

# GRAND MARAIS PRAYER INITIATIVE

November 2021 Newsletter / Issue 7

## 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 NOVEMBER 2021: INTRODUCTION

The central topic for this month's prayer map (attached at the end of this newsletter) is "Abiding in Christ". In chapter 15 of *The Gospel According to John*, Jesus counsels His disciples as follows:

[1] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. [2] Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. [3] Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. [4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. [5] I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. [6] If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. [7] If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [8] By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. [9] As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. [10] If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. [11] These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. **John 15:1-11** (ESV)

In this section of Scripture Jesus clearly lays out for His disciples the benefits of abiding in Him:

- They will bear much fruit;
- Their prayers will be answered;
- God will be glorified; and
- They will be filled with joy.

In chapter 3 verse 6 of *The First Letter of John*, the apostle adds one important detail about what it means to abide in Jesus; that is, to renounce the continual practice of sin:

[4] Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. [5] You know that [Christ] appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. [6] No one who abides in [Jesus] keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. [7] Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. [8] Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. [9] No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. [10] By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.<sup>1</sup> **John 3:4-10** (ESV)

In the New American Commentary, An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, Volume 38 1,2,3 John (B&H Publishing Group, Nashville, Tennessee, 2001, p 143-4) Daniel Akin summarizes 1 John 3:6 by stating the following:

John is not suggesting that the child of God will not commit a single act of sin. Instead, John is describing a way of life, a character, a prevailing lifestyle. Here the present tense verb contextually depicts linear, continual action. In other words, the believer will not live a life characterized by sin...it is obvious that the Christian, while enjoying a position or standing of sinlessness through identification with Christ, will sin on occasion and will need to seek God's forgiveness ([see 1 John] 1:9; 2:1-2). But what is also apparent from John's writings is that a genuine believer will not live in continual sin...To see [Christ] entails a spiritual vision brought about through a personal, saving relationship with him...The one who sees Christ for who he is and embraces his redemptive work is the one who abides in him...To know him is to enter into that personal, dynamic relationship with him. It is not a mere intellectual assent or innate comprehension, but rather it is a knowledge based upon experience. It is the subjective appropriation of who Christ is and what he has done for sinful humanity...this knowledge is obtained rather than naturally possessed. It is coming to know him more and more in a personal way.

Renouncing the continual practice of sin is a distinguishing mark of a person striving to abide in Jesus and the first, key step in keeping His commandments. By virtue of what Jesus states in John 15:10 it follows this same person will begin to abide in Jesus' love. Therefore, it stands to reason that two additional benefits may be added to the bullet list of four specified earlier; the complete list representing the progression that occurs as genuine believers in Jesus mature in their faith:

- They will renounce their habitual practice of sin;
- They will abide in Jesus' love;
- They will bear much fruit;
- Their prayers will be answered;
- God will be glorified; and
- They will be filled with joy.

This is indeed what we as genuine believers hope to see in our personal and communal daily walk with Jesus.

## **NOVEMBER'S PRAYER MAP: HOW TO USE IT**

The prayer map for this month illustrates the steps most Christians go through as they mature in their journey toward Christ-likeness, starting with a search for purpose and ending with proclaiming the source of their hope in a manner that glorifies God. The life-long march toward this goal is characterized by 1) personal challenges and defeats which require the traveler to return to the Biblical truths that allow him/her to overcome such adversities, 2) a growing need for Christian community, and 3) the life-changing realization of the critical role Spiritual prayer plays along every step of the way. The map can be used as part of your daily prayer time to 1) thank God for His grace in giving you a growing desire to abide in Jesus, 2) identify personal weaknesses that must be addressed to mature in Christ, 3) pray for the Holy Spirit's inspiration in addressing such weaknesses, and 4) ask for wisdom in understanding how such personal growth can be used to strengthen Christian community in the location God has placed you.

## **OTHER THOUGHTS REGARDING PRAYER**

In the past two years our community of faith has been blessed to witness many answers to fervent and long-term prayers for brothers and sisters in Christ facing challenges requiring God's intervention. Many of the answers received bordered on the miraculous; some were miracles. Doesn't this realization lead you

to question what might change in the world if we took advantage of every opportunity we are given to pray together? For one another?

**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:  
Abiding in Christ  
November 2021 Prayer Map**

Start Here, Moving Clockwise  
Around Central Focal Point

**Abiding in Christ**

