

A 4-WEEK TEACHING SERIES

ORDINARY PEOPLE // EXTRAORDINARY GOD

BY BRIAN ALARID
WITH ANDREW MARTIN

Dick Eastman says it well, “We can’t possibly know all there is to know about prayer, but we all have heard stories of God-on-the-move as He responds to the prayers of His people. *When People Pray* is an account of what happens when people *actually* pray.”

Over the course of this 4-WEEK TEACHING SERIES, we are going to go on journey guided by the Holy Spirit partnered with Brian Alarid and his new book *When People Pray*.

Join us as we discover together that “prayer is more about the object of prayer, Jesus, than it is about the outcome of prayer.”

Before we begin together, consider these questions from Brian Alarid:

“So, *what happens when people pray?* What happens when a man, woman, youth, or child pauses to pray to the God of Heaven? What happens when couples and families pray together? What happens when a city or state unities in prayer? What happens when business owners seek God for creative ideas to generate wealth and impact others? What happens when a nation cries out to God? What could happen when every country and people group on the planet are covered in day and night prayer?”

Let’s find out together.

WEEK 2: PRAYER THAT BIRTHS AWAKENING & PRODUCES REVIVAL

In 1809, a powerful movement was birthed that would not be fully known or seen for 48 more years. It began in the heart of man but just like all men, it began as a baby.

The baby was named Jeremiah Lanphier. He grew up in upstate New York, and started learning to be tailor when he was 16, apprenticing in Albany. After his apprenticeship ended, he became a regular, ordinary businessman.

Forty-eight years later, his life shifted completely when he was offered a new position. He took it without hesitation. He left his business and moved from his home into a small room in a small dying church on the corner of Fulton & Williams Streets.

Most people had moved from downtown to better areas. Other churches had left as well, and many thought that the Old Dutch Church should throw in the towel. Against the popular opinion, the trustees were determined to make a last stand.

They picked Lanphier, hiring him as a lay missionary, because they were convinced he was the right man for the job. He was a merchant who had no experience whatsoever in church visitation work. He accepted the position for a salary of less than \$1,000 a year, and in a short time proved the trustees correct, as he was burdened for the people in the area.

It was slow going at first, a few families came, but often Lanphier returned to his room in the church weary and discouraged. At one point after a discouraging day of ministry, it occurred to him that a mid-day prayer time might be something businessmen may be interested in.

On September 23, 1857, at exactly 12 noon, the tall, middle-aged former businessman climbed the creaking stairs to the third story of the Old Dutch church building in the heart of lower New York City. He entered an empty room, pulled out his pocket watch and sat down to wait. The sign outside read: *"Prayer Meeting from 12 to 1 o'clock - Stop 5, 10, or 20 minutes, or the whole hour, as your time admits."* As the minutes ticked by Lanphier was completely alone and wondered if it were all a mistake. He waited ten minutes, then ten more. The minute hand of his watch pointed to 12:30 when at last he heard the sound of feet coming up the stairs. One man came in, then another and another until there were six. After a few minutes of prayer the meeting was dismissed with the corporate decision to meet again the following Wednesday.

Twenty men came to the second noon-hour prayer meeting. Then the Wednesday after that, forty. Lanphier then decided that the meetings would be held on a daily basis.

Wednesday, October 14th, the nation was shocked by the worst financial crisis in its history. Banks closed, many were let go from their work, families were hurting in their unknown future, and many were even going hungry. Lanphier never even flinched, the meetings continued without fail, and they began to grow more and more.

In a short time, what had become known as the Fulton Street meeting had taken over the whole building with crowds of more than 3,000. Lawyers and physicians, merchants and clerks, bankers and brokers, manufacturers and mechanics, porters and messenger boys - all came.

Within six months, 10,000 businessmen (out of a population of 800,000) were gathering daily for prayer in New York City. There were also prayer meetings being held in Virginia, Indiana, Illinois, and many other cities and states throughout the country. The revival was in evidence

from coast to coast and there were tens of thousands of converts. By March of 1858, the movement had reached such heights that the news of its impact had traveled across the Atlantic.

The awakening came first like a baby birthed from the womb of prayer, but the fruit of labor produced a powerful revival.

The initial meeting that took place September of 1857 was not extraordinary, just six ordinary men gathering to pray in small room on the the corner of Fulton and Williams Street. There was no evidence of a supernatural move of God beginning to take place in those quiet moments of united prayer. Lanphier had no way of knowing that it was the beginning of a great national revival which would result in an estimated one million persons coming into the Kingdom of God.

Read Acts 1:1-3, 8-9, & 14

“In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.”

“...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him.”

“They all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus.”

1. Intimacy Unites

Jesus set such an incredible example for us. He stewarded a level of Intimacy with His Father that brought unity that stretched across all distances.

Think about the longest distance friend that you have. How are you able to continue your friendship even separated by miles? How are you able to remain connected?

Consider Pete Greg’s words: ***“The greatest person who ever lived was preeminently a man of prayer. Before launching out in public ministry, HE fasted for more than a month in the wilderness. Before choosing His twelve disciples, He prayed all night.”***

Intimacy is a word that is often inseparable from the relations between a husband and wife. However it is too often not a word that we think of to be the connection between a parent and a

child. For this reason, some have difficulty attributing INTIMACY to the relationship we are invited into with our Father in Heaven.

Prayer is not just a invitation into a conversation with the God of the universe, which is amazing.

“Prayer is Intimacy with God.” - Brian Alarid

Jesus came and laid a foundation - ***“all that Jesus began to do and teach...” (Acts 1:1) -***

THINK ABOUT THIS: All He began to **DO**: How He acted, how He related, how He lived... He gave us a window into true, pure Intimacy.

Intimacy Unites...

Manhattan pastor Timothy Keller once said, ***“The only person who dares wake up a king at 3:00am for a glass of water is a child (a son or a daughter). We have that kind of access.”***

God is beautifully impartial. He loves all His children uniquely. Jesus as King, is seated at the right hand of the Father, ready and willing to *wake up at 3AM* if that’s what it takes to remind you how much He desires an Intimate relationship with you.

*“God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the **children of God.**” Matthew 5:9*

*“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are **children of God.**” Romans 8:14*

*“... to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become **children of God.**” John 1:12*

*“For you are all **children of God** through faith in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:26*

*“For the creation waits in eager expectation for the **children of God** to be revealed.” Romans 8:19*

*“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called **children of God!** And that is what we are!” 1 John 3:1*

Listen closely to the question that Brian Alarid asks, ***“Why settle for a superficial relationship with Jesus when you can have an intimate, face-to-face friendship with Him?”***

Just like Intimacy between a husband and wife develops a deeper connection and creates beautiful children. Intimacy with Jesus develops communion, births awakening, and produces revival.

2. Awake & Alive

J. Edwin Orr once said, ***“No great spiritual awakening has begun anywhere in the world apart from united prayer.”***

To be Awake is defined as the opposite of Asleep.

To be Revived is defined as the opposite of Dead.

The Kingdom of Light operates in those who are Awake & Alive. As sons and daughters of the most High God, we are carriers of Light.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:14, ***“You are the Light of the world - like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden..”***

So we as the adopted children of our Father in Heaven, we are called to not only BE THE LIGHT but to CARRY THE LIGHT.

We have become Awake & Alive.

“...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere...” Acts 1:8

Like DNA that genetically connects us to our earthly parents, there is likewise a connection so deep within us (**the Holy Spirit**) that divinely connects to our FATHER. After all, we were created in His image and made after His likeness.

Our Father has a heart for people everywhere... so we as His children, being united in Him and with each other through Jesus, can through prayer develop a heart for people.

Like Father like son... Like Father like daughter...

Prayer is the connection that cultivates the relationship.

“Jesus’ devotion to prayer was His special connection to the Father that released supernatural power on His ministry.” - Brian Alarid

Think about when the disciples went to Jesus and asked Him to teach them to pray. Too often we repeat words but do not understand or contemplate meanings.

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we

forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” Matthew 6:9-13

Even if we only think through the first few words... (consider processing the entire passage phrase by phrase to see the deep prayerful connection that releases supernatural power on Jesus' ministry & yours also).

“Our”

- Wait, what? “Our”?
- Yes, that is what Jesus said! **“Our”**. Consider that Hebrews 2:11 says, **“So now Jesus and the ones He makes holy have the same Father.”**

We could just stop there with the word **“Our”** and be satisfied with a divine connection that we are invited into with the God who created everything!

“Father”

- Excuse me? You mean, God isn't some far away being waiting to smite me if I mess up?
- No, He isn't. He is not an angry dad. God is a good, good **“Father”**.

A life of prayer with **“Our Father”** is possible. Allow the Holy Spirit to teach you how to cultivate His presence in everything you do, big and small.

Start to pray constantly. Practice daily, not always in solitude but in step with the rest of your life.

The greatest intercessor in history was Jesus. Becoming like Him is synonymous with becoming a person of prayer. Its no wonder the disciples asked Him to explain how to they could pray... they had seen Him live a life of prayerful connection with the Father that produced real fruit!

“When you commune with God through prayer, He gives you His heart for the lost.” - Brian Alarid

Consider the work of Count Zinzendorf, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, John & Charles Wesley, Jeremiah Lanphier, Evan Roberts, Sydney Evans, Frank Bartleman, Jim Cymbala, Andrew Murray, Lottie Moon, or countless others. All of these **ordinary people** had so stewarded an Intimate Prayer relationship with an **extraordinary God**, that the only natural response was for Awakening & Revival to be seen as fruit in their lives.

Revivals often begin with one or two people who have been given a burden for a people & who have united themselves in prayer to a God who cares.

Dr. A. T. Pierson said, ***“There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer.”***

“They all met together and were constantly united in prayer...” Acts 1:14

What would it look like if you are the next person that God uses to spark an awakening and bring revival in your business, school, college, church, city, or nation?

What would it look like if we laid down our differences and united together in prayer?

Are you willing to pray for revival and unite with other believers even if they hold different political or theological views? If YES, why not start now?