

# GRAND MARAIS PRAYER INITIATIVE

August 2021 Newsletter / Issue 5

## MISSION

Cultivate an urgency for unified prayer through its committed/disciplined practice.

## VISION

Holy Spirit-led prayer movement makes disciples & transforms the community by radiating Christ-like character.

## PRAYER MAP FOR AUGUST 2021

The central concept for this month's prayer map is "Worshiping in Spirit and Truth". In chapter four of the Gospel According to John, the apostle recounts Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. In verse 23 of that chapter, Jesus informs the woman that "...true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him." As devoted followers of Jesus who genuinely desire to be considered "true worshipers", we struggle with how the somewhat-mysterious tenet about worshiping in spirit can be put into action. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans gives us a very practical means by which we can be assured of being considered "true worshipers". At chapter 11 of Romans, verse 1, the apostle states the following:

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." (ESV)

The NASB 1995 translation uses the phrase "spiritual service of worship" in place of the ESV's "spiritual worship"; the NKJV translation, "reasonable service" instead. The *Blue Letter Bible* website equates use of the phrase λατρεία λογική in the Greek Bible to "worship which is rendered by the reason or soul ('spiritual')" [see <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3050/nkjv/tr/0-1/>]. The word Jesus uses in His statement to the Samaritan woman is given in Greek as πνεῦμα. The *Blue Letter Bible* website equates use of this Greek word to "the rational spirit, the power by which a human being feels, thinks, wills, decides; the soul" [see <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4151/esv/mgnt/0-1/>].

Even though the writer of this newsletter is not a student of Greek, it would appear justifiable from the above analysis to interpret Jesus' "worshiping in spirit" to be equivalent in meaning to Paul's use of "spiritual worship". Therefore, we can be reasonably assured that by "presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" we will be considered by God to be a "true worshiper"; the mystery of "worshiping in spirit" is mostly eliminated because we can readily envision what is required to "present our bodies as a living sacrifice". The right-hand side of August's prayer map – attached the end of this newsletter – provides Bible-borne examples of such requirements.

The left-hand side of August's prayer map provides tenets for worshiping "in truth", the first tenet of which is to acknowledge the source of truth, the second to understand it, and the third to employ it. This is a far easier concept to grasp and, therefore, needs no added logical justification.

Using August's prayer map to guide part of each participant's daily prayers will help unify the body of Christ by identifying areas in our personal lives and church life that can only be strengthened through God's grace and the Holy Spirit's intervention.

## **JULY 25<sup>TH</sup> PRAYER INITIATIVE MEETING**

The Prayer Initiative's central concept for July 2021 was "Always Be Ready". Prayer Initiative participants met on June 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss insights they had gained through their prayers on maintaining readiness. The discussion began with identifying scriptures pertinent to this concept including Psalm 32:6, Matthew 24:44, and Jesus' parable of the ten virgins. One participant suggested that the word "ready" did not convey the level of intensity believers need to exert when it comes to anticipating and preparing for Christ's return. This participant suggested the word "vigilant" was better suited than "ready" because vigilant is always used in contexts where situational dangers or threats might exist. One only needs to look as far as Esau to see the penalty for failing to maintain a vigilant outlook. Hebrews 12:15-17 provides this caution:

"See to it...that no one is...unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears."

Had Esau exercised vigilance he might have concluded that the decision to give away his birthright was irreversible and given the immediacy of his hunger second thought. Christians must avoid such careless decision-making by being aware of the Apostle Peter's warning:

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

This state of vigilance requires a heightened awareness of the Holy Spirit's input which, in turn, is procured through heartfelt prayer.

One participant stated that despite his prayerful focus on anticipating and preparing for personal trials identified on the prayer map he still had fears about failing to respond to such trials in a manner that would glorify God. To lessen his fear of failure he stated his intent to memorize scripture so that it could immediately be employed to guide his response in any situation.

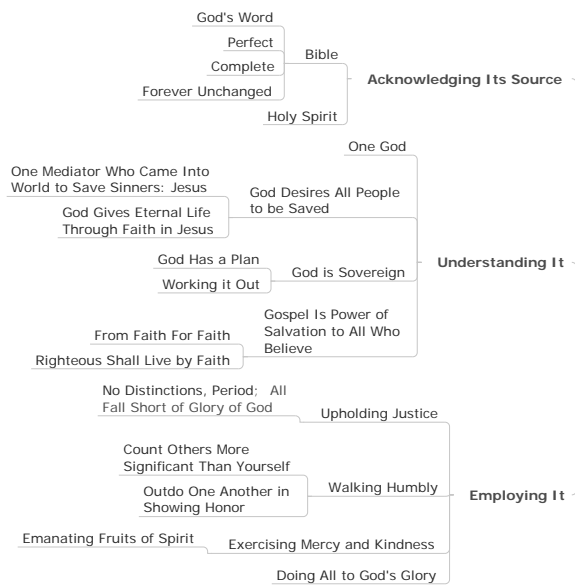
One of the participants spoke about maintaining an awareness of prayer needs, following up intercessory prayers with frequent contacts, and witnessing life-changing impacts that resulted from such efforts. Another participant fondly discussed a friend's propensity to take time to pray with someone at the time she sensed prayer would be beneficial (as opposed to stating her intention to pray for them later). One person stated he struggled with praying in this immediate manner but indicated his hope to become more comfortable with such practice.

The threat of fear was mentioned during the meeting in at least three contexts: failure, physical harm, and rejection. About such fear one participant quoted 1 John 4:18b "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" and stated his understanding of what this means: 1) God's indwelling love in believers assures them of their salvation and removes any threat of adversity because they know they have an eternal dwelling place in heaven and 2) the majesty of that eternal dwelling place far exceeds anything that can be imagined, therefore, no threat should hold dominion over a believer.

## **WANT TO KNOW MORE? WANT TO ADD SOMETHING TO THIS NEWSLETTER? HAVE OTHER SUGGESTIONS?**

Pray-ers are encouraged to contribute input that would provide for the outgrowth of Spirit-led prayer in the community. Email the editor a note at [online@grandmaraisfree.church](mailto:online@grandmaraisfree.church) if you have something that should be shared to encourage others' growth in prayer!

**Grand Marais Prayer Initiative: Worshiping in Spirit and Truth  
August 2021 Prayer Map**



**Worshiping in Spirit and Truth**

**Truth**

**Presenting Our Body As A Living Sacrifice**

**Our Individual Bodies**



**Our Collective Body: the Church**

