

# **PRAYING WITH JESUS:**

**40 DAYS TOWARD CHURCH  
REVITALIZATION.**



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## **Resolving Our Differences (Days 16-19)**

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**TRUE WAY BAPTIST CHURCH**

**2020.**

**Adapted from**



# DAY SIXTEEN



The spectacular views of the Grand Canyon remind us not only of God's greatness and His sovereign rule over His creation, but also the deep chasms that can occur in a church family that often precipitate the need for the revitalization your church family now seeks.

## CONFLICT, DISAGREEMENT, RESOLVE

Bill Henard, in his book Can These Bones Live?, says that "One of the primary reasons that a church turns inward comes from present or past conflicts within the congregation," and that "problems and conflicts occur in all churches of all sizes," and that "unforgiveness represents the foremost internal conflict most often ignored in the church" (Chapter 8). Unforgiving hearts are usually one of the primary causes of spiritual decline both personally and within the church. That's why there are so many exhortations in the Bible like these:

- *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).*
- *"So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you" (Colossians 3:12-13).*

## PRAY...

Father God, I thank you that in Christ You have forgiven me all my sins and reckoned me as righteous through the atonement of Christ. I have gladly received Your forgiveness; make me equally glad to extend the same forgiveness to those who offend, disappoint, or hurt me. Transform my tendency to hold grudges into Christlike mercy toward others. Dissolve all my inner bitterness and unforgiveness in the shed blood of Jesus, and restore to me a clean heart out of which I gladly forgive others. I ask this in Your Son's Name, Amen.

# DAY SEVENTEEN

*THEREFORE, IF YOU ARE PRESENTING YOUR OFFERING AT THE ALTAR, AND THERE REMEMBER THAT YOUR BROTHER HAS SOMETHING AGAINST YOU, LEAVE YOUR OFFERING THERE BEFORE THE ALTAR AND GO; FIRST BE RECONCILED TO YOUR BROTHER, AND THEN COME AND PRESENT YOUR OFFERING.” (MATTHEW 5:23-24)*

## RECONCILIATION

I had not been their pastor very long. In an effort to become acquainted with the older members of the congregation, I invited one long-time member to be my visitation partner for a few months. The first time we went visiting together he surprised me at the end of the afternoon. Pulling into the church parking lot he reached into his shirt pocket to reveal a note card with the names of ten men written on it. “Pastor,” he began, “these ten men have deeply offended me and I want them brought before the church to answer for what they have done.” As we talked, I learned that he had been carrying this list of names around for more than three years, but had never attempted reconciliation with any one of them. Biblical reconciliation was missing from his demand; he was only interested in revenge.

Perhaps you need to be reconciled to a brother or sister in Christ. Perhaps others in your church family are at distant odds over some issue or another. Regardless what the offense, without forgiveness and reconciliation, your church will continue to struggle and revitalization attempts will be stymied.

## PRAY...

Lord Jesus, we are a broken people, and among us we have broken relationships that, apart from Your grace, will continue to hamper the fellowship and the effectiveness of our church. Please show Yourself strong by surfacing every previous offense that is strangling us, and compel us, by Your Holy Spirit, to speak the truth in love to one another and to offer to one another the same forgiveness which You have so generously given to us. Please break down every stronghold of bitterness and unforgiveness in our fellowship, and replace it with the fruit of Your Holy Spirit. I humbly ask in Your Name. Amen.

# DAY EIGHTEEN

“God’s Word and Spirit are so powerful that they can not only build a healthy church, but even take a dying, broken, discouraged congregation and give it renewed life, causing it to flourish far beyond what its founders ever imagined.” These are words written by Pastor Brian Croft in his article “Five Unexpected Lessons in Church Revitalization,” and recorded in a 9Marks Journal entitled, *Revitalize: Why We Must Reclaim Dying Churches - and How*.

## GOD’S WORD

Read John 15:1-11

*Identify three things Jesus talks about in this passage that need to be either developed or initiated, or advanced among your church family. List them here as three specific prayer requests: “Father, shape us into a church that...*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Include these three prayer requests in your prayer below...*

## PRAY...

Jesus, thank you for teaching us in John 15 about faithfully abiding in You and Your Word, bearing fruit, being pruned, staying connected to You as our life source, prayer, obedience to Your commandments, love, and joy. Our church family is desperate for You to do a new work among us in these areas (include your prayer requests here)...

In Jesus’ Name I pray, Amen.

# DAY NINETEEN

Read Matthew 6:1-15

This passage of Scripture links prayer in a believer's life with at least three critical heart elements. These heart elements, when laid bare by the work of the Holy Spirit, reveal whether or not a believer is rightly aligned with God's heart:

- ❑ Theatrics = *"beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them"* (6:1,5)
- ❑ Verbosity = *"when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition"* (6:7)
- ❑ Forgiveness = *"forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"* (6:12,14-15)

## AUTHENTICITY

There is no place in Christ's church for hypocrisy. Jesus warned His followers not to make their faith activities a performance to impress others (Matthew 6:1,5,16). Neither should believers judge others because there is yet plenty in their own lives to be judged (Matthew 7:1-5). Instead Jesus both lived and taught authenticity in our relationship with Him and with one another. Are either of these statements true about you or about any one in your church family?

- *"This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me, but in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men"* (Matthew 15:8-9).
- *"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man..."* (Matthew 15:19-20a)

When we fail to be authentic with Jesus, we will undoubtedly be playing a masquerade with our fellow believers. Let's repent of our lack of authenticity and come clean with Jesus about our hypocrisy today.

## PRAY...

Father God, I want to come clean about my hypocrisy. It is creating chaos in my walk with You and in my relationships with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Please forgive me for not living an authentic Christian life, and by Your grace empower me to live soberly and uprightly in my walk with You and in my relationships with fellow believers. I desire to walk in the Light as You Yourself are the Light, so that I can have Biblical fellowship with other believers and so I can walk in authenticity with You. Be honored today in all my relationships, as I cast off hypocrisy and embrace the life of Christ. I ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

# DAY TWENTY

“BUT SEEK HIS KINGDOM, AND THESE THINGS WILL BE ADDED TO YOU.”  
(LUKE 12:31)

*What does it mean to “seek His Kingdom?” (be as concise as possible)*

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## A KINGDOM AGENDA

In the context of Luke 12 and Matthew 6, Jesus teaches that a Kingdom agenda means...

- A soul is more important than riches (Luke 12:16-21).
- Faith is more important than food, clothing, or life span (Luke 12:22-30).
- Eternity is more important than possessions (Luke 12:33-34).

*Do your personal priorities line up with those that Jesus prescribes? In what ways does your life currently reflect this agenda?*

*Do your church’s priorities line up with those that Jesus prescribes? In what ways does your church currently reflect this agenda?*

## PRAY...

Jesus, at least part of the reason our church needs Your revitalizing grace and restoration is because over time we have drifted away from Your Kingdom agenda. We have adopted our own agenda and we have lost sight of what You value. Please forgive us; please forgive me. We do not want to pursue our own agenda any longer. We long to pursue You, even as the deer pants for the water brook, O Lord, our souls long for You above all else. Please fill our hearts with renewed vigor to passionately pursue You and Your Kingdom agenda for our church. Set us free from the bondage of selfish and self-centered pursuits to hunger and thirst after righteousness alone. In Your Name I pray, Amen.