



**“Prayer”**

**Ben Davis**

### **Matthew 17:14-16**

**Matthew 17:20** “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

It’s not the \_\_\_\_\_ of our faith that matters most, but the \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Reasons to Pray**

1. Prayer moves \_\_\_\_\_
2. Prayer moves \_\_\_\_\_

**1 John 5:14-15** “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”

**Luke 22:42** “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

## **Life Group Discussion Questions**

### **Ice Breaker**

What is the silliest thing you have prayed for?

### **Opening Question**

What stood out to you from the weekend message? Was there a scripture, principle, or action step that has stuck with you?

In the message, Ben mentioned several different mountains we could be facing at any given point in time. Relational, financial, spiritual, work related, physical are all examples of mountains we face. Of those, or perhaps something else, what is the mountain you are facing? Be specific or general with the details of your personal mountain, but what is one action step you could take to move your mountain?

What has been your personal experience with prayer?

Discuss the following examples:

- Prayed and nothing happened
- Not sure I believe in the power of prayer
- God has more important things to do

### **Scripture**

#### **Read Matthew 17:20**

How would you paraphrase this verse? What points does Jesus want to understand in this verse? What encouragement can you take from this verse?

#### **Read 1 John 5:14-15**

What is the confidence we should have when we pray to God? On a scale of 1-10, how high does your “confidence meter” go? What are ways to increase our confidence in God in relation to our prayers?

### **Pray**



# MOVING MOUNTAINS

**He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting.”**

Mark 9:29



## WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is abstaining from food for a specific period of time. When we fast, we intentionally set aside something we regularly rely on for sustenance and look to God to fill us instead.

Fasting is one of the oldest and most prevalent spiritual practices in the Bible. Great leaders in the Bible fasted routinely, including Moses, David, Jeremiah, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Jesus and the disciples. Jesus expects that we will fast regularly. In Matthew 6:16, Jesus addresses fasting specifically when he tells the disciples, “When you fast...” Notice Jesus says “when” not “if.” Jesus assumes that we will fast. Though fasting is assumed, it is not required. We don’t have to fast. We get to fast. Like all intentional spiritual practices, fasting should not be legalistic – we are not earning approval from God through fasting.



## WHY FAST?

Fasting allows us to create space in our minds and souls for more of God’s presence. We can fast for a number of reasons: for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for growing our dependence on God, etc. As we fast, we give our need for food to God, asking him to fill that space instead.

Fasting goes hand-in-hand with prayer. As we become more aware of God’s presence through fasting, we can begin to discern his desires and align our prayers with his will.



## PREPARING TO FAST

Fasting can be practiced in a number of ways. Make several decisions ahead of your fast.

**TIME** - How often you will fast? One meal? One day? Making this commitment ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it. If fasting is new to you, start with a shorter fast.

**TYPE** - Fasting can either be total (abstaining from food and water) or partial (i.e. abstaining from solid foods but still drinking water and juices). Fasting requires reasonable precautions, especially longer fasts. If you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment, consult your physician first.

**PRACTICES** - Decide how much time you will devote to spiritual practices during the fast. Plan to set aside the time you would normally spend on meal preparation and eating for focused time with God. You may need to restrict certain physical or social activities during your fast.

## DURING THE FAST

During the fast, you can pray, read and meditate on Scripture, journal, listen to worship music, etc. Expect to receive insights or promptings from God during your fast, but be patient. Ask God to help you be still and quiet before him. Find purpose in just being focused on his presence.

During a fast you may feel weak, irritable, or have difficulty concentrating. You may also get a headache. This is normal. Let your physical challenges draw you to a deeper dependence on God.

## AFTER THE FAST

Share any insights or promptings you sensed from God during your fast with someone in your Small Group or a friend or a staff member. Let's encourage and challenge each other by sharing what we hear from God! Do not be discouraged if you struggle the first few times you fast. It takes time to build your spiritual fasting muscles. God will honor your desire to experience his presence through this practice.