



PRAYER GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

How do humans experience transformation at the most fundamental level?

If you answer “Jesus”, you’re not wrong! But on an earthly level, how do we transform? In a single line, Paul pulls back the curtain with a compelling answer: *“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18).*

What we behold, we become - there’s our answer. How profound that the very thing (or Person!) we stop to stare at, to love and cherish, to analyze and imitate...that’s who we are molded into. This is true for all humans; but for Christians, we aren’t haphazard about who we behold. We are intentional about our transformation. And transformation isn’t mere change. If you change, you can always change back, but not so with transformation – consider the butterfly.

By beholding the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into His likeness.

This is why we behold Jesus – to become like Him. In this remarkable, God-ordained next season of C3, our longing is to desire more Jesus. We are on a journey to bring our vision for our city and beyond to fruition at a whole new level by sacrificially giving.

**This next season is a
spiritual season.**

**A transforming season.
A season of beholding God.**

**Which means this next season
is a season of prayer.**

Prayer is how we behold God. There, with His Word opened before us, the sacred conversation, the beholding occurs. He has spoken and continually speaks. And we respond. Prayer, then, is active. In it we are forged into the likeness of Jesus. During prayer, we are transformed because we are beholding God.

It's no wonder Jesus commands us to pray! Our Lord doesn't do it to paralyze us with guilt! And neither does he merely suggest it. Jesus commands us to plead for grace, to cry out for help, to request God's good gifts and presence, and to intercede (at the very throne of grace!) on behalf of others, because He knows what brings us transformation.

We don't want to squander this intense season of spiritual growth! Let's behold the glory of the Lord and expect to be transformed.

HOW TO USE

1

We're on this prayer journey as a church. So, right off the bat, go and link arms with some people to hold you accountable, to pray with, and to bounce ideas and thoughts off of. Don't delay!

2

Next, you have twenty-one days to pray fifteen times, which means we've cushioned in some margin. Why? Because we all tend to miss a day (or three). Ideally, it makes the most sense to pray Monday-Friday, take Saturday off from this guide (but still pray), and then take Sunday to gather corporately. That said, *let this resource serve you, not rule you in your time with the Lord.*

3

Over the course of three weeks, we will unpack Ephesians 3:14-21, our core passage in this season. Each week carries a primary theme, and each day is broken into three headings:

- + *Hearing from God*
- + *Engaging with God*
- + *Praying to God*

4

You'll see a clause from the passage, a succinct devotional that both informs and inspires, and finally some sort of springboard into prayer. Jesus warns that prayers without variety eventually become words without meaning (Matthew 6:7), which is why we've provided space for writing. Please consider using it!

5

Finally, take a posture of confidence in this. The Bible says, *"And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him."* (1 John 5:14-15).

Church, let's pray...



EPHESIANS 3:14-21

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way...”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-11



WEEK 1

SOW

In this first week of praying, we want to sow; that is, our desire is to plant seeds. It is a wonderful thing to expect a grand end result, whether that's with this season of giving, building, or even with our lives. But every end result has a beginning. It starts now with the pleadings of God's people, quietly and consistently, yet with power, before our God.

Let's be honest: most of us don't bring a glowing "resume" of prayer to this fifteen-day guide. But let's also be brave: if there were ever a time to sow into our lives and our church the seeds of prayer, it is now.

Together, let's commit!

DAY 1

HEAR FROM GOD

"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father" (v. 14)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

As we embark on this monumental journey in the life of our church, we follow Paul's God-centered language and thought. It's all about God. He is the point. Our role? To bow before Him. Let's begin this 15-day journey together in the proper posture, one of glad submission, and dependence. We want to make sure that, in our hearts, none of what's before us is about...us.

We are therefore calling for a 24-hour fast (if you are able/willing – feel the freedom to modify!) during the first week, dedicating that time to dependent prayer. Use the space given to write out what comes to your mind and heart over the course of these hours of fasting.

By abstaining from food, the dual focus for us is *humility* before God and *hunger* for God. Read Isaiah 58 for a helpful description of a fast that honors God.

Suggested thoughts:

Where have you been depending on yourself? Where have you made things about yourself? What are your legitimate fears, worries and anxieties as we start this season of giving as a church? What are your hopes and dreams for this future building?

Offer the season (and years) ahead to God. Pray that we, as Christ Community Church, would bow on our knees before the Father, in all things, in all ways, for all time, as we seek to live out our vision to be: *a community transformed by grace, sent to transform the world, for the glory of God.*

PRAY TO GOD

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

DAY 2

HEAR FROM GOD

"I bow my knees before the Father" (v. 14)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

As we fast and pray today, our sustaining hope is that we bow down to a *Father*. Our God is not like our earthly fathers, even when they're faithful and good. He is surpassingly glorious. He strengthens and loves us, as this passage will make clear. He doesn't belittle or betray us, like what we sometimes experience here on earth. Our Father is also not like the "gods" of other religions and spiritual paths. He is holy and gracious, the great I AM and Abba. This is why we, His children, possess this sacred tension of being both reverent and personal with Him – and experiencing both fear and intimacy with Him.

Practically, it is a Father who's guiding our church. Ponder that for a long moment. Does this quell any fears? What if He's not setting us up only to tear us down? No, we trust that He is strengthening and loving our church family so we can bring His strength and love to share with our community and world. And we trust He's multiplying that vision right now by providing us with a home base, a building!

PRAY TO GOD

How does viewing this journey through the lens of a Father guiding us fundamentally quell your fears, worries, and anxieties?

How does viewing God as Father build confidence in you to approach Him with your needs and requests?

DAY 3

HEAR FROM GOD

“from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named”
(v. 15)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

Naming implies dominion. God calls out every star by name (Isaiah 40:26) and Adam named Eden’s animals (Genesis 2:19-20).

Think about your family for a moment; go on, let their uniqueness fill your heart and mind. There is so much emotion welling up, and quite the variety, isn’t there?! Now think about other families you know. Each of them – all of them – belong in this sense to God. He is Creator. Not only is God the inventor of the family unit, He thought y’all up and designed you! Specifically!

As Paul is ramping up towards a magnificent prayer in this passage (he actually begins in the next verse!), so we ourselves are ramping up. It is a season of giving, which demands dependence on the God we belong to. Armed with God-centered thoughts, let’s stand in awe at the scope of our Father’s greatness: that He is Creator and Lord over every family.

It is a refreshing perspective to consider our church as a family quilt, knit together by God. And He did it inside a school auditorium. But a new beginning is approaching. What desires and prayers do you have for your family, and for all of Little Rock's families, with this new beginning – this new building?

Take time now to pour them out to the Lord. Whatever you're led to write down, plan to reread it frequently in the years to come, watching for God's faithfulness...

PRAY TO GOD

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

DAY 4

HEAR FROM GOD

“that according to the riches of his glory” (v. 16)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

God is not limited to our asks. His generosity isn't bound to our imaginations. His actions towards us are not according to us...but to Him! That might be strange language, in that we don't regularly speak that way. But all it means is that when God decides to give to us, He doesn't first check our “Ability Bank” and then give us what we've earned, or what we're capable of. Instead, He reaches into His own account, His own “riches” found within His own heart – and lavishes us according to that.

As Paul's monumental prayer begins, notice again how God is front and center. We too, are a God-centric people who celebrate that His responses to our (let's be honest, often) meager prayers are according to His wealth, His riches, His radiance, His grace, His power, His glory!

This mean our prayers need to get bigger, y'all! Let's sow into the kingdom seeds of ambitiously God-centric prayers!

Today, we're going to get brave and biblical. In your time with Him alone, with family, in a Bible study or Community Group, call upon your God to do things in this season of giving that outreach your belief and ability. His giving surpasses your wildest asking!

PRAY TO GOD

BIG
Prayer #1

BIG
Prayer #2

BIG
Prayer #3

DAY 5

HEAR FROM GOD

“he may grant you to be strengthened with power” (v. 16)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

Christianity requires strength. Let’s face it, following Jesus is a lot of things, but it is not easy. Change, too, requires strength. We’re moving from Warrior Hall to “Tract 17” – although it’s the right move, it implies change; and although we follow Jesus, it won’t be easy.

But it’s tricky because despite strength being demanded of us, strength isn’t natural to us. We are weak. However, as we depend on our Father this week, He is granting us the necessitated strength according to the riches of His glory.

We’ve got a steep incline ahead of us. This journey will be filled with wonder, pleasure, and glory, but not ease. However our God is a strength-lending God. Let’s cling to Him. And as we close out Week #1, let’s sow into this season both our confession of unbelief and our assurance of God’s provision.

PRAY TO GOD

Use these questions to springboard you into prayer, for both confession and assurance.

- + Where is my unbelief and why is it there?
- + Are my doubts mastering me?
- + As I consider giving, am I depending on God?
- + How can I trust more in Him starting today?
- + Do I believe God is a strength-lending God?
- + What's the best thing that can happen during and following the Rooted Giving Campaign in the church, my family, and in my heart?

[illegible]

[illegible]

*“And we all, with unveiled face,
beholding the glory of the Lord, are
being transformed into the same image
from one degree of glory to another..”*

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

However you're entering this second week of prayer, keep your eyes on Jesus: not your previous week's successes or failures. We have sowed. And now we aim to grow. This is true for us as believers. Our expectation is that we are rooted in order to reach. It is also true for our church. This building is in no way the point. We view it as a tool in God's hands, a conduit of the gospel ministry that will transform us, our community, and our world, all for the glory of Christ Jesus. We give, therefore, not towards a static cost but as a God-centered investment. Let's never shy away from growing, from advancing, from shining all the brighter in a world desperate to be found and safe in the arms of Jesus.

Let's grow!

DAY 6

HEAR FROM GOD

“through the Spirit in your inner being” (v. 16)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

It takes strength to grow. Whether that’s venturing beyond comfort zones or defying gravity, strength enables growth. But weakness snuffs it out.

This has been Paul’s concern so far – if Christians aren’t vigorously strengthened by the Holy Spirit, but instead are weak, we will not be effective in our calling.

We are soon to begin construction on a building, a project in a world hostile to the gospel, a project in an economic season that lends itself to hitting pause. Yet the Lord has called us to grow, and so we must be strong. But this is only the starting line, because a building is merely a conduit of gospel ministry, which will demand even more growth, and more strength from us.

It looks like we’re going to need God! And He has drawn near. It is none other than God the Spirit who personally mediates the Father’s strength to us. God is so near to you that He has made His home in you and looks to inject strength directly into your “inner beings.”

Your innermost self – personality, giftings, character – is given power to radiate Christ. As you, therefore, grow and experience weakness, continually ask for strength – and He will give it.

PRAY TO GOD

Use Psalm 60 as a guide to prayer today.

Notice: The confession of weakness; how strength is required; from where strength comes; and, finally, in rereading the first and last verses of the psalm, ask, “What made the change in his attitude?”

Hint: It is by praying that the Father strengthens us through Spirit into our inner being.

[illegible]

DAY 7

HEAR FROM GOD

“so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (v. 17)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

It can be refreshing to zoom out sometimes, don't you think? Like standing atop Pinnacle's summit and just taking it in. We've been marching through the intricate Pauline clauses of an ancient letter. Let's zoom out.

What is Christ Community Church all about? Actually, let's go further up: why did God think up the Church and plan for local churches to riddle the far reaches of His green earth? Let's use the language of verse 17: *so that Christ might dwell in the hearts of ex-rebels who have placed their faith in Him.*

Feel the force of these words: Paul is praying that the very character of Jesus would increasingly shape and dominate the whole being – the thinking, acting, feeling, and willing – of the Christian. The hallmark of the Christian's life is Christ, this is what the Spirit brings to us with power (v. 16).

So, as we start to zoom back in, why this building? We desire nothing less than for Christ to shape the city of Little Rock, which starts with us – but that desire moves outward fast. That's why this building is one of the most important things we will ever be a part of.

It is a historic moment for Little Rock. And it is a piece of God's redemptive plan over human history in action. We desire for Christ to dwell in the hearts of every single resident of our town. Let's go to Jesus now carrying that burden.

PRAY TO GOD

Thank Jesus for shaping your heart ever since your conversion.

Ask Him to continually shape your heart, even now, more than ever.

Plead with Jesus to use this building to make Ephesians 3:17 a reality in our city.

DAY 8

HEAR FROM GOD

“that you, being rooted and grounded in love” (v. 17)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

How are Christians to be identified? What is the characteristic mark of our heart and life? The answer is not up for debate, not where Jesus is concerned: it is by our love for one another (John 13:35).

The soil of our moving and going, the foundation of our lives, is love. Vertically, it is God’s love for us in Christ that secures us. His love is our base, our motivation, our hope, and our joy. Remember verse 14, it is a Father who is guiding us! And from 1 John 4:16 we know that love isn’t just something God does but is.

Horizontally, this love we are rooted and grounded in is our love for others. It must define who we are to the watching world. If it doesn’t, we are off. The aroma (or “vibe” for the young readers) of the Christian is life-giving, self-forgetting love.

Now, we all know a building in itself cannot love. It is cold and empty left to itself. But the people who fill it can. So, let’s turn our hearts toward this future building. What do you want it to feel like, the very culture of it, for all who walk in? We hope your answer begins with love! It starts with Jesus’ love towards the undeserving, but it continues with you. Will you welcome every single person who enters with the same love you’ve received from heaven?

What a glorious thing to pray for! May people be drawn by the irresistible aroma of Christ emanating from those who gather at this new building (2 Corinthians 2:15)!

PRAY TO GOD

This is an excerpt from The Valley of Vision, a prayer entitled, “The Love of Jesus.” Use this to pray to God today.

But my love is frost and cold, ice and snow;
Let his love warm me,
lighten my burden,
be my heaven;
May it be more revealed to me in all its influences
that my love to him may be more fervent
and glowing;
Let the mighty tide of his everlasting love
cover the rocks of my sin and care;
Then let my spirit float above those things
which had else wrecked my life.

Make me fruitful by living to that love,
my character becoming more beautiful every day.
If traces of Christ’s love-artistry be upon me,
may he work on with his divine brush
until the complete image be obtained
and I be made a perfect copy of him,
my Master.

DAY 9

HEAR FROM GOD

“may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth” (v. 18)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

The operative word here is “comprehend.” We are living in a truly thoughtless age, where deep thought about one’s belief and lifestyle isn’t the norm. Christians are joyously given an alternative to this departure from truth by *comprehending*...by always having our wits about us.

We are to comprehend what’s true. That sounds vague, but it’s meant to hit us at the most practical level. Well, what’s true? Reread verse 18: all of this strength is given to us so we can comprehend *Christ’s love for us*: “the breadth and length and height and depth.” That’s what’s true! Jesus loving you is nothing less than the very heart of reality. It is our shield and purpose, joy and hope.

Jesus’ love is the power coursing its way through the universe, intertwining with every aspect and situation of our lives with a white-hot intensity; but we often miss it because we don’t ask God for strength to comprehend it.

So, that's what you are about to do: comprehend Jesus' love *for you*. It's why you exist; why you belong to a church placing roots in this community. You desire for others to come to grips with God's love for them in Christ!

PRAY TO GOD

Commit to intercessory prayer today. What five people will you specifically pray for? Keep your focus on Christ's love for them *and* their comprehension of it.

PERSON #1

PERSON #2

PERSON #3

PERSON #4

PERSON #5

HEAR FROM GOD

“and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge” (v. 19)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

At the heart of every Christian doctrine is a paradox. Is God three or one? Is Jesus God or man? Who wrote the letter titled *Ephesians*, Paul or the Holy Spirit? The answer to these, of course, is, “Well, both.” Reread verse 19 again and try to answer this question: Do we know or not know Christ’s love for us?

It’s rationally infuriating to read that Paul is praying for us to know what’s *unknowable*! The Bible takes our minds and knowledge seriously. Yesterday we were to “comprehend” and today we are to “know.” Still, Christ’s love is so immense that its vastness bests our brains. Its depth, weight, and greatness outreach our what our mind can compute.

And yet, we are all called to know it. What a mystery! It is already ours and yet we grow closer to it in knowledge every day – all the way into eternity. How incredible!

As Week #2 closes, let’s rejoice that our Jesus isn’t out to get us. He’s not holding back His heart from us. Instead, He is growing us individually and as a church by extending a love toward us so profound we can’t even grasp it. But we must try. Because it is ours to pass down. It is, as we’ll see, our ultimate legacy.

PRAY TO GOD

Review the last five days' worth of notes and use it for your prayer today. In all of it, ask God for growth. For you and your home, for your church, for God's name in this city, for His glory among the nations. Where does a building play into all of it? Pray big – His love is so intimate toward you.

[illegible]

*“Let this be recorded for a generation
to come, so that a people yet to be
created may praise the Lord.”*

PSALM 102:18



As we enter Week #3, it's go-time. It's now time to look over the ridge, beyond ourselves, and into the eyes of the next generation.

What do we want for them?

- + Pause for a moment. Dig deep.
- + Draw a serious answer from your heart's depth.
- + Don't move on until you've supplied a response.
- + *Reflect.*

What do you want for the generations to come?

Make it personal: What will you give them?

As it turns out, they will not remember us chiefly for what we tell them with words, but for what overflows from our lives. That which fills us is what overflows onto them. Let's hold that thought sacred as we enter this third and final week of church-wide prayer.

HEAR FROM GOD

“that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (v. 19)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

How bold are we allowed to be as we approach the throne of grace? This clause is the gold standard! Paul’s prayer ends climactically. It’s a battle cry, a vision of what the Christian life is and is to become. To be filled with all the fullness of God! What a reminder that whatever fills us up ultimately overflows from us.

Consider what the best gift is that we can leave for the coming generations. By the way, don’t keep “the coming generations” in the hypothetical bucket. Take a stroll through C3 Kids and C3 Students. It gets real, real fast!

What’s better than that we are filled with all the fullness of God?!

As Paul’s prayer concludes with this clause, the words he has used so far in the prayer are influencing these words:

We are filled:

- + with strength through the Spirit
- + by Christ taking up residence in our hearts
- + in laboring to comprehend and know the love of Christ

This leads to *divine fullness*. Let’s not water down that biblical phrase but step up into it.

Church, we must move past personal salvation being the goal of Christianity. That's just the start! We want to be filled with God so that we overflow with God. Future generations need that from us.

PRAY TO GOD

As you think of the next generation, who specifically comes to mind?

How might your being filled with all the fullness of God help them?
Be specific.

How does a church building aid this high calling?

HEAR FROM GOD

"Now to him who is able" (v. 20)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

Paul's prayer has ended, and his doxology begins. A doxology is a statement or declaration of praise. Paul has reached the height of theology (which we've been experiencing these past two weeks) and now humbly bows before his God, in worship.

A right view of God (theology) ought to elevate our hearts to begin immediately praising Him (doxology). That's even the purpose of these devotionals: for us to encounter the real, biblical God who has spoken, which then spurs our hearts to praise Him in prayer!

The object of your highest praise is obvious to the next generation. They see it, for it overflows from you. Is it God? Or is it something else? We want to get this right. Our desire is to be singularly minded on praising God. With our passion, our schedules, our gifts, our bank account, our time, and our affections.

Specifically, Paul is praising God's *power*... His *ability* (they are synonyms). He is praising that God *is* able. There is nothing He cannot do. Tomorrow, we'll get into the specifics. But for today, let's conclude with this thought: your life is a doxology, it is a statement of praise. To the next generation watching, what is your life praising?

PRAY TO GOD

This is an excerpt from *The Valley of Vision*, a prayer entitled, “Praise and Thanksgiving.” Make God “the first of all objects” today. Then get up and do it again tomorrow!

Thou fairest, greatest, first of all objects,
my heart admires, adores, loves thee,
for my little vessel is as full as it can be,
and I would pour out all that fullness before thee
in ceaseless flow.

When I think upon and converse with thee
ten thousand delightful thoughts spring up,
ten thousand sources of pleasure are unsealed,
ten thousand refreshing joys spread over my heart,
crowding into every moment of happiness.

HEAR FROM GOD

“to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us” (v. 20)

ENGAGE WITH GOD

Have you ever lacked words to describe something? Have you experienced an event or moment that you stammered to put words to? Here we catch Paul grasping for Greek words, trying to chain them together, using the height of his rhetoric ability, all in the attempt to express God's power.

It's not just that God is able to do...

- + what we can ask
- + what we fail to ask, but can still think up
- + more than what we can ask or think

It's that God is able to do *abundantly more* than what we can ask or think. *And that power is at work within us!*

Paul's doxology is that God, in love, is more capable than our wildest imagination. It is a fact of every Christian that, biblically, our prayers are too small! He can do more. Where are your doubts about the future of our church and the prospects of a financial sacrifice?

Where is your excitement about the gospel ministry our church will engage in this next season?

What are you begging God for as you think about what's overflowing from you and onto the generations to come?

Defy your doubt. Stretch your mind. Plead now at the gut level. What are your prayers to God? Go big!

PRAY TO GOD

Below, write out your three biggest prayers...of all time.

BIG

Prayer #1

BIG

Prayer #2

BIG

Prayer #3
