

Moving Mountains — Group Discussion Questions

Discuss any or all of the questions below with your group. Choose some questions ahead of time, just in case you end up only having time to discuss a few of them:

Session 1: There is a Way Things Work

Colossians 4:12: *...wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.*

1. Read **Matthew 17:14–20**. According to this passage, why is prayer the “greatest secret weapon God has given to his people”? What did Jesus say was required on the disciples’ part for this prayer to work?
2. There is a way things work in any area of life. We know that to get good at something—playing an instrument, reading a book, cooking, riding a bicycle—all takes practice. So why do we tend to have a different attitude when it comes to prayer?
3. Read **Ephesians 4:11–16**. In what ways does Paul say in this passage that God is “growing us up”? How does God use prayer to make us mature believers in Christ?
4. Read **1 Kings 18:41–45**. What does this story tell us being persistent in prayer? What does it tell us about adjusting our prayers when we don’t see anything happening?
5. In James 5:17, we read, “Elijah was a human being, even as we are.” What is James saying about the power we have been given in prayer? How do we know that we, as believers in Christ, have access to this same power?

Session 2: The Cry of the Heart

Psalm 77:1-2: *I cried out to God for help. I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress I sought the Lord.*

Psalm 13:1-2: *How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?*

1. Read **Psalm 77:1-2, 61:1-2 and 13:1-2**. What range of emotions do the psalmists express in these verses? What do they ask God to do for them?
2. How did Jesus pray in the Garden of Gethsemene on the night he was betrayed (see **Matthew 26:38-39; Mark 14:34-25; Luke 22:44**)? What does his example show us about being open and honest with God? What does it mean to pray *fervently* or *earnestly*?
3. It's good to remind yourself that the God you are praying to is the "One who made them all." In light of that, who do you find yourself praying to? Is he adequate? Is he kind? Is he in a good mood? Where is he located? Is he near, or far away? Do your prayers sound like those of the orphan, the slave, or a son or daughter? Explain.
4. Read **Luke 15:18-19**. How did the prodigal son believe his father viewed him? How is this reflected in this speech he planned to say to him?
5. Read **Luke 15:20-23**. How does the father's response reveal to us the way God views us? How should knowing we are sons and daughters of God affect our prayers?

Session 3: The Prayer of Intervention

Ephesians 2:4–6: *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.*

1. God made the earth and gave Adam and Eve the authority to rule over it. However, because of their disobedience, “the whole world lies under the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). According to **Colossians 2:13–15** and **Philippians 2:9–10**, how did Jesus win it back? What authority does Jesus now hold in our world?
2. Read **Matthew 28:18**. What are we actually doing when we pray in Jesus’ name?
3. How does this understanding of Jesus’ authority affect the power of our prayers? How does this authority relate to prayers we pray for God to intervene in a situation?
4. Why didn’t God just “zap” Peter out of prison? What is God’s purpose in wanting us to be persistent and earnest when we seek him for intervention?
5. In wildfire story I told in the video, I demonstrated how I (1) proclaimed the truth, (2) invoked the authority of Jesus, and (3) enforced his kingdom over the situation. In what ways is this similar or different from the ways we typically pray? How is prayer *active* rather than *passive*?

Session 4: The Prayer of Consecration

2 Peter 3:9: *“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”*

Romans 8:26: *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*

1. Read **Exodus 19:10–11** and **Joshua 3:5**. Why did God give these instructions to the Israelites? Why was consecration necessary for what he was about to do in their midst?
2. We live in a world at war. According to **John 10:10** and **1 Peter 5:8**, what is the goal of our enemy? How does he seek to achieve his aims against us?
3. Read Romans **6:13** and **12:1**. What does it mean to “offer ourselves” to God? How does this enable the healing and blessings of God to flow into our lives?
4. Why is it important to not only consecrate ourselves but also the places where we are dwelling, our possessions, and our relationships?
5. What is the purpose in beginning our day with consecrating prayer? What are we committing to God when we do this?

Session 5: Listening Prayer

Ephesians 1:18: *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,*

1 Kings 19:11-12: Then he was told, "Go, stand on the mountain at attention before God. God will pass by." A hurricane wind ripped through the mountains and shattered the rocks before God, but God wasn't to be found in the wind; after the wind an earthquake, but God wasn't in the earthquake; and after the earthquake fire, but God wasn't in the fire; and after the fire a gentle and quiet whisper.

1. Read **1 John 5:14–15**. What promise are we given in this passage? What does this tell us about the way we should be praying and the requests we should be making to God?
2. Read **Acts 9:10–12** and **17–18**. How did Ananias act in partnership with God? What was the result of Ananias's prayers for Paul?
3. Read **John 10:2–4, 16**, and **27**. What did Jesus reveal in this passage about God's desire to communicate with us? Why is it best to "begin small" when learning to listen for the voice of our Shepherd?
4. In 1 Kings 19:12, we read the voice of the Lord came to Elijah in "a gentle whisper," or a "still, small voice." What are some ways mentioned in the video for how we still our hearts so we can hear God speak? Why is it crucial to get rid of all distractions?
5. What does it mean to bring our hearts into a place of "surrender" to God? How does this open the way for us to better hear God's voice? How does Listening Prayer change the way we ask God for guidance?

Session 6: Warfare Prayer

Revelation 12:17: *“Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against ... those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus”*

Luke 10:19: *Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you.*

1. Warfare prayer often has the most immediate and dramatic results. Read **Acts 16:16-18**. What did Paul do to cause the enemy to leave? How was he able to do this?
2. Read **Ephesians 2:6**. What does this verse say about the authority we have been given in Christ? What images does this passage bring to mind? How would this change our view on prayer if we really took this truth to heart?
3. Read **James 4:7** and **1 Peter 5:8-9**. What instructions are we given for how to oppose the work of the enemy? How should these instructions guide our prayers?
4. What is the value in naming a specific attack that is taking place against us? How should this guide our prayers against such attacks and why is it crucial to renounce the enemy’s claim against us?
5. Read **Revelation 12:10–11**. How do we bring the work Jesus did for us at the cross against the works of the enemy? What happens when we do this?
6. Why does the enemy always try to distract us from praying? How can we learn to recognize these subtle forms of attack and resist them?

Session 7: Healing Prayer

Psalm 23:1,3: *The Lord is my shepherd. ... he restores my soul*

Psalm 147:3: *He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds*

1. Read **James 5:14–15**. How did members of the early church view prayers for healing? What instructions does James give in this passage?
2. Read **Romans 12:1**. In prayer for physical healing, we bring power of the resurrected Jesus into the afflicted body. How does consecration of the body play a role in this? Why is it important for the person with the affliction to pray for this?
3. The heart and soul can be wounded just like the body. Read **Luke 2:34-25**. What did Simeon say about the wound Mary would receive? Why did he phrase it in this way?
4. What promises do we find in **Psalm 23:1–3**, **Psalm 147:3**, and **Isaiah 61:1** about God’s healing for our brokenness? Why is it significant that Jesus quoted this prophecy from Isaiah when he began his ministry (see **Luke 4:17–21**)?
5. What does it mean that “our soul is healed through union with Christ”? How did Jesus pray we would have this type of union with God in **John 17:20-23**?

Session 8: Holding the Heart in Unanswered Prayer

Proverbs 4:23: *“The Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*

Ephesians 1:17-18: I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit[a] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

1. Read **Matthew 13:3–8**. What happens to the different kinds of “seeds” in this parable? What does Jesus, the Sower, say about the results of his own efforts?
2. We have to be careful about how we *interpret* unanswered prayer. Read **Genesis 3:1–5**. What does this passage tell us about how our enemy tries to twist the truth of our situation? How he attempts to get us to question God’s intentions?
3. When we do not receive an answer to prayer, it is important for us to ask Jesus to help us interpret what is happening. What promise are we given in **James 1:5** when we seek godly wisdom? What does Paul pray for the believers in **Ephesians 1:17-18**
4. There is a time for contending, but there is also a time to let go? How will we know when this time has come? What enables us to receive this discernment?
5. God says one day he will wipe every tear from our eyes and the life we dreamed of will be ours (see Revelation 21:4). In the meantime, what is our goal in this life? How does centering our lives on God’s purposes keep us from being shaken when we don’t receive the answers we desire?

LEADER'S GUIDE

What does it take to lead this study? Get together and watch God show up. Seriously, that's the basics of how a small group works. Gather several people together who have a hunger for God, and are willing to be open and honest with God and themselves. The Lord will honor this every time and show up in the group. You don't have to be a pastor, priest, theologian, or counselor to lead a group through this study. Just invite people to watch the video together and talk about it. All you need is a willing heart, a little courage, and God will do the rest. Really.

A FEW TIPS FOR LEADING A GROUP:

- ***Be honest.*** Remember that your honesty will set the tone for your time together. Be willing to answer questions personally, as this will set the pace for the length of your group members' responses and will make others more comfortable in sharing.
- ***Stick to the schedule.*** Strive to begin and end at the same time each week. It's helpful that the people in your group can trust you to be a good steward of their time, and they will be more willing to come back each week. Of course, you want to be open to the work God is doing in the group members as they are challenged to reconsider some of their preconceived ideas about the availability of the kingdom of God to bring them joy in their everyday lives, and at times you may want to *linger* in prayer or discussion. Remember the clock serves *you*; your group doesn't serve the clock. But work to respect the group's time, especially when it comes to limiting the discussion times. You don't have to get to every question suggested.
- ***Don't be afraid of silence or emotion.*** Welcome awkward moments. The material presented during this study will likely bring to the surface areas of pain and suffering. Don't be afraid to ease into the material with the group to allow space for honoring one another's stories and personal questions.
- ***Don't dominate the conversation.*** Even though you are the leader, you are also a member of this small group. So, don't steamroll over others in an attempt to lead—and don't let anyone else in the group do so either.
- ***Prepare for your meeting.*** Watch the video for the meeting ahead of time. Though it may feel a bit like cheating because you'll know what's coming, you'll be better prepared for what the session might stir in the hearts of your group members. Also review the material in this guide and be sure to spend time in prayer. In fact, the *most important* thing you can do is simply pray ahead of time each week:

Lord Jesus, come and rule this time. Let your Spirit fill this place. Bring your kingdom here. Take us right to the things we really need to talk about and rescue us from every distraction. Show us the heart of the Father. Meet each person here. Give us your grace and love for one another. In your name I pray.
- ***Make sure your group members are prepared.*** Send out a reminder email with the Zoom link a couple of days before the meeting to make sure folks don't forget about it.

AS YOU GATHER:

You will find the following counsel to be especially helpful when you meet for the first time as a group. I offer these comments in the spirit of “here is what I would do if I were leading a group through this study.”

As your group gathers for the first time, start your time with introductions if people don’t know each other. Begin with yourself and share your name and what you want to learn most about prayer. Going first will put the group more at ease.

After each person has introduced themselves, share—in no more than five minutes—what your hopes are for the group. Then jump right into watching the video session, as this will help get things started on a strong note. In the following weeks you will then want to start by allowing folks to catch up a *little* with some “hey, so how are you?” kind of banter. Too much of this burns up your meeting time, but you have to allow some room for it because it helps build relationships among the group members.

Note that each group will have its own personality and dynamics. Typically, people will hold back the first week or two until they feel the group is “safe.” Then they will begin to share. Again, don’t let it throw you if your group seems a bit awkward at first. Of course, some people *never* want to talk, so you’ll need to coax them out as time goes on. But let it go the first week.

INSIGHT FOR DISCUSSION:

If the group members are in any way open to talking about their lives as it relates to this material, you will *not* have enough time for every question suggested. That’s okay! Pick a few questions ahead of time that you know you want to cover, just in case you end up only having time to discuss a few of them.

You set the tone for the group. Your honesty and vulnerability during discussion times will tell them what they can share. How *long* you talk will give them an example of how long they should. So give some thought to what stories or insights from your own work in the study guide you want to highlight. **WARNING:** The greatest temptation for most small group leaders is to add to the video teaching with a little “teaching session” of their own. This is unhelpful for three reasons:

1. The discussion time will be the richest time during your meeting. The video sessions have been intentionally kept short so you can have plenty of time for discussion. If you add to the teaching, you sacrifice this precious time.
2. You don’t want your group members *teaching, lecturing, or correcting* one another. Every person is at a different place in her spiritual journey—and that’s good. But if you set a tone by teaching, the group will feel like they have the freedom to teach one another. That can be disastrous for group dynamics.
3. The participants will have watched the video teaching and possibly read the corresponding chapters in *Moving Mountains*. They don’t need more content! They want a chance to talk and process their own lives in light of all they have taken in.

A STRONG CLOSE:

Some of the best learning times will take place after the group time as God brings new insights to the participants during the week. Encourage group members to write down any questions they have as they read through *Moving Mountains* and do the preparation work. Make sure they know you are available for them as they explore what God has to say about any of the concepts that might be new or challenging to them. Finally, make sure you close your time by praying together. Perhaps ask two or three people to pray, inviting God to fill your group and lead each person during this study. (A closing prayer is included in the guide, should you want to use it instead of or in addition to extemporaneous prayer.)

Finally, make sure you close your time by—praying together! Perhaps ask two or three people to pray, inviting God to fill your group and lead each person during this study. Also, be sure to “practice” some of the specific prayers your group will be learning about during the sessions. Many of these prayers can be found in the corresponding chapters to the sessions or in the appendix in the *Moving Mountains* book.

Thank you again for taking the time to lead your group. May God reward your efforts and dedication and make your time together in *Moving Mountains* fruitful for His kingdom.