

WEEK 2: BEING A PEOPLE SHAPED BY THE GOSPEL

How to Use These Prayer Updates

We invite you to watch the video, as Michael Oh, Lausanne Movement Executive Director, shares an invitation to join in the month of prayer by visiting www.lausanne.org/pray



We ask you to set aside time each day – a holy, consecrated time – to savor the great gift of God in the Gospel, and to bring before Him the needs of a world where so many have yet to hear and experience the transforming news of the Gospel.

Some updates include sample prayers, while others include specific prayer points. These are provided as beginning points for your own communion with God and intercession for the nations. Don't allow the format to restrict the way that you respond to God. Just as we come from many cultures and traditions, may our worship and prayers be expressed in manifold ways to the glory of God.

In addition to reading and praying, consider how you might further consecrate yourself to God during this time. Would you consider fasting one meal a day, a day each week, or perhaps giving up something else that is precious to you like your morning coffee or your internet surfing? Would you be willing to go without these things in order to express to God your deep need for him to make himself known in you and in the world? Might this discipline of prayer and fasting be an aid to stirring up a holy hunger to see God glorified in those places where men and women are serving creation instead of the Creator.

How else might we together declare to God that we are expectant, waiting, and attentive to his Word and his Holy Spirit, wholly dependent upon him and completely his?

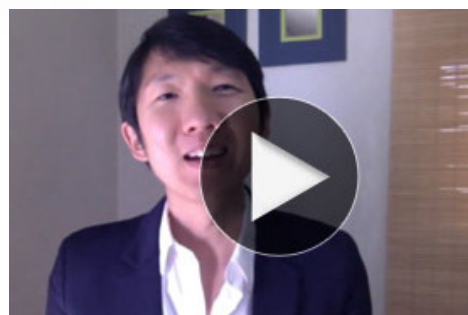
When the month is over, may it be that God has been lifted up and glorified, the world made further ready for the Gospel, and God's people renewed, rejoicing and ready to serve him!

Please join us in this prayer journey.

WEEK 2, DAY 8: BEING A PEOPLE SHAPED BY THE GOSPEL

Being a People Shaped by the Gospel

Today, Michael Oh, Executive Director of The Lausanne Movement, shares his thoughts on "Being a People Shaped by the Gospel"



We've reflected on and celebrated anew the salvation of God, won for us by the suffering of Jesus on the cross as a fulfillment of all the promises of God to Israel and to the World. This week we will explore one of the great ramifications of that salvation, namely, our sanctification. Notice the relationship between what Christ did on the cross and the ongoing results as explained by the writer of the book of Hebrews:

"For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

*Therefore, brothers, **since** we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."*
Hebrews 10:14, 19-25 (emphasis added)

Verses 19-25 explain verse 14, which declares that the single offering of Jesus on the cross not only perfected us for salvation, but also put us into a category of people who are "being sanctified". Verses 19-25 illustrate this in two ways. These verses are saying that SINCE we have been saved, that should affect how we approach God (with a pure heart and full assurance), and behave within the household of God (stir up one another to love and good works, meet together, and encourage one another). The Gospel has practical ramifications for our daily lives.

Have we allowed the Gospel to shape us? Are there areas of life that still need to be refined in Gospel fire? As we seek to serve the Lord and his people, we must be careful not to disqualify ourselves through ungodliness. Today we consecrate anew our hearts and lives to God, for his glory and our joy.

Father, as we consider living lives shaped by the Gospel, we invite your penetrating and purifying work in our lives. We want to be useful for Kingdom work. We want to lead men and women to the knowledge of Christ. And we want to please you, our loving Father. Shape us. Amen

WEEK 2, DAY 9: BEING A PEOPLE SHAPED BY THE GOSPEL

Gospel Powered Humility

"Pride must die in you or nothing of heaven can live in you...Here is the path to the higher life: down, lower down! Just as water always seeks and fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds men abased and empty, His glory and power flow in to exalt and to bless."—Andrew Murray, Humility

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Philippians 2:5-8

Perhaps one of the first things which must be shaped by the Gospel is our ego. The Cape Town Commitment calls all believers to walk in humility: "In our fallenness and sin, power is often exercised to abuse and exploit others. We exalt ourselves, claiming superiority of gender, race, or social status. Paul counters all these marks of the idolatry of pride and power with his requirement that those who are filled by God's Spirit should submit to one another for Christ's sake."

If we are honest, humility is easier said than done. It is so easy to forget that all that we have is from God and not from our own accomplishments. Humility is also difficult because it continues to be redefined by society in many places. G.K. Chesterton's words from nearly 60 years ago still ring true, "What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place...A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. Nowadays the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert-himself. The part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt - the Divine Reason."¹

Take a moment, if you are physically able, to kneel on the floor in a posture of humility in body, as we would posture our hearts spiritually...kneeling as servants before the King, the good Master, let us pray.

Father, despite society's attempts to rob Christ of his claim to sole possession of truth and rule, and despite our own jealous pride, we press in and beseech you to empower us to humble ourselves, and we say that if we cannot humble ourselves, then YOU must do it! We dare not usurp your throne. Instead, we bow now before you, the only true God. There is none like you! Amen

¹ G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1957], pp. 31-32.

WEEK 2, DAY 10: BEING A PEOPLE SHAPED BY THE GOSPEL

Power, Humility, and Love

*"Love for God and love for neighbour constitute the first and greatest commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and the first named fruit of the Spirit. Love is the evidence that we are born again; the assurance that we know God; and the proof that God dwells within us. Love is the new commandment of Christ, who told his disciples that only as they obeyed this commandment would their mission be visible and believable. Christian love for one another is how the unseen God, who made himself visible through his incarnate Son, goes on making himself visible to the world. Love was among the first things that Paul observed and commended among new believers, along with faith and hope. But love is the greatest, for love never ends."*¹

These words are saturated with biblical teaching on love. Yet, is this robust, life-giving love what we see in the world? The Church? In place of love, all too often we see a thirst for self. In many places this self-first focus results in a race for power. This is certainly true as we look among the governments of this world, but sadly, it is often true in the one place where humility should be at home – that is, in the Church.

Love is the root of humility and the antidote to egotism. Without love, humility is not possible. Love can do great things because it takes control of our lives out of our hands and gives that control back to God where it belongs. Watch the video below (Testimony from North Korea), and notice how love compels God's people to cast aside their own interests for the interests of others.

Take a moment now and pray as this young woman has exhorted us.



To see such selfless love is humbling. Brothers and sisters, we must get serious about living lives of humility. We must resist the enemy and this world that would tempt us to usurp God's rightful place. It is only love, His love for us, changing us and causing love to well up in us for others that can overcome pride. The Gospel of God's love for us must blow apart our kingdoms of self-interest. Regardless of your station in life – whether ministry, business, politics, or the academy, let God's love for you lead you to a life of humility.

Ask God to reveal to you where you should grow in loving others. Pray for those you love, and most importantly, pray for those you find hard to love. Pray for the Church that humility, born in love, would characterize God's people for the sake of his name. Ask how you might give away power today instead of grasping for it. Ask how you might go lower today, that the name of Christ may go higher. Ask how you might serve today so that others might see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

¹ Cape Town Commitment, "We love because God first loved us," 2010.

WEEK 2, DAY 11: BEING A PEOPLE SHAPED BY THE GOSPEL

People of Integrity

Integrity means wholeness, or a state of having all the parts of a thing or person fully and rightly fitted together. The opposite of integrity is brokenness, which we know is caused by sin. For the Christian, integrity is served and supported by unrelenting truth. Integrity requires first, knowing the truth and second, living according to the truth with consistency in action, values, and principles. Just as embracing truth undergirds integrity, a rejection of truth and acceptance of dishonesty undermines integrity.

Lack of integrity within the ranks of professing believers seems to be common place today. The Book of Acts and the epistles seem to suggest that, unfortunately, this has always been the case. There have always been those who would seek to profit by the Gospel. This sometimes happens in blatant ways, as we see in frequent reports of prominent leaders of God's people being exposed, be it for heresy, greed, or sexual immorality. It also happens in subtle ways, ways that news reporters or bloggers may never hear about. Pastors behave as dictators. Employers use their positions of power for personal gain. Co-workers take advantage of one another. Not only does dishonesty and abuse exist in all quarters of the world but it also exists in the Church. For many, working every day with "brothers" and "sisters" in Christ is a dreadful thing. Dear friends, Satan rejoices at these ways we defile God's name. May this never be!

Nothing but the Gospel – its truth and its power – will fix this. We must not pretend that the lack of integrity is a problem just for others. No, the flesh still wars within each one of us, and we must put it to death daily, taking up the cross of Christ. The Gospel reminds us that we are wholly dependent on God to work in us "both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). We need God to make us whole, that is, holy, completely set apart for his good pleasure!

What the world desperately needs are men and women who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). Governments need these people. NGOs need these people. The Church needs these people. Businesses need these people. Universities and schools need these people.

Will we and our ministry, business, staff team, or church heed the call to integrity? Or will we wait until we are exposed by the light of God's truth?

Father, purify your people. Make us holy as you are holy. Cause us to be people of integrity. Lord, cause our churches and organizations to be places where truth reigns and where justice is done. For the sake of your name and the salvation of many, cause integrity to spring from your people like water from the rock. You are able! Amen

WEEK 2, DAY 12: BEING A PEOPLE SHAPED BY THE GOSPEL

Organizations of Integrity

The Cape Town Commitment, when reflecting on Integrity, issues this call:

*"We call on all church and mission leaders to resist the temptation to be less than totally truthful in presenting our work. We are dishonest when we exaggerate our reports with unsubstantiated statistics, or twist the truth for the sake of gain. We pray for a cleansing wave of honesty and the end of such distortion, manipulation and exaggeration. We call on all who fund spiritual work not to make unrealistic demands for measurable and visible results, beyond the need for proper accountability. Let us strive for a culture of full integrity and transparency. We will choose to walk in the light and truth of God, for the Lord tests the heart and is pleased with integrity."*¹

We cannot build the kingdom of God - a kingdom of truth - on the foundation of dishonesty. Yet in our craving for 'success' and 'results' we are tempted to sacrifice our integrity, with distorted or exaggerated claims that amount to lies. We forget that "the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true" (Ephesians 5:9). The Gospel of Mark recounts a story in which Jesus challenges a system which lacked integrity:

"And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And he was teaching them and saying to them, 'Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers.'" Mark 12:15-17

Jesus' anger is directed specifically at the pious religious leaders, those who should have been guaranteeing that the temple would be open to "all nations" and that business would not be turned into robbery. Most likely these religious leaders were personally benefitting from the unjust arrangement! Jesus cleansing the temple of corruption is a radical call to integrity.²

Pray that, in the pressure to perform and get results, we will strive for a culture of transparency and integrity. Pray for advocates to stand up and confront corruption in private, civil, and religious organizations. Pray that as we partner with each other through The Lausanne Movement, across national, regional, and global offices that we will serve with hearts of humility, and integrity. Pray that the global body of Christ will grow in their joy of living lives of radical integrity, built on Gospel foundations and resulting in the global glory of Christ.

¹ Cape Town Commitment, 2010.

² Ruth Padilla DeBorst World Vision Partnership Month Bible Studies

WEEK 2, DAY 13: BEING A PEOPLE SHAPED BY THE GOSPEL

Gospel Simplicity for the Glory of God

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Colossians 3:17

Surely how we use the money God has entrusted into our care is included in Paul's exhortation. The Bible has much to say about money. Much of that teaching can be summed up by saying, "Money is a part of the creation. It, therefore, belongs to God, and exists for God." But like so many other parts of God's creation, we have worshipped money rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25).

How so?

We have been known to look to money for salvation and satisfaction. Surely every Christian at some time has thought or said, "If I could just make a little more money, then..." But money does not meet our needs, God does. Money is not our good Father who cares for us, God is. ***Oh Lord, forgive us.***

We have also been known to seek money, in the same way as we should seek God. We can spend inordinate amounts of time earning more and more, and desiring more and more. We worship it through our hearts' desires and our use of time. We worship it through neglecting our relationship with God and our humble service to the world. ***Oh Lord, forgive us.***

Finally, we worship money by recreating God in our image, pretending that money is as important to him as it is to us, going so far as to say, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him will have money and health abundantly." In doing so, we cut the heart out of the Gospel and gravely dishonor God. ***Oh Lord, forgive us.***

Embracing simplicity, first and foremost, is a reminder to ourselves that all our hope is in Christ. It is a discipline which we desperately need. It helps to pry our fingers away from the love of things over and against the love of God. Furthermore, when simplicity is practiced, as many Christians throughout history have done, it serves as a clarion call to the world that there is nothing in heaven or on earth that we desire more than God (Psalm 73:25), because his love is better than life and all that life offers. Gospel simplicity results in our good because its aim is God's glory. Will we embrace simplicity?



Watch the video: Femi Adeleye. Be reminded that prosperity is not the Gospel. Be challenged to put down anything that sets itself up against the Gospel of Christ. Hear the call to engage as Gospel people against the so-called "prosperity Gospel".

Further Resources:

CAPE TOWN 2010 MULTIPLEX: POVERTY, PROSPERITY, AND GOSPEL

John Piper: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLRue4nwjaA>

Lausanne Standards: <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lausanne-standards.html>

WEEK 2, DAY 14: BEING A PEOPLE SHAPED BY THE GOSPEL

Gospel Simplicity for the Joy of the Nations

The first aim of simplicity in our lives is the glory of God. That is the ultimate aim. Yet, an interesting side effect of simplicity is the unleashing of resources for Gospel purposes.

Michael Oh has said, "Some pastors think that their people value money too much. I disagree. I think people value money too little! Money is like blood. There is great value and blessing. But money – like blood – was meant to **FLOW!** To flow through the body – to clean and cleanse and bless and enrich and support and give life – this is God's design for the money that He has blessed you with! You have opportunity for double blessing! To receive and to **GIVE!** What a shame it is to miss out on the fullness of God's blessing in giving – and giving **SACRIFICIALLY** and **GENEROUSLY** for the flow of blood and blessing to the whole body of Christ – to the global body for the global spread of the gospel!"¹

Indeed what great work could be accomplished if God's people would but embrace simplicity, and it's near friend, generosity! Godliness with contentment is great gain...gain for us and for the world. Gain for us in holiness and satisfaction in God alone. Gain for the world in the laborers for Christ released into the harvest, serving the unreached and unengaged peoples of the world, in the availability of the scriptures translated, in training programs for community health, in economic development, in Gospel-centered medical care and employment.

What will you release for your good, God's glory, and the good of all peoples? How will you simplify your life and lifestyle? How will you cultivate Gospel motivated generosity?

As you reflect on these last seven days, and the call to be people shaped by the gospel, first ask God to purify you. Then ask God to purify his people, especially those in leadership positions. Ask him to raise up another generation of godly leaders who are shaped by the gospel and his living Word. Pray that the Church would become known in all places as people who walk in humility, integrity, and simplicity.

Father, we want to be people shaped by the Gospel. Let the Gospel fuel all that we think, say, and do. In response to your boundless love for us in Christ, and out of our overflowing love for him, we rededicate ourselves, dependent upon the help of the Holy Spirit, to fully obey all that you command, with Gospel-powered self-denial for our joy and your glory. Amen

¹ Michael Oh, "The Individual's Suffering and the Salvation of the World." The Gospel Coalition, 2013.