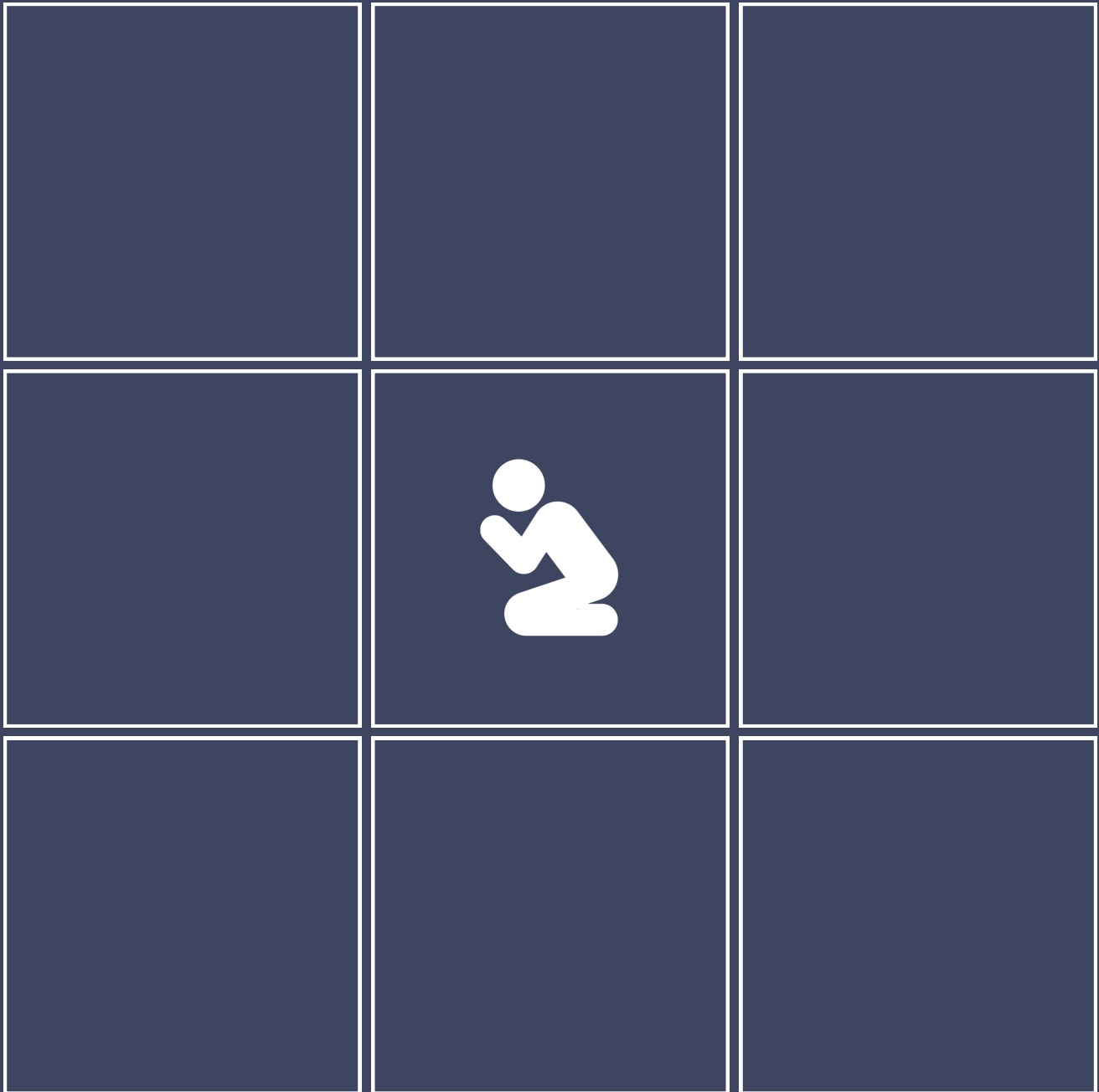


EVERYDAY EVANGELISM

Learning to Intercede



LEARNING TO INTERCEDE

Small Group Study Guide

Overview

“Be persistent in prayer and watch how God changes things.”

In this teaching, Jay shares a personal story about how persistent, intentional prayer preceded his own conversion to faith. A classmate named Johnny, someone he had argued with and dismissed, put his name in a Bible and prayed for him. Dozens of others did too. And something shifted. This guide invites your group to reflect on the mystery and power of praying for people far from God and to take a practical step of their own.

Key Ideas

Four movements from the teaching:

1. Persistent personal prayer is foundational to evangelism.
2. Transformation usually happens through relationships, not arguments.
3. God often works through unexpected people and moments.
4. Faith grows through consistent presence and love, not persuasion.

Icebreaker

Choose one to open your time together (5–10 min):

1. What’s a story you have of answered prayer? What was it? How long did it take?
2. Has someone ever done something unexpectedly kind for you that you only found out about later? What was it like to learn about it?
3. Is there someone from your past who you now realize was quietly rooting for you or praying for you? Who were they?

Watch the Video

Discussion Questions

Part 1: The Mystery of Prayer

Key idea: Prayer works. Even when we can't fully explain how.

1. Jay says, "I don't have a great theology for this. I don't quite know how it works." How do you hold the mystery of prayer alongside your faith that it actually does something?
2. Jay describes a change in his heart toward Johnny that same weekend people began praying for him. Have you ever experienced a shift in your heart toward someone or something that you couldn't fully explain? What happened?
3. What does it tell us about God that he would use the prayers of a group of teenagers to pursue one person who had never asked to be prayed for?

Part 2: Praying for Specific People

Key idea: Intercession is personal and persistent, not vague.

1. Jay keeps a list of 10 people he prays for every day. What do you think changes in us when we commit to praying for specific people by name?
2. He mentions that sometimes the person comes to faith through someone else entirely (a neighbor, a coworker) but he still felt like a part of it through prayer. How does that shape how you think about your role in someone's spiritual journey?
3. Jay received a sudden prompting to call a friend and discovered that friend was contemplating suicide at that exact moment. How do you respond to stories like that? What does it stir in you?

Part 3: The Saul/Paul Connection

Key idea: No one is too far gone. God pursues the most unlikely people.

1. The preacher at Johnny's camp challenged students to think of someone who was far from Christ but had a leadership calling on their life. Who comes to mind for you when you hear that prompt?
2. Saul was actively working against the church when God intervened. What does his story say about who is a "good candidate" for God's pursuit?
3. Jay describes himself at that time as a bully who kicked someone in the hallway. How does the gap between who he was and who he became shape your hope for the people you're praying for?

Part 4: The Practice of Intercession

Key idea: Prayer for others is a discipline that can be cultivated.

1. Jay suggests a physical token like a rock in your pocket or a list on the fridge as a prompt to pray. What rhythms or reminders help you stay consistent in prayer?

2. What's the difference between occasionally hoping someone comes to faith and actively, persistently praying for them by name? Which describes your current practice?
3. What would need to change in your week for intentional intercession to become a genuine habit?

Scripture

Read one or more of these together and discuss how they connect to the teaching:

- Acts 9:1–19 - The conversion of Saul (the story Johnny's camp preacher told)
- Acts 10:1–4 - Cornelius's prayers reach God; Peter is sent to him
- Acts 16:9–10 - Paul's vision of the Macedonian man; God directs through prayer
- Ephesians 6:18–20 - Paul asks others to pray that he would boldly proclaim the gospel
- Luke 18:1–8 - The parable of the persistent widow; keep praying and don't give up
- Romans 10:1 - Paul's heart's desire and prayer for his people to be saved

Application

Take a few minutes individually before sharing with the group.

The challenge:

Write down the names of people you sense God calling you to pray for. Aim for somewhere between 3 and 10. These should be real people in your life, friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, who are far from Jesus.

This week, take one of these steps:

1. Write your list somewhere you'll see it daily: your phone lock screen, the bathroom mirror, the front of your Bible.
2. Find a small physical reminder like a stone, a card, or a bracelet to carry with you as a prompt to pray for your list.
3. If appropriate, let one person on your list know that you're praying for them. Notice what happens.
4. Share your list with someone in this group so you can pray for each other's people together.

Ministry Time

A practical way to close your time together:

Invite everyone to say one name out loud. Someone they want to pray for. Don't share backstory; just the name. Then spend two or three minutes in silent prayer, each person praying for every name that was spoken, listening to God to see if any prophetic insights come up for that person. Feel free to share those insights, if relevant and if led, when you interact with that person.

Closing Prayer

When everyone is finished, close with a simple spoken prayer:

God, we bring these names before you. You know every one of them better than we do. You love them more than we can. We don't fully understand how prayer works but we trust that you do. Soften hearts. Open doors. Send people. And make us the kind of friends who persist in prayer even when we see nothing yet.

Amen.

Leader Notes

Tips for facilitating this discussion well:

- Jay is honest that he doesn't fully understand how intercessory prayer works. Give your group permission to sit in that mystery rather than needing to resolve it.
- The story of the friend contemplating suicide is heavy. Acknowledge it gently. If anyone in your group is struggling, create space for that conversation.
- The application here is unusually concrete: making a list and committing to pray. Don't skip it. Give group members time to actually write names during your gathering.
- Some people in your group may have someone they've been praying for for years without visible fruit. Honor that faithfulness. The teaching is an encouragement to persist, not a formula.
- Consider closing with the Ministry Time exercise above and simply saying names aloud with no explanation. It can be a surprisingly powerful experience.