



LEARNING FROM THE
POWERFUL EXAMPLES OF
PRAYER IN THE SCRIPTURES

SELF-STUDY WORKBOOK

by: Brent Kercheville

- 1 Be concise.** Please share your thoughts and answers, but be considerate so that others will have time to share their answers also. Be charitable and kind. Be willing to share with the group, but do not try to dominate the conversation. Use the time after the class to find help with any personal issues or problems you may be confronting in your life.

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

(James 1:19–20)

- 2 Be thoughtful with your answer.** Consider your words. Do not simply regurgitate what you have always heard. We have the tendency to speak in “Christianese” — words that only people who grew up on the pews would understand. Think about how your words will be heard by others. Will they understand what you are saying? Is what you are about to say going to be useful for the building up of the faith of others? Or will your words be confusing, cause hurt, or worse, damage someone’s faith? Speak without harshness or anger, but with kindness and humility.

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

(Ephesians 4:29)

- 3 Rely on the scriptures for truth.** It is easy to rely upon conventional, worldly wisdom as truth. Bible study is about seeking God’s answers for our lives, not dispensing the advice of the world. We must consider that our natural answers may be the wrong answers if they are not founded on God’s word.

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”

(1 Corinthians 1:25)

Have you ever read a chapter in the Bible but then could not remember what you had read? Have you ever fallen asleep while reading? An hour after you read, do you retain what you have read? These problems destroy enjoyment in Bible reading and therefore we must use a method of Bible reading that will solve this problem. To read properly we must be keen observers. We must see words and phrases that stand out while at the same time collecting the whole thought. Remember, the important thing is not how many times you have gone through the Bible, but how many times the Bible has gone through you!

Observe // what do I see?

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is, "What do I see?" This is the crucial skill of observation, which lays the groundwork for your study. The text is given to you so that you will underline, circle, box, and highlight important words as you read. As you read look for comparisons, contrasts, purposes, results, causes, explanations, conclusions, and conditions. Ask yourself who, what, where, when, why, and how as you read. Keep asking these questions as you read to prevent a lazy brain while reading. Look for themes and main ideas from the passage.

Interpret // what does it mean?

Our observation of a passage should stir interesting yet challenging questions, leading us to the second stage of our Bible study: interpretation. Reread through the passage after your observation notations have been made looking to answer what the passage means. Record your explanations of the text in the workbook.

Apply // how does this affect me?

Our Bible study is not over until we apply what we have learned to our everyday lives. Write down lessons that you have learned for you own life especially things that you see you need to change. Only you know your heart and what is happening in your life to be able to apply God's word directly to you. Bible study is fruitless if we do not take the information we have learned and directly change our lives. Write down how the passage affects you. The transformation section in the workbook will help you in this effort.

Share // how can I share my findings with us?

Now we want to share our findings with others. We want to share our observations, interpretations, and applications with others in the Bible class. This is your opportunity to hear what others have found in their studies and for you to share what you found. By doing this we are able to build one another up and grow up in the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:12-13). If we do not share what we have found then we will be unable to grow together as the family of Christ.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

PRAYING WITH POWER

1

JAMES 5:16-18

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. **17** Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. **18** Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. (ESV)

The base scripture for our study in this workbook is from James 5:16-18. James wants us to think about the power of prayer. As we move through our study together, we will consider many examples of people praying in a variety of conditions with all kinds of differing needs.

1. Why is the prayer of the righteous person powerful? Consider Psalm 34:15 and 1 Peter 3:12 in your answer.
2. Who does James use as an example for the power of prayer? Explain what James is trying to show us.
3. Look carefully at verse 16. What is James particularly teaching us to pray about and pray for?
4. Based on question 3, what would this kind of prayer look like? Do we pray these kinds of prayers?
5. Turn to James 4:1-6. When does prayer fail? When does God say that we will not receive what we ask for?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this scripture change the way you will pray or the way you will think about prayer?

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

PRAYING WITH POWER

2

EPHESIANS 1:15-21

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, **16** I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, **17** that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, **18** having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, **19** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might **20** that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (ESV)

1. Write down what Paul prayed for these Christians in verse 17. Explain what he prayed for and how we can pray for this.

2. Write down all the things Paul prayed for these Christians in verses 18-19. Explain each aspect of what he prayed for. Then write down how we can pray for these things.

3. Where does Paul say that we have seen this power on display in verse 20?

4. Think about everything Paul wants these Christians to know and how Paul is praying for each aspect. What do we learn from this prayer of Paul?

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PRAYING WITH POWER

3

EPHESIANS 3:14-21

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, **16** that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. **20** Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (ESV)

1. Write down what Paul prayed for these Christians in verse 14-16. Explain what he prayed for and how we can pray for this.
2. Write down all the outcomes Paul is praying for these Christians to have from verses 17-19? What does Paul want them to know? How does Paul want them strengthened? What do we learn and how we can pray for this?
3. What else does Paul pray in conclusion to this section of his letter in verses 20-21? What do we learn and how we can pray for this?
4. What is available to us through prayer?

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DANIEL 9:3-19

3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. **4** I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, **5** we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. **6** We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. **7** To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. **8** To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. **9** To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him **10** and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. **11** All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. **12** He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. **13** As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth.

14 Therefore the LORD has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. **15** And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

16 "O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. **17** Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. **18** O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. **19** O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name." (ESV)

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1. What is Daniel praying about? Who is Daniel praying for?
 2. Write down some of the key points of Daniel's prayer in verses 3-13? What does he say about God? What does he say about the people?

3. What does Daniel pray in verses 14-15? What do we learn from this?

4. What does Daniel pray in verses 16-19? What do we learn from this part of the prayer?

5. Write down ways that we can pray like Daniel.

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PRAYING WITH POWER

5

COLOSSIANS 4:12-13

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. **13** For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. (ESV)

2 THESSALONIANS 1:11-12

11 To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, **12** so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (ESV)

2 JOHN 2-3

2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.

3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth.

Consider the three short prayers above and write down your observations.

1. What did Epaphras pray for in Colossians 4:12-13? What do we learn from his prayer life? How can we pray like him?
2. Write down what Paul prayed for with the Thessalonian Christians in 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12. Explain what he wanted for these Christians. What do we learn from this prayer for ourselves?
3. Write down what John prayed for the Christians he wrote to in 3 John 2-3. Explain what he wanted for these Christians. What do we learn from this prayer?
4. Write down what you have learned from these three short prayers.

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PRAYING WITH POWER

6

LUKE 18:9-14

9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: **10** “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ **13** But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ **14** I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” (ESV)

1. Write down the components of the Pharisee’s prayer. What does he say to God? How can our prayers sound like the Pharisee’s prayer?
2. Write down the components of the sinner’s prayer. What does he say to God? How can our prayers sound like the sinner’s prayer?
3. Discuss the posture of these two men in the parable. Can physical posture matter in prayer? Why or why not? Explain.
4. Why is the sinner justified and the Pharisee is not? How does this relate to prayer?

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COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11** being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. **13** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (ESV)

1. Carefully look at this prayer that Paul gives for these Christians. Try to note where the prayer ends and his teaching about Jesus begins.
2. Write down what Paul prays for these Christians in verse 9. Explain what he prays for. What do we learn from Paul's requests?
3. What outcomes does Paul pray for these Christians to enjoy in verses 10-12? Explain what he prays for. What do we learn from this part of Paul's prayer.
4. What do you learn from this prayer? What are some characteristics and needs we can be praying for?

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2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-10

5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! **6** I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test. **7** But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. **8** For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. **9** For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for. **10** For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down. (ESV)

1. Write down what Paul prays for these Christians in verses 5-7. Explain what he prayed for and how we can pray in the same way.
2. What did Paul say these Christians should be doing while Paul prays for them in verse 5? What do we learn from this?
3. Write down what Paul prays for these Christians in verses 8-10. Explain what he prayed for and how we can pray in the same way.
4. What attitude does Paul express regarding these Christians, his prayer life, and his own authority? What do we learn?

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PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. **6** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. **7** It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. **8** For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. **9** And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, **10** so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:3–11 ESV)

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1. Write down what Paul says he prays about in verses 3-5. Explain his prayer and write down what we can learn from this prayer.
 2. Why did Paul pray the way he did for these Christians (1:7-8)? What do we learn from this?
 3. Write down what Paul prays for these Christians in verse 9. Explain his prayer. What do we learn from this?
 4. Write down the outcomes that Paul desires from this prayer in verses 10-11. Explain these outcomes. What do we learn from this?

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PSALM 51

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. **2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! **3** For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. **4** Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. **6** Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. **7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. **8** Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. **10** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. **11** Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. **12** Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. **14** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. **15** O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. **16** For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. **17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. **18** Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem; **19** then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar. (ESV)

1. Write down how David begins his prayer in the first four verses. Explain what he prays and what we can learn.

2. Write down what David prays in verses 5-8. Explain what he prays and what we learn from it.

3. Write down what David prays in verses 9-12. Explain what he prays and what we learn from it.

4. Write down how David ends his prayer in verses 13-19. What does David say he will do? What do we learn from David's conclusion to his prayer?

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2 KINGS 20:1-7

1 In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.’” **2** Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying, **3** “Now, O LORD, please remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly. **4** And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: **5** “Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD, **6** and I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David’s sake.” **7** And Isaiah said, “Bring a cake of figs. And let them take and lay it on the boil, that he may recover.” (ESV)

2 CHRONICLES 32:24-26

24 In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death, and he prayed to the LORD, and he answered him and gave him a sign. **25** But Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud. Therefore wrath came upon him and Judah and Jerusalem. **26** But Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah. (ESV)

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1. Write down what Hezekiah prayed for. What was his approach toward God in his prayer? Is this something we can use in our prayers with God? Explain.
 2. Does God answer his prayer? What do we learn from this outcome?
 3. What happened to Hezekiah later in life? How does Hezekiah fail to come through on his prayer? Explain.
 4. What dangers are there from God answering our prayers? How can we avoid such temptations?

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ACTS 4:23-31

23 When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. **24** And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, **25** who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? **26** The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’ — **27** for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28** to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. **29** And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, **30** while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” **31** And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (ESV)

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1. After being persecuted and instructed not to preach the name of Jesus, Peter and John report the events to disciples. How do they begin their prayer in verse 24? Why was this a good place to begin prayer for what they were experiencing? What can we learn?

 2. What do they pray in verses 25-26? Explain what they are doing in this part of the prayer. How is this helpful for what they are experiencing? What can we learn?

 3. What do they express in their prayer in verses 27-28? What can we learn?

 4. What do they pray in verses 29-30? What do they want God to do? What can we learn?

 5. What was the outcome of their prayer in verse 31? What do we learn?

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HABAKKUK 3

1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.

2 O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. **3** God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. **4** His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power. **5** Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels.

6 He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. **7** I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. **8** Was your wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation? **9** You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. You split the earth with rivers. **10** The mountains saw you and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice; it lifted its hands on high.

11 The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear. **12** You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger. **13** You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. **14** You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. **15** You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters.

16 I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. **17** Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, **18** yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. **19** GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. (ESV)

Habakkuk offers this prayer after hearing from the Lord that he is going to bring the Babylonians against Judah and Jerusalem as an instrument of judgment and destruction. Consider how Habakkuk prays in the face of imminent suffering and judgment.

1. How does Habakkuk begin his prayer in verses 2-5? What is he focusing on? Why is he doing this? What do we learn?
2. What does Habakkuk describe in his prayer in verses 6-14? What is he focusing on? Why is he doing this? What do we learn?

3. How does Habakkuk feel as he offers this prayer (3:16)? What does he know is going to happen? What can we learn from this for our prayers?

4. What hope is Habakkuk able to express at the end of his prayer (3:18-19)? How is Habakkuk able to move to hope even though he fears what is about to happen? What can we learn from this? How can we do this in our prayers?

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