

HEAR
THEM
PRAY

FOLLOWING
THOSE
WHO CHANGED
THE WORLD
BY PRAYER

STUDY GUIDE

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HEAR THEM PRAY STUDY GUIDE

I believe a reader will get far greater benefit out of the book *Hear Them Pray* by prayerfully reflecting on it and answering the questions in this study guide. These aren't questions to make you scour the book for details or analyze the author's intent. Rather, they're designed to make you humbly ask yourself, "How do these truths from the Bible connect with my life? What is God saying to me personally?" I realize this involves one of the hardest tasks—thinking. But I believe, by God's grace, the payoff will be well worth the effort. I've tried to write the questions in helpful ways that make application easier rather than harder.

If you study in a group, I suggest that each reader spend time answering these questions alone with the Lord before discussing them together. I also recommend keeping your answers and the discussion focused on application—what specifically will I do differently this week? Many Christians know bucketloads of information about prayer. We might even feel bored by all we know. But actually engaging in a dynamic prayer life with God? There's nothing boring about that!

Group leaders, I recommend that instead of re-teaching the chapter content, you draw out what the participants learned by asking them the questions. Perhaps start with a comment about what impacted you personally. The first questions deal with the content, so new attendees will catch on to the general ideas. Everyone will probably learn better from hearing others' testimonies than from just a repetition of the material. The testimonies will also motivate those who didn't study to do the reading themselves before the next meeting.

Most importantly, I urge every reader to make prayer the atmosphere of the whole study. Pray before you read each chapter. Pray for insight as you answer the questions. Pray in response to what God speaks to you. If you're working together as a group, pray together—not just as an opening or closing exercise, but specifically practicing what you're learning and earnestly asking God as Christ's disciples did, "Teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). This study isn't about learning information. It's about your relationship with God. He's waiting to meet with you right now.

- J. B. Shepherd

CHAPTER 1

1. What detail or idea from the opening story section especially stands out to you? Why?

2. In what ways do you feel that you could relate to the main character's experience or feelings?

3. What idea or statement from the rest of the chapter especially stands out to you? Why?

4. How will the message of this chapter impact the way you pray?

5. What specific way would you like to respond in prayer to the Lord based on this chapter?

6. How do you think you might feel if God appeared to you in person the way He did to Abraham so that you could draw near to Him physically?

7. Do you feel a sense of awe toward God when you begin to pray? What practical steps might help you have a deeper sense of wonder and worship?

8. What practical steps might help you keep your attention on God as you speak with Him?

9. What people or situations do you think God is bringing to your attention because He wants you to pray for them?

10. Consider this quote about Abraham. "The power was not in the prayer, but in the God he prayed to." How can that truth be an encouragement to us regarding our own prayers?

CHAPTER 2

1. What detail or idea from the opening story section especially stands out to you? Why?

2. In what ways do you feel that you could relate to the main character's experience or feelings?

3. What idea or statement from the rest of the chapter especially stands out to you? Why?

4. How will the message of this chapter impact the way you pray?

5. What specific way would you like to respond in prayer to the Lord based on this chapter?

6. Have you ever accepted the Lord Jesus's gift of salvation for yourself? If not, would you turn from sin and trust in Him to save you now?

7. If your friend said, "I just don't feel like my prayers matter that much to God," how could the message of this chapter be a help?

8. How often do you skip praying or rush through your prayers?

9. List the top three challenges that make prayer hard for you.

10. How could the memory of Christ's sacrifice help you overcome those challenges and take more time for God?

11. If Christ went to such lengths to make the way for you to pray, do you think He'll also help you take that way?

CHAPTER 3

1. What detail or idea from the opening story section especially stands out to you? Why?

2. In what ways do you feel that you could relate to the main character's experience or feelings?

3. What idea or statement from the rest of the chapter especially stands out to you? Why?

4. How will the message of this chapter impact the way you pray?

5. What specific way would you like to respond in prayer to the Lord based on this chapter?

6. Jabez seemed to have life stacked against him from birth. He was concerned about having a life of pain. What circumstances do you experience that tempt you to feel that your life won't amount to much for the Lord?

7. Are you convinced that your heavenly Father is eager to bless you abundantly in the best ways? Why or why not?

8. Jabez was “more honorable” than many in his generation. Where he depended on God for victory, others could see only impossibilities. What “impossible” needs might this generation be ignoring, in spite of God’s clear calling?

9. What specific ways do you believe the Lord is leading you to work for His kingdom expansion?

10. What might enlarged borders of ministry look like in your life? Do you want enlarged borders, and are you persistently asking God to enlarge them in specific ways?

11. Will you make the resolution at the end of the chapter?

CHAPTER 4

1. What detail or idea from the opening story section especially stands out to you? Why?

2. In what ways do you feel that you could relate to the main character's experience or feelings?

3. What idea or statement from the rest of the chapter especially stands out to you? Why?

4. How will the message of this chapter impact the way you pray?

5. What specific way would you like to respond in prayer to the Lord based on this chapter?

6. Do you believe that your actions—right or wrong—have a significant impact on other people's lives?

7. What people in your life need you to intercede for them?

8. How do the two main principles in this chapter work together to answer the key question: "Can you really change their lives just by asking God?"

9. The section "Are Your Hands Lifted?" offers several suggestions regarding people and ways to intercede. Which of those suggestions especially hits home as a way you'd like to grow?

10. What specific time have you set aside in your regular schedule for interceding?

CHAPTER 5

1. What detail or idea from the opening story section especially stands out to you? Why?

2. In what ways do you feel that you could relate to the main character's experience or feelings?

3. What idea or statement from the rest of the chapter especially stands out to you? Why?

4. How will the message of this chapter impact the way you pray?

5. What specific way would you like to respond in prayer to the Lord based on this chapter?

6. What have you prayed for in the past and waited a long time before God answered?

7. What prayers are you currently waiting on God to answer?

8. Are there prayers you've given up on because of waiting so long?

9. Have you become at least partly disillusioned or discouraged regarding prayer because of the waiting process?

10. How can God's answer to Zechariah and Elizabeth's prayer strengthen your faith?

CHAPTER 6

1. What detail or idea from the opening story section especially stands out to you? Why?

2. In what ways do you feel that you could relate to the main character's experience or feelings?

3. What idea or statement from the rest of the chapter especially stands out to you? Why?

4. How will the message of this chapter impact the way you pray?

5. What specific way would you like to respond in prayer to the Lord based on this chapter?

6. What circumstances in your life right now are stirring up strong emotions?

7. Do you often bring those circumstances and emotions honestly before the Lord in prayer?

8. How can you be certain from the Bible that God feels deeply about your situation and your feelings?

9. In what areas of your prayer life is God pointing out calluses?

10. How could you intensify your prayers in a way that pleases the Lord?

11. What prayer need is important enough for you to fast and pray over? When will you do that fasting and praying?

CHAPTER 7

1. What detail or idea from the opening story section especially stands out to you? Why?

2. In what ways do you feel that you could relate to the main character's experience or feelings?

3. What idea or statement from the rest of the chapter especially stands out to you? Why?

4. How will the message of this chapter impact the way you pray?

5. What specific way would you like to respond in prayer to the Lord based on this chapter?

6. What are some of your biggest spheres of prayer that you typically pray for—either inside or outside your circle of influence?

7. Great faith comes from great assurances in God's Word. What verses do you claim or rely on in your praying?

8. Do you mostly pray generic blessings or do you take time to ask for very definite things related to specific areas of need?

9. If we limit our prayers to the people and ministries we're familiar with, many of the darkest places in the world—those that need prayer the most—would never get prayed for. Has God put a particular dark place on your heart? Would you pray for Him to give you a focused prayer burden like that?

CHAPTER 8

1. What detail or idea from the opening story section especially stands out to you? Why?

2. In what ways do you feel that you could relate to the main character's experience or feelings?

3. What idea or statement from the rest of the chapter especially stands out to you? Why?

4. How will the message of this chapter impact the way you pray?

5. What specific way would you like to respond in prayer to the Lord based on this chapter?

6. I highly encourage you to memorize John 14:12–14. What is the connection between Christ continuing His work through us (14:12) and our asking for things in His name (14:13–14)?

7. Do you see Christ's perfection as an excuse not to copy His prayer life? Or as an example to passionately pursue?

8. How often do you pray about your personal sanctification and victory over temptations? Are there times you should add this kind of praying?

9. Do you ask your friends and family members how you can pray for them? Do you write down those requests and remember them?

6. What is one of the hardest times for you that God has said no to something you prayed for?

CHAPTER 9

1. What detail or idea from the opening story section especially stands out to you? Why?

2. In what ways do you feel that you could relate to the main character's experience or feelings?

3. What idea or statement from the rest of the chapter especially stands out to you? Why?

4. How will the message of this chapter impact the way you pray?

5. What specific way would you like to respond in prayer to the Lord based on this chapter?

6. What is one of the hardest times for you that God has said no to something you prayed for?

7. Which do you value more—your personal comfort or your spiritual progress? How does that value make a difference in your attitude when God allows you to experience disappointment?

8. What are the reasons given in this chapter for being thankful that God sometimes says no? Can you think of any other reasons?

9. In the face of difficulties it may be hard to keep trusting God. What can you do in advance to prepare to fight the doubts that arise at such a time?
