

Give God Thirty Days and See What He Will Do



BECOMING  
A VESSEL OF  
GOD'S POWER



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## **Leader's Guide**

**By  
Rose Jackson**

Thank you for responding in faith to God’s call to lead this study! Are you anxious about your qualifications or about how infrequently you’ve seen God’s power move mightily in your life? Then you’re in the perfect place – hungry and utterly dependent upon God – to lead this group of women on this journey to become vessels of God’s power! The only qualifications you need to effectively lead this study are: a personal relationship with Jesus, commitment to read each day’s text and the leader notes ahead of class and to work through the questions, dedication to pray for the class, and willingness – make that eagerness - to let God transform you into a vessel of his power! You are qualified! I pray you joyfully experience God moving powerfully through you as you lead this study.

## **The Guide**

Becoming a Vessel of God’s Power is an eight-week study. The first class is an introduction and the last is a celebration, with five daily readings in each of the six weeks between. The notes and resources in this leader’s guide are here to encourage you and help you feel prepared and comfortable as you lead the study. This guide doesn’t go into detail on each day’s message, but focuses each week on one of on six emphases listed on pages seven and eight of Day One in the book:

Power through purification	(days 1-5)
God’s practical provisions for power	(days 6-10)
The power of the Word	(days 11-15)
Power through prayer	(days 16-20)
The power of balance	(days 21-25)
Power in practice	(days 26-30)

In this guide you’ll find suggestions for activities and visual aids, as well as questions for discussion relating to questions the women have answered during the week or to points in the text. The guide is just a guide, so feel free to incorporate illustrations from your own life and any insight the Holy Spirit gives you.

From the first lesson, emphasize you intend to make this class a place of safety. Don’t call on women to respond to questions. Encourage, but don’t require, each woman to participate in discussions.

## **Prayer Requests**

Have you noticed how much time people spend explaining their prayer requests (particularly of the “My Aunt Tilly’s neighbor’s cousin’s friend needs prayer for . . .” variety) but how little time is left for actually praying? Tell the class that you want to spend prayer time in what is effective – praying – and specifically in praying for one another. To protect prayer time, give everyone two pages of prayer request slips on which they can write out their prayer requests during the week, cut them off and bring them to class next week. Provide a stack of prayer request forms at the beginning of each class, too. If you want to keep a master prayer log so you can pray for the women during the week, collect only the slips women want to turn in at the end of each session. Shred the slips after you’ve recorded them. Use good judgment and respect confidentiality in documenting requests! Keep the log only for the duration of the class, and only for prayer.

Many women feel intimidated to pray out loud, so you may want to divide the class into groups of two to four for prayer at the end of each class. Praying in twos during the first few weeks is a good way to help people feel more comfortable praying out loud. Ask everyone to exchange prayer slips in their groups and pray for those requests. If any women are uncomfortable praying out loud, even in smaller groups, pass their slips to other women who are willing to pray aloud. Please remind the women about confidentiality: what is prayed in class stays in class. Be sure to share praise reports as God answers prayers!

## Power Partners

Day Nine in the book introduces the PIT Crew concept. Class members can be the P-I (prayer and insight) part of a crew for each other during the study. In the first two weeks, ask the women to pair with a partner and commit to call or e-mail each other during the week to share prayer requests and what they're discovering. Make it a priority to regularly e-mail or contact each woman yourself outside of class time.

### Week One

**Emphasis:** Welcome and introduction

#### Preparation:

**Make** enough copies of the prayer slip form to give each woman two pages at the first class. **Cut** slips so the women have slips for prayer requests in groups or twos today. Also make copies of the "I'm Anticipating" sheet for each participant.

**Make** contact information and attendance sheets, so you can contact class members outside of class.

**Purchase** a 3/5-inch spiral bound index card book and **write** out the affirmations and scripture for days 1-5.

**Bring** pitchers or containers for the ice breaker today and as visual reminders that we are vessels of God's power. Have books available for purchase if you haven't instructed women to purchase them before class. You may want to ask someone to help you handle book sales if you choose to sell them at class. If you will use a baseball cap or hat to illustrate the PIT Crew at the third week, you may want to **wear** it today as you explain about Power Partners and tell the class they'll learn the significance of the hat at Week 3.

**Find** a Power Partner to **pray** with you for the class before the first week. Cover the class in prayer each week.

#### In Class:

The pitchers or vessels you've brought

1. **Welcome** each woman as she arrives. Ask everyone to sign the contact information and attendance sheets. Instruct the women how to purchase the book if you've chosen to sell books in class.

2. **Open with prayer. Introduce** yourself.

**Show** the pitchers and containers you brought as **ask** the women which container they see themselves as and why. Share your own choice to get discussion started; speak simply, not elaborately, to encourage participation.

**Tell** the women that they are not alone if they're confused and longing for the power of God to appear in their lives. Read these quotes from Day 1:

"Finally, I understood, God's power isn't always where we expect to find it." (p. 4)

*"I want to experience the power of God, and I don't care who knows it. What I have is not enough, and I'm willing to admit it. In that moment, I knew I wasn't alone. I believe millions of Christians are yearning to experience the power of God. We want to taste it, not just read about it in the Bible or church history books, not just hear what's taking place in Uganda or China. We want to see God's power in our own lives, in our families, in our churches, and in our nation. We want a clear, dramatic, immediate, unmistakable, life-altering encounter with the transforming power of God."* (p. 5)

Briefly **summarize** the material between these two quotes. We may feel like empty vessels, but God will fill us. God still extends his hands of power to and through us.

We can pray for strength and power. *God give me power. Make me a vessel of your power.*

We can ask God for wisdom and power, expecting God to answer affirmatively.

We aren't perfect, but we are jars of clay so that we can display the power of God

**Share** what being a vessel of power means to you personally, along with your hopes for the class, pointing to the pitchers or vessels you've brought as you speak.

3. **Explain the course structure.** This week, week one, is introductory. The women should read Day 1 through Day 5 readings by the second class, Day 6 through Day 10 for the third week, and so on, reading five days each week through week seven. The last week will be a time for practice, ending in the last class of celebration. You will focus on one of six principles of power (listed in Day 1 in the book) each week.

4. **Go over the book**, noting from Day 1 that each day has a scripture, a reading, an affirmation to say out loud, application questions, and action to take. **Show** the class your **index card affirmation and scripture book** and briefly explain the action to take for Day 1. Point out the list of affirmations on pages 255-256 and the scripture cards to cut out on pages 257-261. Encourage the class to memorize any of the scripture verses that speak to them particularly. You'll be talking about the affirm statements and the verses throughout the weeks ahead.

5. **Explain** how you will structure **prayer time in class**, emphasizing participation is voluntary and all requests will be confidential unless the person requesting prayer specifically gives permission to share the request beyond the class. **Show** and explain the prayer request slips. Explain the importance of encouraging one another and the purpose of Power Partners, even though the book introduces the PIT Crew concept in Week 3 on Day 9. **Ask** the women to choose a Power Partner and exchange phone numbers or e-mail, then contact each other once during the coming week.

6. Take time for the women to **fill out** the "I'm anticipating" sheet and collect them when completed. Ask for volunteers to **share** how they are hoping to be different by the end of this study. Tell the class to **write down a prayer request** specifically for their hopes through this class. Break into small groups or twos and **pray** for each other's requests. Collect the slips afterward.

7. **Close in prayer.**

## Week Two

**Emphasis:** Power through purification

### Preparation:

**Contact** each woman in class by phone, e-mail, or a short note, thanking her for coming and encouraging her to **read and work through** Day 1 through Day 5. Do so yourself! **Pray** for each woman, and with each one who wants prayer if you call the class. Do this regularly throughout the course.

**Pray** with your Power Partner for the class. This is part of your preparation each week, but this note will appear simply as **Pray** in the notes from now on.

**Write** next week's affirmations and scripture in your index card book. Writing these out a week ahead will be part of each week's preparation, but not noted after this week.

**Purchase or find** smooth stones and paint pens (available at craft stores) if you want to include a stones of remembrance activity.

**Bring** a toy stuffed animal to illustrate "pet" sins. Bring your index card book each week as a reminder.

**Provide** slips of paper and a wastebasket or basket for letting go of disobedience and pet sins.

### In Class:

1. **Welcome** each woman as she arrives. Ask newcomers to sign the contact information sheet and help them purchase a book if you're selling them in class. Tell newcomers how to purchase the book if you've chosen to sell books in class. Ask everyone to sign the attendance sheet. Point out the prayer request slips for those who didn't bring one today. This will be your first order of business for the next week or so, but this note won't appear in the notes for next week and beyond.

### 2. Open with prayer

3. **Repeat out loud together** affirmations 1-5 from last week, found on page 255 in the back of your book.

**Explain** this purpose for reading the daily affirmations out loud: reading aloud benefits your brain by stimulating your frontal cortex, the part of your brain that controls communication, memory, creativity and social behavior, and your "practical intelligence," which is your ability to apply stored knowledge to everyday living. Urge the women to repeat the "Affirm" sentence for each day out loud. **Show** your index card book and remind the class to also write out the affirmations and scripture for each day. Urge the class to memorize any verses which speak powerfully to them.

4. **Quote** from Day 3, page 23: "If we want to become vessels of God's power, we need to make a conscious decision: I *will* remember. I *will* remember the deeds and the miracles God has performed, yes, even those performed long ago. Remembering what God has done is a choice. He doesn't want us to remember for remembering's sake."

**Question:** Why God does want us to remember, and why it is important to experiencing God's power now, to remember what he has already done. **If you want to use a visual and an activity here**, give each woman a smooth, flat **stone** instruct the class to **write** with a paint pen a key word about a time God spoke clearly, a prayer he answered, or a miracle he performed in their lives. (Their answer to Question 4, p. 27) One word is fine, like something provided: job, house, money, child, friend; something God did: healed, delivered, saved, protected; something God spoke: encouraged, convicted, forgave, loved, and so on. It will take several minutes for the paint to dry, so set the stones aside while you continue with the study.

5. **Summarize the emphasis** of this week's readings, **power through purification**. Day 4, "Align Yourself With God's Purposes," stresses the importance of obedience – purifying our desires and attitude toward God's power. "Like Jesus, we can only do what we see the Father doing. We must be in alignment with Father God—

his purposes, priorities, and timing. We can't just go out into the world with our own agendas and ask God to bless whatever we feel like doing. In general, we shouldn't ask God to bless what we are doing; we should find out what God is doing and join him, because that activity or ministry is already blessed. The power of God will only flow when a servant of God operates in alignment with God's purposes, priorities, and timing. (Day 4, pp. 30-31). Experiencing God's power is not about getting God to align with our agendas; it is about getting in alignment with him. It is about walking in obedience." (Day 4, p. 34)

**Question:** What kind of people we would become if we could disobey God's direct commandments and never suffer any negative results? If *we* could wave God's 'wand' to *make* his power flow through us according to our desires, whenever we wanted?

**Question:** What do we need to change, or purify, to walk in obedience to God's purposes, priorities, and timing?

**Summarize:** What are some typical "pet" sins? If you'd like, **show** a stuffed animal and act out the answers as you discuss this point. Consider what we do for and with pet animals: we give them food and water, provide a place for them in our homes, play with or talk to them, pay attention to them, cuddle them, walk or exercise them, and sometimes show them. How does that apply to our "pet" sins?

**Quote** Day 5, p. 41: Even if we have aligned ourselves with God's purposes, if we choose to wallow in sin, God steps back and says, "If that's what you truly want, have at it. But you can't have your sin and my power at the same time." Or as King David put it: "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened." (Psalm 66:18)

**Question:** How can holding on to hurt or disappointment, bitterness, anger, jealousy or self-pity "put us on the sidelines" and interfere with experiencing God's power?

What does God do when we repent and let go of our "pet sins"? Read the last sentence of Day 5, p. 43 if no one volunteers an answer.

6. **Give** each woman a slip of paper and tell the class to **write down** something they need to let go of: a disobedient desire or attitude out of alignment with God's purposes, priorities or timing, or a "pet" sin. Instruct the class to pray silently along as you **read the prayer** for Day 5 on page 43, then bring their paper forward and drop it into a trash can or basket. Day 6, 7, and 8 next week give more steps to take toward purity. These aren't condemnation, but tools God gives us to experience his power.

7. Divide into twos and **pray** for each other's requests. Collect the slips afterward.

**Close in prayer.** End with a prayer, including thanks for what God is doing, each week.

## Week Three

**Emphasis:** God's practical provision for power

### Preparation:

**Read and do** Days 6-10.

**Pray**

**Bring visuals** for PIT crew illustration: an oil can, tire wrench or socket wrench, engine cleaner like Gum Out, shop rag, tire pressure gauge, oil filter box, cap or hat, toy car, or other items you may think of or have at home. Also bring poster board or a large sheet of paper and markers for recording responses to questions.

**Make** a "checkered flag" for each participant: a piece of paper or cardstock with a black-and-white checkerboard design on one side, and blank on the other, for listing possible members of their PIT crew. Write out slips of paper with the Bible verses on counsel and wisdom listed in the "In Class" section.

**Bring** video, CD, or taped Bible studies if you have them.

**Bring** a pitcher of water, a basin or large bowl, and a hand towel or paper towels if you decide to do a cleansing ceremony at the end of today's class.

### In Class:

**Welcome**

**Open with prayer**

1. **Ask** the class to share their favorite affirmation so far.

**Explain** that today's focus is on three aspects of God's provision for power: cleansing, a PIT crew, and a teachable spirit. The first three readings this week continued the theme of cleansing. **Ask** if anyone knows why you need to change the oil in a car. (**Show** the oil filter or box if you brought one. Changing the oil removes buildups of carbon and pollutants from combustion from the engine.) **Direct** the class to the top of page 6.

**Question:** From the text, what contaminants or pollutants does Satan tempt us with? Can you think of other pollutants? List these on a white board or large sheet of paper.

Better than an oil change, Jesus' death on the cross cleansed us from contaminants and pollutants. **Quote** "In the same way Christ offered himself as a sacrifice *on behalf of sinners* to deal with the fact of sin." (p. 49)

A car's oil filter traps pollutants as the engine runs. To live a life of radical purity, we should ask these "filter" questions of ourselves regarding any action we are taking. (pp. 71-72) **Ask volunteers to read** the filter questions on pages 71 and 72.

**Question:** Think back to a poor choice you made. Which filter question would have helped you make a better choice, and how would it have changed your action?

Even with clean oil and a new filter, a car can still run below its peak performance if it has dirty injectors. Jesus' sacrifice purified us forever from the fact of sin, but like a car with dirty injectors, we often don't experience God's power because we still feel "dirty" and unworthy. Mechanics put additives in the gas tank to clean the injectors in the engine. "God also made the Holy Spirit available *to sinners* so that we could experience the joy of spiritual purification. This purifying makes us *feel clean again*, addressing the aftermath of sin. We need both forgiveness and purification in order to live in freedom. If you are a Christian, you have been declared "not guilty" in God's sight. Therefore, you shouldn't *feel guilty*." (p. 49)

**Read out loud together** Hebrews 9: 13-14 found on page 49 of the book:

“The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify

them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal

Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences” (Hebrews 9:13–14).

**Question:** How does the purifying power of the Holy Spirit affect your emotions and your willingness to serve God? (Question 4, Day 6)

2. The second provision for power we read about this past week is making a PIT crew, with prayer warriors, insightful counselors, and teachers. Drivers who want to win races count on a capable pit crew. **Summarize or quote** the first paragraph of Day 9, and the first paragraph under Prayer Warriors on the next page. Point out that everyone in class has started creating a PIT crew by being a Power Partner with another woman in class, and encourage the class to call or e-mail their Power Partner every week.

**Give** everyone willing to read a short verse a slip of paper with one of the following verses on counsel from Proverbs: 1: 5 ; 3: 5-6 ; 3: 7-8 ; 11 :14 ; 12: 15 ; 13: 10 ; 19: 20 ; 20: 5 ; 24: 6 ; 27: 9

As each verse is **read** out loud, **ask** the class to tell the promised result or product of counsel, and **write** the answers on paper or poster board.

Point out that the Holy Spirit should be the first counselor on our PIT crew. **Ask** volunteers to read the following verses out loud, and **list** the benefits of the Holy Spirit’s counsel: John 14: 16, 26 ; James 1: 5

**Ask** the class for ways/resources to find gifted teachers if their pastor or church doesn’t have that resource. **Show** the video, CD, or taped Bible study or teaching material you brought and **ask** if anyone has resources they would be willing to bring next week to share with others.

**Give** everyone a “checkered flag” and instruct them to write the names of prayer warriors and insightful counselors they can and will ask to become part of their PIT crew.

3. Along with the Holy Spirit, the greatest insightful counsel and gifted teacher God has provided for us to experience his power is the Bible. **Read** Psalm 1: 1-3:

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers, But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”

**Question:** What does God promise us if we delight in his word and spend time in it? Does reading the Bible automatically produce God’s power in our lives?

**Summarize:** “Bible reading and sound doctrine can inform us, but they don’t automatically transform us. God’s Word holds no power to transform our lives apart from the Spirit of God illuminating it. It’s nothing more than marks on a page. Unless we approach God’s Word with a teachable spirit, it will *not* penetrate, and it will not judge our thoughts and attitudes (see Hebrews 4:12). As Christians, we often fail to benefit from Bible reading because we approach God’s Word in the wrong spirit or for the wrong reasons. (p. 85)

**Question:** What roadblocks to experiencing God’s power through the Bible did you discover in reading Day 10 this past week? Then **ask** what we need to experience the promise in Psalm 1: 1-3 as we read God’s word. Some possible answers found in Day 10: ask God specific questions when we read the Bible, expect the Holy



Spirit to answer clearly, don't read with a time limit in mind, have a teachable attitude, read out of desire and not as an obligation.

4. If you **choose** to close today with a cleansing ceremony, you may want to divide into twos and **pray** for each other's requests and collect the slips before conducting the ceremony. If you decide not to do the cleansing ceremony, proceed with prayer time as usual.

Tell the class they are on the road to victory in becoming vessels of God's power.

**Remind** everyone to bring a Bible next week, especially a Bible with a concordance if they have one.

**Close in prayer.** You may want to use the prayer for Day 9 on pages 80 and 81.

## Week Four

**Emphasis:** The power of God's Word

### Preparation:

**Read and do** Days 11-15.

#### Pray

**Contact** class members during the week if you haven't spoken with them for a while.

**Bring** a Bible with a concordance, a concordance if you have one, and markers or colored pencils. Bring plenty if you want the participants to practice highlighting their Bibles during class. Bring a large sheet of paper or white board for recording answers. Bring your index card book this week as a reminder and ask the women to bring theirs next week, since one activity next week uses the scriptures recorded.

**Make copies** of the prayer request form if the class needs more slips. You will want to have a supply on hand for the one-on-one prayer time today. If you choose, **write or print out** slips of paper with 2 Corinthians 3:18-4:1 and John 15: 15-16, leaving enough room for class members to write their personalized version of one verse.

### In Class:

#### Welcome

#### Open with prayer

1. **Ask** who started building their PIT crew after last week's class? **Ask** for volunteers to read their favorite scripture from the study so far.

**Question:** Has anyone ever given you "just the right scripture" for a need in your life or issue you faced? What impact did that have on you?

Week Three's readings ended with the call to abandon clock-controlled and checklist-driven Bible reading. This week we learned some practical ways to make our time in God's Word more powerful, beginning with highlighting and color-coding your Bible. This simple-seeming activity gives the Holy Spirit, the most important member of the "T" or teaching part of our PIT crew, an opportunity to speak to us personally and pointedly.

**Question:** Skim through the last paragraph on page 96 and the top of page 97. What do highlighting and color-coding facilitate? **List** additional ideas the participants may have beyond the ideas in the book: "As I said, color-coding your Bible is not coloring for coloring's sake. It's a tool for studying, meditating, and making connections among passages. It's for noticing trends, contrasts, similarities, lists, and so on." (pp. 96-97)

2. **Question:** (Question 2 from Day 11) What do you think of the suggestion to color-code your Bible? What do you see as the advantages (and perhaps even disadvantages)?

Donna started highlighting verses on prayer, then peace, then wisdom. She also asked the Holy Spirit to direct her to areas of weakness in her life. **Ask** the class for additional topics to highlight and **make a list** of topics on paper or a white board. From the list, choose as many topics as you have Bibles with a concordance available, and ask the people with those Bibles to select one of the chosen topics. Instruct the participants to **break into groups** based on the topic they would like to look up. **Pass out colored pencils or markers** and tell the class to find one or two verses under their topic, and then highlight them in their own Bibles.

3. **Summarize** the power in personalizing Bible verses, and **share** from your own experience. See the first paragraph on page 104 and the second paragraph on page 106. **Read out loud** as a whole class several of the personalized scripture passages on page 257 at the end of the book.

**Question:** How did reading those personalized passages impact you?

**Practice** writing personalized scripture. Ask the class to choose either 2 Corinthians 3:18-4:1 or John 15: 15-16 and write out their personalized “I” statement from the selected verse. You may want to print out these verses on slips of paper, allowing enough room for writing a personalized version, and give each class member a slip. Ask if anyone would like to read their personalized scripture out loud.

4. **Summarize or say:** Beyond its power to teach us, to become vessels of God’s power, we need God’s Word working in us and through us to do what Jesus did. “But personal experience is not the measure of truth; God’s Word is the measure of truth. As we choose to believe his Word, he will show us his power.” (p. 120) Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12).

**Question:** Looking at the second paragraph on page 118 of Day 4, and thinking about the stories in Day 13 and Day 15, what did God’s power in Jesus look like? How can we expect to see God’s power evidenced in our lives?

**Question:** How does knowing you will inevitably stumble as you learn to be an imitator of God give you greater courage to step out in faith?

**Practice:** Since we do want to experience God’s power, tell the class members you are going to practice **praying with boldness**. Ask the class members to choose a partner and, holding hands, pray boldly for either the prayer request their partner brought today or for a need or circumstance in her life.

**Question:** Without mentioning the requests you prayed for, what did you experience during this time of prayer?

Since you already prayed, wrap up today’s class by **reading** this from the book: “But if we want to become vessels of God’s power, we must be willing for him to use us. When it comes to experiencing God’s power, we don’t *have to*. We *get to*.”

**Remind** everyone to contact their Power Partner this week.

**Close in prayer:** Pray as the Holy Spirit leads you, or pray the prayer for Day 12 on page 107.

## Week Five

**Emphasis:** The power of prayer

### Preparation:

**Read and do** Days 16-20.

#### Pray

**Think/pray about** preparing a class evaluation form for each member to fill out at the last class.

**Bring** paper for class members to write out a prayer, your index card book, your own highlighted Bible, a quiet worship CD or tape (quiet instrumental music is fine, also) and a CD or tape player, and a Frisbee or ball to illustrate the “Frisbee chaser” example from Day 20’s reading.

**Write out** a sample scripture-rooted prayer to read as an example during the class activity.

### In Class:

#### Welcome

#### Open with prayer

1. **Point out:** Have you noticed the continuity and carry-over from week to week in this study? Week Two’s emphasis on purification led into God’s provision for continuing confession, repentance, and pursuing purity in Week Three. The place of God’s Spirit and Word on our PIT crew moved us seamlessly to the emphasis on the power of God’s Word in Week Four, where we learned that God’s Word teaches us to boldly do what Jesus did. Last week we ended by praying boldly for each other, which guided us to this week’s emphasis on the power of prayer. Today’s class is filled with practical ways to make our prayer life powerful.

**Question:** What is the purpose of prayer? Take answers from the class and direct everyone to Day 16, page 139: “God did not create prayer as an exercise in futility. He created prayer as a tool to bring heaven’s power to bear upon the affairs of earth.” and to Day 18, page 153: Is it possible that when Jesus commanded us to *pray* for his kingdom to come and his will to be done that there was more to it than just keeping Christians busy with a religious activity? Is it possible that if we *don’t pray* for God’s kingdom to come and his will to be done, we can *hinder* God’s kingdom?

**Ask** the class to share their answers to Day 16 question 4: Describe a time when you prayed a specific prayer and received a specific response. What impact did that have on your faith and the faith of those around you?

**Question:** How do you respond when you *don’t* see God answering yes to your prayers? You may get other answers in addition to the responses listed in the book on pages 137-138:

We assume God is the cause for a no answer.

We explain it away by saying that God gave us something better instead

We give up too soon, assuming God’s answer is no.

**Question:** Looking at this week’s readings and readings from past weeks, what does stand in the way of God answering yes to our prayers? Give time for answers. If the participants don’t readily find the reasons, go to:

Our prayers are out of alignment with God’s stated will. (p. 138)

We have unconfessed sin. (p. 138)

We have prayed a generic prayer instead of a specific prayer. (p. 138)

Our prayers are timid [Is it right to pray with such boldness? Jesus said it is. (Day 15, p. 131)]

Our prayers aren’t rooted in God’s Word. (Day 17)

We are praying our agenda, not God’s. (Day 18)

Apathy: we believe God's kingdom will come and his will shall be done *whether or not* we pray. (p. 153)

2. **Summarize:** Why persist in praying? Because God did not create prayer as an exercise in futility. God delights in saying yes to our prayers! (p. 139) Today we will practice strategies to help overcome some of the obstacles just listed.

**Show** your highlighted Bible and **explain** we can know our prayers are in alignment with God's will when we root our prayer in scripture.

**Practice:** Instruct the participants to find a highlighted verse in their Bible or from their index card book, turn it into a prayer, and write it out. **Give** each person a piece of paper. **Read** your sample prayer, and direct the class to the **example** on Day 17 page 147. Depending on how comfortable the class members feel, **you** may want to **ask** for volunteers to read the scripture they chose and their prayer.

3. **Quote:** Our primary role in prayer is *praying what God directs us to pray*. We pray about matters on *his* prayer list. I believe God actively seeks prayer partners. When he finds a listening ear, he shares what's on his heart and invites that person to agree with him in prayer. (p. 155)

**Question:** Before this study, did you ever consider that God wants to share the concerns of his heart with you? How does this realization change your thoughts on prayer? Do you think this means we shouldn't ask God for the concerns on our hearts?

**Read** this quote from Dallas Willard: "Prayer is never just asking, nor is it merely a matter of asking for what I want. On the other hand, I am to pray for what concerns me, God is concerned with my concerns, and in particular, that my concerns should coincide with his. This is our walk together. Prayer simply *dies* from efforts to pray about "good things" that honestly do not matter to us. The way to get to meaningful prayer for those good things is to start by praying for what we are truly interested in. The circle of our interests will inevitably grow in the largeness of God's love. . . . he (God) is concerned with my concerns, and in particular, that my concerns should coincide with his. This is our walk together."<sup>1</sup>

**Practice:** Ask the class members to write out one of their prayer concerns, or the prayer request they brought to class today, on the back of their scripture prayer paper. Tell the class to lift up that concern to God and then ask him what is on his heart for that person or situation. Spend several minutes in silent, listening prayer. Write down what God shares.

4. Praying with others is another way to experience power in prayer. *If you want to know the most effective way to pray, the answer is corporately*. When Jesus said, "This, then, is how you should pray," he used the plural form of *you*. (p. 161)

**Explain** that you are going to incorporate the praying scripture activity with the power step of praying together. "Where two or more are gathered...there is power." (p. 164) In case some people in the class are uncomfortable praying out loud with another person, remind the class of this quote from Day 19: "Some people say they are uncomfortable praying aloud. If you are one of them, ask yourself why. If you can stand around chatting with friends in public, then you can pray in public. If you can have a conversation with a human being, you can have a conversation with one or more human beings plus God. (p. 164) When it's time to pray, pray. Don't talk about praying. Don't build up to praying. Pray expecting God to show forth his power. (p. 165)

**Divide into groups** of two or three. **Instruct** the class to take turns praying their scripture-based prayer. After each person prays the prayer she wrote, the other group members will pray out loud for that request, listening to what is on God's heart for the concern. **Emphasize simplicity**. **Remind** the class that God says, "*Stop leaping*

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<sup>1</sup> Willard, Dallas, *The Divine Conspiracy*, Harper San Francisco (1997) 242-3

*in the air, chasing Frisbees. Stop trying to impress me with all you can do. I'd much rather have you just sit right here with me.*"(p. 170) This is not a flowery prayer contest or Frisbee chasing (**show the Frisbee, if you brought one**), but friends in a conversation with God!

After this group prayer time, tell the class you will **close** in silent listening prayer. **Play** the CD or tape you brought. After several minutes of silence, simply say "In Jesus' name, amen."

**Remind** everyone to contact their Power Partner during the week.

## Week Six

**Emphasis:** The power of balance

### Preparation:

**Read and do** Days 21-25

#### Pray

**Call or e-mail** the class this week. Ask them to write down on a 3x5 card or small piece of paper a typical situation that makes them frustrated or annoyed and bring it to the next class.

**Make** the “board game” for this week. Write each “choice” phrase that follow in on regular piece of paper or colored paper. Tape these securely down on the classroom floor before class begins; participants will stand on them. You may prefer to or additionally draw the game board on poster board or a large piece of paper so everyone can see the choices as you discuss them. **Make** a “Go directly to jail” and “Get out of jail free” card for each class member. You can use one card and print the phrases on opposite sides of the card.

**Bring** a pitcher and a kitchen timer to illustrate points in today’s study.

**Purchase** or make awards for the game: blue ribbons, crowns, tiaras, trophies, or award certificates.

### In Class:

#### Welcome

#### Open with prayer

Today’s class covers serious issues but will be more light-hearted in approach.

**Question:** What is restful for you? How do you relax or renew?

1. **Activity:** Set the kitchen timer and ask everyone in the class to stand on one foot for one minute. At the end of the minute, ask what they experienced and how they felt. **Question:** Was it hard to keep your balance? Did that affect your thinking as well as your muscles?

**Show** the pitcher and **ask** what happens when a pitcher or vessel of liquid is out of balance. (It doesn’t pour properly, it spills, it makes a mess.) **Question:** What happens to us as vessels of God’s power when our lives are out of balance?

Being out of balance spiritually is like standing on one foot; possible answers may include that it creates stress, drains our energy, causes us to wobble, creates “messes” in relationships, and makes it difficult to experience God’s power in our lives.

**Summarize:** This week we read two days on resting - honoring the Sabbath and trusting God - and two days on doing – behaving as God’s child and living out the Holy Spirit’s power in us. We need both rest and activity to become effective Vessels of God’s power.

2. Today you may want to arrange chairs in a circle as you “play a board game” to discuss and illustrate points in Days 22-25. The game illustrates how our choices lead us toward God’s purpose for vessels of his power, or away from God’s purpose. The game starts from the paper marked “God’s Promises.” This paper will be the point of an inverted “V” shape. Write each of these additional phrases on a sheet of paper, one phrase per sheet. Tape down choices moving us away from God’s purpose to the left of the “God’s Promises” page as the left side of the inverted “V” shape. Tape down choices moving us toward God’s purpose to the right of the “God’s Promises” page as the right side of the “V” shape. Leave some space on the floor between the pages. The phrases and their placement are shown below. Space phrases on the left increasingly to the left of center, and phrases on the right similarly to the right. With each choice, the distance grows between living or not living

toward God's purpose. The phrases are arranged below as they should be taped to the floor. You may also want or prefer to make a poster "game board" with these phrases to be more visible to the whole group.

	God's Promises	
1.		
2.	Trust Myself	Trust God
3.	Seek approval of others	Believe I'm God's child
4.	React instinctively to circumstances	Choose the Fruit of the Spirit in circumstances
5.	Released frustrations trap everyone	Released faith releases everyone
6.	Go to Jail	Get out of Jail
7.	Keep my spiritual gifts to myself	Share my spiritual gifts with others
8.	If all goes as I've planned, I should be okay	I know I need God's power
9.	Corruption in the world from evil desires	Participate in the Divine nature
10.	STUCK IN THE SWAMP	ADVANCE GOD'S KINGDOM – YOU WIN!

**Ask** for volunteers to come, tell what their typical frustrating or annoying situation is, make a choice about the situation, and stand on the phrase they choose as you discuss the points and questions. Questions and/or related points from the book are tied to the numbers above; not every line has a question. After the volunteer answers the question, read the quote from the book and discuss the question briefly as a whole group.

**Question (2):** How does it affect you when you don't trust and stand on God's promises? When you do trust God?

**Quote:** When I don't stand on God's promises, I'm in emotional anguish; and fear, rather than faith, motivates everything I do. Unfortunately, "everything that does not come from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Our lives become conduits for the power of God when we trust God. It's God's job to keep his promises, and it's impossible for him to fail. When God sees someone who *believes his promises*, he will move heaven and earth to reward that person's faith. (p. 187)

**Question (3):** In frustrating or stressful situations, what are some emotional responses produced by insecurity? How would believing God cherishes and empowers you change those responses?

Personal insecurities are a giant energy drain. They sap the power of God from our lives because they cause our prayers and even our ministries to be motivated by fear, jealousy, and personal ambition rather than by the love of God. Insecure people desperately seek the approval they think they need, instead of simply standing on God's promise that he has *already* freely given them everything they need to live a God-infused life. I have one title alone: I'm God's child. If I experience his love by focusing on him day by day, rejection issues will disappear. My Father . . . tells me I'm cherished. As I keep receiving that love, it starts to pour out of me to others. (p. 185)

**Question (4):** This is a quick general question to the entire group: You can't choose your initial emotional responses, but are your reactions a choice – even the instinctive ones?

When we choose to conduct ourselves as God's children, whether others are treating us well or poorly, we stand out, allowing us to testify to the transforming power of God in our lives. When we allow the Holy Spirit to flow through us, our lives overflow with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, *no matter what happens*. (p. 194)

**Point (5): Ask** the entire group: In Acts 16: 23-26, what resulted from Paul and Silas releasing their faith in their prison cell? (p. 194-195) **Read:** No matter where you are right now, no matter how trapped or hopeless you might feel, if you choose to release the power of God within, God will unleash his power into your circumstances. A faith real enough and powerful enough to enable us to sing in our own prison cell is a faith that's real enough and powerful enough to impact everyone around us. And the converse is also true

**Question (6):** Who would you set free if you chose to release your faith in your annoying situation?



**Give** everyone a “Go directly to jail/Get out of jail free” card, **ask** the whole class to prayerfully ask themselves the same question, and **say** that everyday they can choose which side of the card they will “play.”

**Question (7):** If you cultivated the Holy Spirit’s power within you to such an extent that your character was transformed, would that prompt you to share your gifting with others? What spillover would that have in your daily situations and the people involved in them?

A power-packed Christian life includes the unleashing power of the Holy Spirit within us, producing the fruit of righteousness in us. It also includes the Holy Spirit upon us, yielding a harvest of souls for the kingdom. (p.202)

**Question (8):** Do you feel more comfortable with self-sufficiency or knowing you need God?

Too many of us have organized our lives so we don’t need God’s power, and then we wonder why we never experience it. Even our prayers boil down to: *Dear God, please set up my life so perfectly that I don’t need you or anyone else.* . . . We leave no room for God. However, throughout Scripture, throughout history, throughout the world today, God’s power is given to those who recognize their need for it. (p.210-211) If you can say of your life, “If all goes as planned, I should be okay,” don’t expect to see a mighty move of God. . . . Many of us have inadvertently power-proofed our lives, and we don’t even know it. Until we recognize our desperate need for God’s intervention, he will watch quietly, patiently waiting until we get it through our thick skulls that he wants to do so much more in and through our lives. (p. 211-212)

**Points 9 and 10:** Following the path on either side takes us to 2 Peter 1:3-4: “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” The left path leads to the end of this verse: the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. What does the right path lead us to? Participation in the divine nature, and the victory of becoming a vessel of God’s power to advance God’s kingdom upon the earth. (p. 205)

**Say YOU WIN** and **hand out** the ribbons, tiaras, crowns, certificates, or other prize you’ve brought for each class member. Then **instruct** the class to lift their pinky finger and repeat this affirmation/prayer after you:

Lord, I want to discover what it truly means to have power-packed faith—  
I want to believe you’ll do the miraculous in and through my life.  
I believe you will keep your promises to me!

**If time permits, divide** into small groups to share prayer requests. Tell the groups to be sure to end each prayer with “God, I believe you will keep your promises to me!”

**Close in prayer.**

## Week Seven

**Emphasis:** Power in practice

### Preparation:

**Read and do** Days 26-30

#### Pray

**Bring** binoculars and a power tool, such as a drill or screwdriver with a power cord and preferably a three-pronged plug, to use as illustrations if you'd like.

**Contact** the class during the week if they need to bring anything for your final class celebration next week.

**Contact** someone to lead praise and worship for the celebration on Week Eight if you'd like to have live music.

### In Class:

#### Welcome

#### Open with prayer

1. **Ask** the group to share any experience of God's power they've been part of in the past two weeks.

**Show** the binoculars and **ask** if anyone knows what improvement the two eyepiece and lenses of a binocular give over a single lens in a telescope. Using both eyes gives us stereo vision, or perception of depth.

**Summarize:** We are not obligated to become vessels of God's power; we are privileged to. Last week we played a game to discover choices that lead us toward or away from seeing and experiencing God's power and purpose, but being a vessel of God's power isn't a program or a set of regulations. "We need to remember that the power of God is, first and foremost, for salvation. We are following the Person of the Holy Spirit. He is always at work all around us." **Quote:** "If we are not seeing his work, it's not because he isn't working! It's because we are not being prayerful and watchful." (p. 219) **Direct the** class to page 221 in the book and **quote** "We are to *devote ourselves to prayer*, asking God to grant us the privilege of experiencing his power at work in the world. Then we are to *begin watching* for his answer to our prayer. But we *don't complain* when we don't see immediate results. Instead, we stay thankful. *God, I know you are working in the world. I am confident that today I'm going to experience your power. I'm on the watch!* As we maintain a thankful attitude, God provides an open door for us to proclaim his truth to someone.

**Ask** the class to share a time they were prayerful and watchful and, as a result, experienced the power of God. (Question 2, p. 222)

2. **Question:** What do you think it means to exercise spiritual authority? Take several answers.

**Question:** Do you think God's power is a tool to use for your ends, or do you believe you are a tool of God's power for God's purposes?

**Say:** "We're going to examine power tools, not for home improvement, but to improve effectiveness as vessels of God's power. Spiritual authority unleashes the power of God. **Show** the power tool you brought and ask the class to tell simple principles they know about using a power tool. Then **ask** how these principles apply to us as tools of God's power. they see or they discovered in this week's readings

**Points to bring out:** a power tool has a purpose, but it only works when it is plugged into power.

**Put the tool's plug** near a wall outlet and **ask** if the tool will work. Just as the tool's plug must be in contact with the outlet for power to flow to the tool, we must be in prayerful, watchful, listening, obedient contact with God, our source of power, if the spiritual authority Jesus wants to give us is to flow through us.

Kingdom work is accomplished by exercising our spiritual authority; and spiritual authority unleashes the power of God.

**Show the plug as you ask this question and ask the class to look for the answer on Day 27, p. 228:** But like a safely grounded plug needs three prongs, in order to exercise spiritual authority, what three conditions must we operate under? Answers: We must be obediently (1) in the right place, (2) at the right time, (3) doing the right thing. When we are not walking in obedience, God won't authorize us to do *anything for him*. (p. 228)

**Show** the point of the tool. **Question:** Is the point of exercising our spiritual authority to change other people to be what we want them to be or do what we want them to do? If not that, then what is the point and purpose of exercising spiritual authority?

“If our objective is to control—whether God, people, or circumstances—then we are praying with wrong motives, and God will not honor such prayers. We cannot use prayer to make God or people do what we want them to do, even if we want good things . . . . Jesus delegated his authority to us for one reason and one reason only: so that we could pray for his kingdom to come and his will to be done on this earth, not so we could build our own mini-kingdoms or have our own will be done. As always, it's all about him.” (p. 231)

Jesus told believers to exercise spiritual authority over the Enemy. He said, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18, NLT), then added, “I have given you [the disciples, which includes us] authority . . . to overcome all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19). (p. 228)

**Activity: Say:** This is the right place and the right time to exercise our spiritual authority over the enemy in our own lives, relationships, and homes. In authority praying, you speak directly to the situation, just as Jesus instructed us to do. We've learned the power of praying together, so today let's stand together and pray out loud the prayer from Day 27 on pages 233 and 234. If you aren't married or don't have children, substitute the words that apply to you: my job, my relationships. Let's unleash the power of God into our lives. **Read:** *In the name of Jesus, I claim protection over my . . . . Thank you that you live in me, and that you are far greater than he who lives in the world. Jesus, we exalt your name and proclaim that your power is greater than any other force. Thank you for the Cross. Amen.*

3. **Question:** Praying with authority is an important function as a tool or vessel of God's power, but a drill bit or screwdriver blade can be off center if you haven't tightened it down equally on all three sides. Can we become off center in exercising spiritual authority? If so, how, and what helps keep us properly centered?

**Summarize:** (You can illustrate this point by using a chuck to tighten the bit or blade on the tool you've brought.) An electric drill or screwdriver usually has three adjustment holes for tightening the bit or blade. Tightening them all equally keeps the bit or blade centered. We have three adjustment spots, too: exercising spiritual authority, loving service, and solitude and rest. Believers “. . . sometimes do more harm than good because they do not first seek God, are not securely grounded in him, and don't return to him before they are depleted. God calls us to experience a divine rhythm:

- Come to God to get our needs met, go to meet the needs of others.
- Come to learn, go to teach.
- Come to be filled, go to pour forth.
- Come to be ministered to, go to minister.

Just as there is a need for both spiritual fruit and spiritual gifts, there's a need for both inward spiritual reality and practical outreach. (p. 244)

“God's power is often seen when we are willing to do small things with great faithfulness. As Mother Teresa said, “We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love.” Every follower of Jesus Christ has a standing appointment with people in need. If you see someone with a need that you can meet, consider it a

divine appointment. . . . Sometimes the power of God is most clearly demonstrated not in the big things, but in the small things we do with faithfulness. (p. 236)

**Question:** In which area do you tend to be off-center: praying with authority, loving service, or solitude and rest? What are some actions you can take to become better centered as a tool of God's power?

**Question:** As you read the ideas in Day 28, and thinking about your own regular routines, what ideas came to your mind to prepare for God's "standing appointments" with others?

**Break into small groups.** Think of a place you are likely to be today or tomorrow (for example the grocery store or school parking lot). Share ideas about how to be faithful in a "small thing" in that place. Pray specifically for each other that God will show you his work in that place today or tomorrow.

Next week is the final class. It should be a time of reflection, celebration, and commissioning. If you want to have refreshments, let class members sign up today to bring them. Remind everyone to bring their scripture/affirmation index card book next week.

**Close in prayer.**

## Week Eight

**Emphasis:** God wants to say “Yes!”

### Preparation:

**Read again** Day 30

#### Pray

**Contact** class members and remind them to bring the food they signed up for, as well as their index card book. **Bring** your index card book and the “I’m anticipating” sheets class members filled out the first week. Bring pretty pitchers or containers and, depending on your classroom or home setting, a tablecloth, flowers, or other decorations for this week’s celebration. Bring anointing oil if you would like to anoint each class member in a commissioning ceremony. Bring a CD or tape, or ask someone to lead praise and worship. If it’s someone in the class, so much the better! Write a thank-you note for that person/those people.

**Make** Print out evaluation forms and the reading for the commissioning ceremony if you choose to include these in the last class. You might like to make “graduation” certificates or write an encouraging note to give each class member. This week’s notes are brief to allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in planning this celebration.

### In Class:

#### Welcome

#### Open with prayer

1. Spend some time in praise and worship, either using recorded music or the musician/worship leader you asked to participate today.

**Question:** Where and how did you see God move through a “small thing” or God appointment in your routine last week? Be sure to cheer, applaud, or otherwise celebrate both what God did and the faithfulness of his vessel.

**Question:** At the beginning of this class, you decided to “give God thirty days – and see what he will do.” What are some things you’ve seen God do in your life?

**Hand back** the “I’m Anticipating” sheets the class members filled out on the first week.

**Question:** How would you answer these questions now? Has your understanding of God - and your role as a vessel of his power – changed since this class began?

**Instruct** the class to add a prayer at the bottom of the sheet, expressing and thanking God for what they have discovered and experienced.

**Take turns reading** the affirmation statements out loud. **Read** affirmation 30 all together.

**Commissioning:** [In a responsive reading, the leader (L) reads one phrase and the group as a whole (G and in bold type below) reads the next, alternating reading between the leader and the group, ending with everyone reading the final passage together.] You may use this ceremony based on scripture verses from 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, 4:6-7 and 2 Timothy 2:21, or prepare one of your own.

(L) Father God, you are the Spirit,

**(G) And where you are, there is freedom.**

(L) Jesus, you are the glory of God in the fullness of its radiance. Sanctified, we lift our faces to you,

**(G) We celebrate and we reflect your glory!**

(L) Day by day we’ve watched you transforming us into your likeness.

**(G) You give us glory upon glory, Holy Spirit!**

(L) Yes, Lord, we confess we are jars of clay,

**(G) But you make your light shine in our hearts.**

(L) You have cleansed us and made us vessels for noble purpose.

**(G) We receive your power now. Master, make us lovingly, boldly, powerfully useful.**

**All: Prepared for every good work, I am a vessel of your power. I invite you, God, to work through me!  
Amen!**

Anoint each person with oil if you choose. Give everyone their graduation certificate, note, or other token.  
Hand out a class evaluation if you've prepared one.

**End with refreshments and close in prayer.**

## I'm Anticipating

Name:

Date:

Address:

Phone:

1. I am taking this class because:

2. List several areas in your life where you need to experience the power of God:

3. Do you think God is disappointed with you, are you profoundly aware that he dearly loves you, or do you fall somewhere between these two perceptions?

4. In a nutshell, I'd describe my current Bible reading and prayer life as:

5. How would you complete this statement: "God, I really want to know . . . ."

6. How do you hope you will be changed or different at the end of this study?

**Requested by** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Requested by** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Requested by** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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