dominates the news. Any honest self-evaluation will have to admit it, and God's Word promises that self-examination and confession lead to forgiveness and cleansing. It also gives insight into the ways we tend to stray.

We have little trouble recalling in the lives of Isaac's family. Jacob bought his Esau's birthright for some lentil stew. Then, with his mother's help, he deceived his father by pretending to be his brother and lying to Isaac's face to get his blessing. When Esau threatened to kill him, Jacob ran away and had a vision of a ladder going up to heaven, with angels going up and down on it. But what on earth does this all mean?

These stories are the Bible's early lessons on how to walk with God—and how Not to walk with Him. A kind of a "Faith 101." They teach us by example how God's children stray and how He faithfully brings us back. We take these lessons to heart, by comparing our lives today to their lives back then.

Take Jacob, for example. God clearly and spectacularly promised to be with him wherever he went and to bring him back home safe and sound. Jacob's response was a model of thickheaded unbelief. *"If God will be with me and will keep me ... and will give me bread ... and clothing and ... I come again to my father's house ..., then the LORD shall be my God* (28:21-22). Jacob rejected God's unqualified promise to protect and provide for him, put himself in control, and dictated terms to God.

Fear dominated Jacob's life—Not faith. Like sheep—and like Jacob—we stray from God when ...

- We focus on our needs and not on God. Jacob was preoccupied with the things of earth, not on the promise of God. He focused entirely on the stuff he needed, so he could never rest in the God who promised to provide it. Still, God poured out His blessing on Jacob, just as He promised, but Jacob was a troubled man, who wrestled with God until God had to pin him down. And his children turned out disobedient and troubled.
- We rely on our ability not God's. Doing things his way, Jacob substituted deceit for obedience and trickery for honesty. He paid for it dearly, fleeing from home, living in conflict, and never seeing his mother again. Still, God blessed Jacob, kept him safe, and brought him home, as He promised.
- We set conditions on our obedience and put ourselves in control. Faith lets God be in control. That's not our nature. Jacob's conditional obedience put him in control of events, so he could make a mess of God's plan. God gave him twelve sons, but they lived in the conflict between Jacob's two wives. He had abundant wealth, but he could never enjoy it in peace.

Fear dissipates and peace comes, when we let God define the outcomes of our faith and the answers to our prayers. His plan is not always easy, but it's always the better way. Isaac dropped the baton of faith by not teaching his sons to let God be God and trust Him to keep His promises.

Promises like, *do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 4:6-7).

Cultivate the habit of trusting prayer, and pass it on to your children, for the sake of your peace and to the praise of God's glory.

The Power of Prayer in Our Lives

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. —John 1:5

God has chosen His people to shine the light of truth and righteousness to the world. Northpoint is God's light, shining in the darkness. We don't gather every week to enjoy spending time with people who share our values. We gather to be equipped by God's Word and His Spirit so we can go out into the world to declare that our God reigns and that Jesus saves.

Ask God to accomplish His work in us and through us, as individuals and as a church body. Pray for ...

- God's Word to convict us and His Spirit to cleanse us of sin
- Confidence in the power of the Gospel to redeem others through us
- Clear prompting and guidance in sharing the Gospel with people around us
- God's power to save souls and change lives through our ministry

As we seek the Lord for new leadership at Northpoint, pray for our pastors—present and future—to be men who know how to ...

- Lead skillfully and effectively
- Preach God's Word clearly and faithfully
- Rely on the Holy Spirit completely
- Demonstrate integrity and accountability to God and church leadership

Prayer for Our Leaders

Ask God to watch over our leaders, direct their steps, and accomplish His purpose, Pray for ...

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, Vinoj Zechariah, and new elders who will soon come onto the board.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Chelsae Grant, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Tamene Menna, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. —Deuteronomy 31:8