

# 2021 PRAYER FOCUS: WALKING AS JESUS WALKED — LIVING AS DISCIPLES OF JESUS

Two key ingredients for any awakening are a focus on the Word of God and prayer. It is in prayer that we are awakened to our need of Christ and to the life that is possible through Him. The Word of God keeps us on track — teaches us how to live in the Kingdom of God.

The United States recently has probably seen more division than it has since the time of the Civil War. Unfortunately, that division has often spilled into the Church. There is division over political agendas and over everything related to the pandemic. The controversy over masks and vaccines continues to punctuate conversations. Then there is division over whether or not racism is a real issue or one manufactured.

In the midst of all of this, the Church needs to shine like a bright light in a dark world bringing hope, peace, and truth. The evangelical church has often shied away from social issues. Our focus has been on preaching the Gospel, and we have at times been critical of those churches that focused too much on social issues. The truth is, social issues exist and the Gospel has something to say about those issues.

The prayer focus this month does not begin to address the full scope of the need regarding justice and the social needs facing the Church or the country. This may be the toughest challenge when it comes to living as a disciple of Jesus. This subject addresses our prejudices and our reluctance to engage with those who are different.

We focused our prayers for the first three months of the year around three themes: intimacy with God, dependence, and personal holiness. In April we focused on brokenness for lost people and in May, we focused on discipleship. This month we focus our attention on what it means to be the Church in the world as we consider living out Micah 6:8 — to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. We are reminded that the Church has a responsibility to take the lead in ministering to the poor, the stranger, the widow, the orphan, and the disenfranchised. In order for the Church to take the lead, our hearts need to be ready to love those we deem unlovely and love them as Jesus does.

## JUNE PRAYER FOCUS — DO JUSTICE — LOVE MERCY — WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD

As you pray this month, ask the Lord to open your heart to the hurting, needy, lonely, disenfranchised people around you. Ask him to reveal any prejudices or racism or any areas where you are prone to overlook those who are different.

**He has shown you, O man, what *is* good;  
And what does the LORD REQUIRE OF YOU  
BUT TO DO JUSTLY, TO LOVE MERCY,  
AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD?  
MICAH 6:8**

1. **WALK HUMBLY:** “HE HAS SHOWN YOU, O MAN, WHAT *IS* GOOD; AND WHAT DOES THE LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).

**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you for the privilege of walking with you. We praise you that you are a God of justice and mercy. We praise you for the mercy and grace you have extended to us. Forgive us for living as though walking with you did not include walking like you. Continue to teach us to be a people of justice and mercy who also walk in humility. Open our eyes to see those who need our love and mercy.

2. **THE LEAST OF THESE:** “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me” (Matthew 25:40).

**PRAYER:** Father in heaven, we praise you that you loved us when we were still living in sin. We were “the least of these” and you reached out to us. We praise you for the many opportunities you give us now to represent you in the world around us. Forgive us for those times when we have been satisfied to only sit at your feet and worship and neglected your promptings to care for “the least of these.” Teach us to be generous with what you have entrusted to us. Open our eyes to those in need around us.

3. **NO MORE SILENCE:** “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; Seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow” (Isaiah 1:16-17).

**PRAYER:** Lord, we praise you that you call your people to a higher standard than we would ever pursue on our own. You call us to seek justice and to rebuke the oppressor. Father, forgive our sins of omission — the sin of silence in the face of oppression and the sin of neglecting to seek justice for those who are treated unjustly. Help us find our voice so that your Church can show the world that you care.

4. **OPEN OUR EYES:** “Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:9).

**PRAYER:** Lord Jesus, we are so blessed. We praise you that you pleaded our cause before the Father when we were poor and needy. You saw us in our sin and loved us in spite of it. Forgive us for looking at others with judgment rather than compassion. We judge if people are worthy of our attention or our friendship. Forgive us for turning away when we have seen needs. Thank you that you love those we deem unworthy. Open our eyes to see others as you see them. Give us open hearts and hands.

5. **LOVING NEIGHBORS:** “Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”” (Matthew 22:37-39).

**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you that you desire our love and not just our obedience. In fact, the greatest act of obedience is to love you. Forgive us for claiming to love you while neglecting, disliking, or even hating our neighbors. Remind us that loving others cannot be separated from our love for you. Remind us that our “neighbor” is not just the person who lives on our street but each person you bring into our lives. Teach us to love as you love.

6. **UNSPOTTED:** “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

**PRAYER:** We praise you, Father, that you called us to be different from the rest of the world and to not allow the world to shape us but to submit to you and allow your Holy Spirit to shape us.

We have often focused on keeping ourselves “unspotted.” There are places we don’t go, things we don’t do, words we don’t use, and attitudes we try not to embrace. Forgive us for our pride in being unspotted when we have neglected the widows and orphans and others who were needy. Help us to be intentional in reaching out to those who have experienced such significant loss.

7. **JUSTICE AND MERCY:** “Thus says the LORD OF HOSTS: ‘EXECUTE TRUE JUSTICE, SHOW MERCY AND COMPASSION EVERYONE TO HIS BROTHER. DO NOT OPPRESS THE WIDOW OR THE FATHERLESS, THE ALIEN OR THE POOR. LET NONE OF YOU PLAN EVIL IN HIS HEART AGAINST HIS BROTHER’” (ZECHARIAH 7:9-10).

**PRAYER:** FATHER, WE PRAISE YOU FOR THE MERCY YOU HAVE EXTENDED TO US. WE PRAISE YOU THAT YOU HAVE NOT TREATED US AS OUR SINS DESERVE. FORGIVE US FOR NOT SHOWING THE SAME MERCY TO OTHERS. REMIND US THAT JUSTICE AND MERCY INCLUDE NOT GETTING EVEN AND NOT RETURNING HURTFUL WORDS. GIVE US THE GRACE TO ENGAGE AND LOVE THOSE WHO HAVE DIFFERENT VALUES OR WHO HAVE A DIFFERENT WORLD VIEW. GIVE US COMPASSION TOWARD THE POOR AND NEEDY AND ALSO TOWARD THOSE WHO MAY OFFEND US SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE A DIFFERENT POLITICAL OR SOCIAL VIEWPOINT.

8. **HE IS THE ROCK:** “HE IS THE ROCK, HIS WORK IS PERFECT; FOR ALL HIS WAYS ARE JUSTICE, A GOD OF TRUTH AND WITHOUT INJUSTICE; RIGHTEOUS AND UPRIGHT IS HE” (DEUTERONOMY 32:4).

**PRAYER:** LORD, WE PRAISE YOU THAT YOU ARE PERFECT. WE PRAISE YOU THAT YOU ARE A GOD OF JUSTICE. IN YOUR JUSTICE, ONE MAN DIED FOR ALL OF MANKIND. FORGIVE US FOR FAILING TO PRAISE YOU FOR THAT INCREDIBLE ACT OF JUSTICE. IT IS NOT LIKE MAN’S JUSTICE. HELP US TO LIVE, CELEBRATING THE FACT THAT BY YOUR JUSTICE MAN HAS BEEN SET FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH. HELP US REFLECT THAT SAME JUSTICE TOWARD THOSE AROUND US.

9. **STOP THE BULLY:** “THUS SAYS THE LORD: ‘Execute judgment and righteousness and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place’” (Jeremiah 22:3).

**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you that you care for the oppressed. Forgive us for failing to “get involved” when we see oppression. Examine our hearts. Show us where we might be the oppressor in our relationships. Keep us from mistreating anyone who is different from us. Remind us that bullying at any level is a form of oppression. Give us a voice to stand against bullying at every level. Keep us from being content to be uninvolved with the needs of others.

10. **LIVE PEACEABLY:** “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:15-18).

**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you that you give us a greater capacity for loving others than we can imagine. Forgive us for not always tapping into that reservoir of love. Forgive us for any jealousy or envy that keeps us from rejoicing with those who rejoice. Keep us from thinking we are better than others. Keep us from regarding the rich and famous higher than those of lesser means. Teach us to do good even to those who are not good to us. Help us demonstrate the fullest measure of your love toward others.

11. **NO PARTIALITY:** “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the

fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing” (Deuteronomy 10:17-18).

**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you that you do not show partiality. With you there is no Greek nor Jew; no slave nor free; no black nor white. Forgive us for showing partiality only toward those who think and look like us. Help us see those we have kept as strangers in our lives; those who differ politically, racially, or socioeconomically. Open our hearts to love these strangers and show us how to care for those who are different from us.

12. **JUSTICE:** “You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow’s garment as a pledge” (Deuteronomy 24:17).

**PRAYER:** Father, we continue to praise you that you are a God of justice and that you expect us to be a just people. Forgive us if we have ever taken advantage of someone in a business transaction. Forgive us for boasting about getting the best of someone. Teach us to be fair in all transactions, not just looking out for our own interests but for the interests of those with whom we do business.

13. **SINS OF OMISSION:** “‘Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’” (Deuteronomy 27:19).

**PRAYER:** Lord, praise you that you hold your people to this high standard of justice. Forgive us for sins of omission that we have committed by neglecting the needs of the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow. Give each of us a generous heart and open hands. Remind us that you take justice seriously. You say, “Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due a stranger.” Remind us that our treatment of others is a reflection of our relationship with you.

14. **GOOD GIFTS:** “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:11-12).

**PRAYER:** Lord, we praise you that you are the Giver of good gifts. You are a good Father who knows how to bless your children. Lord, we love to receive gifts. We enjoy being on the receiving end of the generosity of others. Forgive us for not showing the same generosity to others. Teach us to be intentional in our generosity — to look for people to bless, whether it is helping a neighbor or leaving a generous tip for the server at the restaurant.

15. **PARTIALITY:** “How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked? *Selah* Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy” (Psalm 82:2-3).

**PRAYER:** We praise you, Lord, that while you are a God of mercy, you are also a God of justice. You hold us accountable for our actions. Forgive us individually and nationally for defending the wicked because it served some personal or political agenda. We want to be a people who defend those who are taken advantage of by wicked men. We pray for an end to the partiality in this nation that endorses the wicked. Purify your Church.

16. **SEEKING STATUS:** “He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches, and he who gives to the rich, will surely come to poverty” (Proverbs 22:16).

**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you that you have blessed us so generously. By your grace we live in a very prosperous land. Forgive us for being more interested in amassing our own wealth while neglecting the needs of the poor. Forgive us, too, for seeking status by trying to impress the

wealthy with our gifts. We pray that you will give us a heart for the poor and keep us from trying to impress others by our gifts or by our possessions.

17. **STOP OPPRESSION:** “He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who honors Him has mercy on the needy” (Proverbs 14:31).

**PRAYER:** Lord, we praise you that you have shown us mercy and that you call us to show mercy to others. We know there are those in our country who oppress the poor. On their behalf, we ask forgiveness. Forgive us for being silent when we see oppression. Remind us that oppressing the poor is not just a sin against them but is an affront — indeed a sin against you.

18. **LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY:** “The righteous considers the cause of the poor, *but* the wicked does not understand *such* knowledge” (Proverbs 29:7).

**PRAYER:** Father, we continue to praise you for the blessings we enjoy. Forgive us that we equate righteousness with attending church faithfully and living as much as possible according to your Word. We have forgotten that righteousness includes looking out for the poor around us. We pray that you will help us live righteously toward the poor. Give us the courage to become involved in the lives of those in need.

19. **KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR:** “But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’” (Luke 10:29 [Read Luke 10:29-37]).

**PRAYER:** We praise you for your Word, Lord. We praise you for this story of the Samaritan. Forgive us for being too much like the priest and Levite in the story. Forgive us for not wanting to get involved, especially with those who are different from us. We pray that you will give us the grace and generosity to reach out to the suffering even when they are different from us.

20. **LIVE THE WORD:** “The Spirit of the LORD *is* upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to *the* blind, *to* set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD” (Luke 4:18-19).

**PRAYER:** Lord, we praise you that we are recipients of your grace and mercy. We have known spiritual poverty. We have had our hearts broken. We have been held captive by an unseen enemy, and we lived in blindness for a long time. You came to deliver us and then to work through us to minister to those needs in others. Forgive us for keeping the message to ourselves. Remind us that the message is spoken louder in deeds than in words. Use us as your instruments to heal the broken-hearted, to open the eyes of the blind, and to set the captives free.

21. **LIVE JUSTLY:** “Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream” (Amos 5:23-24).

**PRAYER:** Lord, we love to sing your praise. Thank you for putting a song in our hearts. Thank you for reminding us that singing your praises does not compare with living justly and righteously. Forgive us for thinking our music impressed you while we ignored how we treated others. Show us what it means to live righteously in an unrighteous world.

22. **THE NEXT GENERATION:** “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him” (Genesis 18:19).  
**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you for the spiritual heritage we have. We praise you that through the patriarchs, and then Moses, you taught us your precepts and laws. We praise you for the men and women you put in our lives who taught us to follow you. Forgive us for not systematically teaching the next generation about righteousness and justice. Show us how to call the next generation to live according to your precepts.
23. **OUR GOD SUPPLIES:** “He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses” (Proverbs 28:27).  
**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you that you have been so generous with us. You have blessed us beyond measure. Forgive us for hoarding. Help us be as generous with others as you have been with us, knowing that you will continue to supply all we need.
24. **INTEGRITY IN BUSINESS:** “You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, *are* an abomination to the LORD your God” (Deuteronomy 25:13-16).  
**PRAYER:** Lord, we praise you for setting a standard for fairness. We confess that there are those in our country who have not been fair in business and have taken advantage of the poor. Forgive our nation for allowing those practices. We pray for an awakening in the business world that companies will be honest in all their transactions. We pray, too, that we will not have in our hearts different measures for the people we meet based on their social status, lifestyle choices, or ethnicity. Help us to see as you see.
25. **BE A FRIEND:** “You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 22:21).  
**PRAYER:** Lord, we praise you that when we were strangers from you, you reached out to us to offer us forgiveness and a place in your kingdom. We have all been strangers, whether it was the first day of school, the first day on a new job, or moving to a new community. Forgive us for not welcoming the stranger. Open our eyes to see the loner — the one who is excluded. Teach us to be a friend. You have brought many nations to this country. Show us how to welcome them.
26. **BREAK BARRIERS:** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).  
**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you that you have brought the nations to us. We confess that we are often fearful of people who are different from us — people who look different, dress differently, and who speak a different language. Help us see them through your eyes. Remind us that you love them as you love us. Break down the barriers. We pray that your Church will reflect the diversity of the community and that we will reach out to all ethnicities.

27. **RECONCILIATION:** “For perhaps he departed for a while for this *purpose*, that you might receive him forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave — a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord” (Philemon 15-16).

**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you that you are the God of reconciliation. You sent your son that we might be reconciled to you. You also sent your son that we might be reconciled to one another. Forgive us for the times we have held grudges and were reluctant to forgive. Give us grace to be reconciled to those who have offended us. We pray your Church will take the lead in bringing reconciliation between the various ethnic groups in this country.

28. **COMPASSION:** “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6).

**PRAYER:** We praise you, Lord, that you care about the oppressed. We confess that it is easier for us to practice our spiritual disciplines of fasting, prayer, and regular times of worship while ignoring those who are bound by addictions or caught in sex trafficking or bound by some other ruler. Give us hearts of compassion and courage to become involved in setting the oppressed free.

29. **OPEN HEARTS AND HANDS:** “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:17-18).

**PRAYER:** Father, we praise you that you have blessed us abundantly with “this world’s goods.” Forgive us for our lack of generosity. Forgive us for greed — for always wanting to accumulate more while others suffer in need. Open our hearts and hands to those who have less and are suffering.

30. **BE THE CHURCH:** “Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw *fit*” (Ezekiel 16:49-50).

**PRAYER:** Lord, we praise you that you have always challenged your people to care for the poor. You destroyed Sodom, in part, because of her sin of pride and neglect of the poor. When we look around our country and see the wonderful places of worship that have cost millions of dollars, are we like Sodom? Lord, forgive us when we have been proud of our buildings and our resources and have spent them on ourselves. Show your church how to minister more effectively to the poor, the needy, and the oppressed.