



Pressure Points - The Power of Prayer

Week of Feb. 28- March 6, 2021

Key Message

It requires effort, but prayer has the power to shape our perspectives and our relationships.

Discuss

- What is/was your favorite exercise? What made it your favorite?
- Who taught you how to pray?
- When are the times in your life when you are most likely to pray?

Read and Discover

Read James 5:13-20 & I John 1:8-10

- What keeps many followers of Jesus from praying with confidence? How could this change?
- When all seems to be going well, why do you think it is critical to praise and thank God?
- Though Scripture highlights and emphasizes communal prayer and confession, why do we tend to resist both?
- What differences do you see between confessing to God and confessing to one another (I John 1:8-10 & James 5:16)?
- It's hard to imagine bolder, more confident faith than that which is displayed when one prays for a momentous weather change like Elijah. What things are you praying for that clearly demonstrate bold, expectant faith?
- Who do you share your struggles with sin and temptation with?

Application

- Which of the situations in which James tells us to pray for do you want to work on this week? (hardships, good times, sickness, confession, someone who might be wandering away)
- If you could call together all of God's people to pray for you in a specific way, what would it be?



- What lessons have stuck with you most from this whole study and series on the book of James?
- Close with an extended time of prayer.



Pressure Points - What's Your Plan?

Week of Feb. 21-27, 2021

Key Message

When you seek and follow God's will for your life, you will never end up disappointed.

Discuss

- Are you a person who hates change or someone who can more easily go with the flow?
- How do you prepare for family vacations? Detailed plan like Zach's family, rough idea, or totally wing it?

Read and Discover

Read James 4:13-17

- What questions does this passage raise for you?
- What role does God want to play in planning for our future?
- This past Wednesday was Ash Wednesday which is the start of the Lenten season in the church. During this season, historically, Christians have paused to reflect on their own mortality and the work of Jesus in their lives. How do James's words about the brevity of life make you feel?
- Given how long you think you could live, how can you best plan for the future with humility and faith?
- How can/do you best determine in your daily life what is sinful and what is pleasing to God?
- Staying connected to God best ensures that our life will stay on track. How are you intentional about staying connected to God? How might your life improve if you were more aware of God's presence and power from day to day?

Application

- What fears are preventing you from allowing God to be in control of your life?
- What aspects of your life plans do you need to present and/or surrender to God in prayer this week? What could this look like?
- In what areas of your life do you need to "do the good you know you ought to do" this week?



- Close in prayer.



Pressure Points - Come Back!

Week of Feb. 14-20, 2021

Key Message

Come back to Jesus and He will come near to you.

Discuss

- What is your favorite comeback story?
- Over what and with whom did you fight the most when you were a kid?

Read and Discover

Read James 4:1-12 & I John 2:15-16

- What does this passage tell you about the character of God?
- Have you ever wanted something so bad that it caused a rift in or an end to a relationship? Share.
- How have you seen or experienced jealousy and selfishness hurt the church?
- How would you know if someone loved the world?
- How should a follower of Jesus stay true to James' instruction and love their neighbor and be relevant?
- Does knowing that God gives grace abundantly make you more rebellious or more grateful? Why?
- Has there been a time in your faith journey when you wandered away and came back to God? If you feel comfortable would you share your experience?

Application

- What is keeping you from coming back to a deeper relationship with Jesus or starting a relationship with Jesus?
- How might you draw near to God this week?
- What can you do this week to help you bring more humility into your life?
- Close in prayer.



Pressure Points - Words Matter

Week of Feb. 7-13, 2021

Key Message

Godly wisdom in our hearts is evident by the words from our mouths.

Discuss

- Can you do any tricks with your tongue? (Roll it, touch your nose with it, make a clover, etc.) Let's try them together as a group and see who can do the most.
- Who is the wisest person you know? What makes them so wise?
- In general, what characteristics do wise people possess?

Read and Discover

Read James 3:1-10

- Where do you find encouragement, challenges, or questions in these passages?
- What situations cause you to speak harshly most often?
- What is so difficult about controlling our tongue?
- What words have been spoken to you or have you spoken that have positively impacted someone's life? Negatively?

Read James 3:11-18, Psalm 19:14, and Galatians 5:22-23

- Share a time when you know your relationship with Jesus changed the way you responded to someone or, have you been able to tell someone is a Christian by their words?
- Think about what you know about Jesus. How does the way Jesus used His words cause you to appreciate Him even more?
- Remember to THINK before speaking (or posting on social media):
Is it **T** rue?
Is it **H** elpful?



Is it Inspiring?

Is it **Necessary**?

Is it **Kind**?

- How might these questions be helpful to you?
- Which of the THINK questions do you most often forget about?

Application

- How do James' words here prompt and shape your reflection on what you have said to others in the past few days?
- In what practical ways will you make every effort, prayerfully, to represent Jesus by the way you speak this week?
- What positive and constructive words do your family, friends, and coworkers need to hear from you this week?
- What do you need to remove from your speech habits this week to make your words more pleasing to God?
- Close in prayer.



Pressure Points - Real Life Faith

Week of Jan. 31 - Feb. 6, 2021

Key Message

The faith in our hearts is evident by the fruit of our lives.

Discuss

- Think back to your childhood, what is your best memory of “Show and Tell”? Favorite thing you took? Best thing someone else brought in?
- Are you more of a doer or a thinker? Are you more likely to act without thinking or think without acting?

Read and Discover

Read James 2:14-19, Galatians 5:6, 22, I John 3:10, & Matt. 7:15-23

- Where do you find encouragement, challenges, or questions in these passages?
- Do you find more agreement or disagreement between Paul, John, James, and Jesus in these passages? Explain.
- What is your response when someone approaches you and asks for money?
- How do your responses align with James’ teaching?
- **(Side note)** This passage does open up the opportunity for a discussion about spiritual beings and spiritual warfare. As a leader, if you feel comfortable leading this discussion, we would encourage you to be open to those questions from your group members.

Read James 2:20-26 & Hebrews 11:1, 17-31

- How did the actions of these people show their genuine faith?
- What do their lives teach us about:
 - The relationship between faith (by which James means the claim to be trusting God) and works?
 - How can you know whether or not someone (including you) has genuine faith?



Application

- In what area of your life is it most difficult for you to live out your faith?
- The Gospel should inspire us to respond by loving God and loving our neighbor. How can you live this out this week?
- Close in prayer.
 - a. David prayed “Who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults” (Psalm 119:12). Ask God to show you any ways in which you may be in danger of counterfeit faith.
 - b. Ask him to enable you to be so in love with Jesus that you live as Abraham and Rahab did.
 - c. Pray for our schools (teachers, administrators, kids, & support staff) for protection, safety, and wisdom in making decisions.
 - d. Pray for Calvary’s missionaries that they would experience God in their work this week, and be reminded that they are not alone.



Pressure Points - An Anchor in the Storm

Week of Jan. 24-30, 2021

Key Message

To weather the storms of life, we need to stay anchored to God's Word.

Discuss

- What pet-peeves or situations are most likely to cause you to lose your temper?
- How is hypocrisy (perceived or real) hurting the church in 2021?

Read and Discover

Read James 1:19-27

- Where do you find encouragement, challenge, or questions in this passage?
- What attitudes and habits can prevent us from growing as followers of Jesus?
- Are you a good or bad listener? What qualities make someone a good or bad listener?
- What strategies have you found that can best help keep you listening well?
- How have the negative behaviors listed in James caused tension or pain in your relationships in the past?
- How have these behaviors affected the way those around you see Jesus?
- When is a time in your life that God's Word provided an anchor in the midst of a storm?
- Do you ever confuse knowledge of God's Word with obedience to God's Word? What are the consequences of this confusion?
- Come up with four or five "items of evidence" that show someone is a committed Christian. How does your list compare to James in v. 19, 21, and 27?
- How does this list challenge you in your own faith walk today?

Application

- What do you need to change in your actions this week to match your talk?
- As you look at your own life, how does verse 27 encourage you as you seek to follow Jesus? Challenge



you?

- Who could you help this week, as an act of gratitude for what God has done for you and out of obedience to God's Word?
- Close in prayer.
 - a. Pray each member of your group would represent Jesus well by the way they treat others.
 - b. Pray that Calvary would be a place that passionately obeys the Word of God.
 - c. Pray for wisdom for our local, state, and federal leaders as they seek to bring unity to our country.



Pressure Points - Faith in the Fire

Week of Jan. 17-23, 2021

Key Message

Faith grows and strengthens when it is stretched.

Discuss

- Is it harder to go through tough times yourself, or watch someone you love go through hard times?
- How would you respond to someone who tells you that good can come from the trials you are currently experiencing? Have you experienced this before?

Read and Discover

Read James 1:1-12

- What stands out or challenges you in this passage?
- How are James' instructions for handling trials different from the way we approach difficult times? (v. 2)
- What are the reasons James gives for viewing trials and suffering this way (see v. 3-4)?
- What does James say we should do if we struggle to understand or believe the truth of verses 3-4?
- How does knowing what our future holds (see v. 12) help us to better endure our present trials and suffering? Why is this kind of perspective often difficult?

Read James 1:13-18

- What is the difference between a trial and a temptation?
- Do you see yourself as God's prized possession? Why or why not?
- How might seeing ourselves as God sees us, provide strength to face both the trials and temptations that we all experience?

Application

- Has there been a time when you have seen good come out of a difficult situation in your life? How has your outlook changed from when you were in the middle of the trial to where you are today?



- How has your relationship with God changed as a result of going through trials and struggles?
- Is there a trial in your life right now that you are struggling to consider as “pure or great joy”?
 - a. What is stopping you from thinking like that?
 - b. What would change in your life if you were able to see your trial in a joyful way?
 - c. What might God be working and growing in you as you face this trial?
- What is the “good and perfect gift” that you are most thankful for right now?
- How can considering our trials “pure or great joy” be a witness to those around us?
- Close in prayer.