

Praying God's Word Over Your City

A Biblical Prayer Guide to Reach the Lost

By Trey and Mary Anne Kent

If you understand God's heart for your city, you will pray more strategically, effectively, and compassionately. And when you pray God's Word over your city, your prayers are filled with power, hope, and vision to see the lost in your city transformed by the gospel.

Here are three themes of biblical insights and prayers that you can use to plead with God for a move of His Spirit and a spiritual harvest among those who desperately need Jesus.

Cry Out for a Heart to See the Lost Saved

The apostle Paul writes of his longing for others to know the salvation power of Jesus:

Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for [them] is that they may be saved (Rom. 10:1).

The prayer of World Vision's founder Bob Pierce has been rightfully and often repeated: "Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."

Injustice, illness, poverty, and devastation are in the news and on our minds every day. We know that Jesus' heart is tender to all the burdens we bear, but nothing moves His heart like the lostness that is found in a soul that is separated from Him.

Every problem that steals our sleep and wrestles peace from

our minds is temporary. Someday, there will be no more sickness, violence, hatred, or lack. Everything will be made right in the eternal Kingdom of God. All will be well for those who are forever in the heart and arms of Jesus. But for those who have not given their lives to Jesus, all will be lost. To live and die without Christ is to face the only permanent loss known to man.

Do we understand that every face we see in the grocery store, every footstep we hear coming down the hall, and every life we encounter has a destiny that will either lead to eternity with Jesus or a never-ending separation from His life and love?

God's greatest desire is that all the world would know His Son and be found safe for eternity in Him. Let's ask Jesus to put His heart of compassion within us and move our hearts to pray and work for the salvation of many.

Gracious heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to die on the cross for my sins and the sins of the world. I repent for my lack of compassion and urgency to see the lost saved. Forgive me for apathy and short-sightedness. Cleanse me of all selfishness and arrogance. I ask You, Father, to change my heart and make it break for what breaks Your heart. I ask You to give me a heart of compassion and a will to witness in every way possible. Holy Spirit, fill me with Your presence and anoint me with Your words so that I may witness passionately and continually for You. Give me a heart to pray and not give up until Your will is done in bringing many to righteousness.

Prayer Points

- Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to show you happenings, activities, and attitudes in your city that break His heart. Ask God to give you His compassion for people who are affected by the sin and lostness of your

community.

- Ask Jesus to show you where you have been apathetic and negligent in praying for and witnessing to the lost in your community. Repent of specific areas and situations where you have chosen to ignore the call to share Him with others.
- Submit your heart and mind to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to give you a list of people for whom you will pray and with whom you will share.
- Take the list you have made and commit to pray for them daily and look for opportunities to share the love of God with them.

Seek God to Remove the Blinders

We can only explain the resistance of unbelievers to the hope of Christ by their spiritual blindness through the schemes of the enemy of their souls.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4–6).

The spiritual warfare for the souls of men, women, and children is raging before our very eyes. May we not be ignorant of the enemy's schemes to deceive and destroy the lives of those we seek to reach for Christ. Being aware of the spiritual forces that are waging war all around us is half the battle. The other half is diligently fighting the good fight through prayer and evangelism.

Let's seek God for His infinite power to see the lost freed to see the glory of Jesus.

Father, today I seek Your face, asking that You would awaken me to the spiritual war that rages all around me. Focus me on the greater power, influence, and victory that is already won through Jesus Christ my Lord. Free me not only to recognize the spiritual battles, but to be mobilized in prevailing prayer and victorious outreach toward those in the clutches of Satan's lies and deception.

Today, Father, I cry out for those I love and for those in my neighborhood and workplace to be freed from the blinders that our ancient foe has used to keep them trapped in a lost state of hell-bound ignorance. Use me and Your people to proclaim Jesus Christ today. Remove my self-centered focus as I lift up the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Open the eyes of the lost to see the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Jesus, You asked that we would see Your glory. Today, I ask that You answer that prayer by removing blinders of deception that plague those with whom I interact with daily. Show Your glory today by freeing the lost from a spiritual blindness that can only be healed by You. Show them the joy, beauty, power, awe, and love that are in You and You alone!

Prayer Points

- Thank God that He is greater than all, including all the forces of the enemy.
- Ask God to remove the spiritual blinders for specific people in your world.
- Seek God for open doors to share the gospel, which has the power to deliver.
- Intercede for believers to preach Christ, not ourselves.
- Trust God that He will reveal His glory to the lost

today.

Cry Out for the Lost to Be Saved in Large Numbers

When the power of the Spirit is at work, people realize their sin and their need for a Savior.

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day (Acts 2:37–41).

Every Sunday in America, some 400,000 congregations gather while the good news of Jesus Christ is preached. What would happen if every pastor had a prayer team that prayed while the preacher preached? Charles Spurgeon said the power of his sermons were attributed to the several hundred deacons who prayed in the church basement while he preached the Word of God powerfully.

Let’s cry out today for those who preach the gospel to many people in your church and community, whether they be pastors or rank-and-file believers.

Father, I cry out today for the Word to go forth in power as I read about in the Book of Acts. May conviction come with such power that those who hear it ask, “What must I do to be saved?” I pray for my pastor and for area pastors to raise up

a mighty praying people who pray while the preacher preaches. Let me be one of these prayer warriors. I ask for all believers to be empowered to share Jesus boldly and to see the lost repent, be saved, and baptized.

Holy Spirit, fill Your people to overflowing. May we be salt and light. Use me today to share Jesus clearly with one person. I pray now that he or she will be receptive to hear Your Word. I ask that this year our community will see a greater number of people saved and disciplined than we've seen in our history. Do a fresh, new, Holy Spirit-empowered work. Bring a great awakening to our community so that we can have a "before-and-after" perspective of Your mighty work. We are eager to see a powerful move of God.

Prayer Points

- Pray for churches and pastors (by name) to preach powerfully the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Ask God for specific believers to be mighty evangelists.
- Seek God for a great awakening in your community.

As evangelist and revivalist Leonard Ravenhill (1907–1994) stated, "If the Lord tarries and there is no revival of pure Christianity, then the next span of years will be the worst history has ever recorded."

Let's pray that our prayers for the lost will ignite the greatest revival our nation has ever known!

TREY AND MARY ANNE KENT is senior pastor of Northwest Fellowship in Austin, TX. He and his wife Mary Anne are founders of a movement of more than 100 praying churches in Austin. This prayer guide is adapted from *Praying God's Word Over Your City*, available at prayershop.org.