

# CIRCLE MAKERS

## WEEK 1 GROUP GUIDE | MESSAGE BY JESSIE DAVIS

### START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

**What is your absolute favorite thing to do in the summer or a tradition that you try to keep every summer?**

### SHARE

Welcome to “Circle Makers.”

Bold prayer honors God, and God honors bold prayers. This series is based on the book *Circle Makers* by Mark Batterson. It isn't just a book about prayer, but about big audacious prayers. The type of prayers that the only way they get answered is if God makes it happen. The type of prayer that invites us into the adventure that God is already writing. Many times when we think of prayer, we tend to think of it as an obligation, something that we are supposed to do if we are a good believer. Other times, we tend to think of prayer only when life isn't going the way we want. So how should we pray, when it comes to our hopes and dreams, fears and insecurities or when we are in desperate need of a miracle?

How big are your prayers? What happens when God doesn't seem to answer our prayers the way we were hoping? Throughout this series we are going to take a look at how we can begin making circles around our hopes and dreams. We will begin to pray specifically for our relationships, family, future and grow closer to God in the process.

This week is entitled, “Shameless Audacity.” When we think of people being shameless or audacious, we tend to think of people who get themselves into big trouble, but what about when we are shameless and audacious with approaching God with our hopes and dreams? Scripturally, there are times when Jesus calls us to be audacious.

**Let's read Luke 11:5-10**

**Are you naturally more of a risk-taker or more analytical and conservative, and why?**

**In the story Jesus told, why did the man's friend finally get up and give him bread?**

**How do you think this relates to prayer?**

## GROW

If we are going to elevate our prayer life and pray audaciously, we must first learn to **circle persistently**. When we pray circles around something specific, it means we specifically cover every angle and ask God to do something big in that area of our lives. This doesn't mean that because you prayed specifically, you will get the kind of answer you are wanting, but it does mean that you can know without a shadow of doubt that you diligently sought God with all your heart and you can trust his answer and walk with more peace and joy. Don't forget though, there are times that your persistent, big audacious prayers might receive a big yes. Jesus encourages us to seek him, to ask, and to knock at those doors. So as you think about your life, are there things that come to mind that you have forgotten to seek God about? Maybe it is a paralyzing fear or insecurity that you have just grown accustomed to and sadly, you don't even think about the possibility of God delivering you from that fear? Maybe it is a God-sized dream, but because it is not practical, you stopped praying about that. Maybe today is the day that you begin seeking the Lord for his guidance again?

### Let's read Hebrews 4:14-16

In L. Richard's *The Teacher's Commentary*, he talks about the importance of approaching God with boldness:

Hebrews 4:14 affirms that in Jesus "we have a great High Priest." As a human being He is able to sympathize with us in our weaknesses. Yet He is also God: the Son has "gone into heaven" to take His stand in the very presence of the Father.

Because Jesus is both God and Man, He is an adequate link between us and the Father. So the Scripture says, "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (v. 16). When we fail and are ashamed, or when we are overwhelmed and need help desperately, we need never draw back. Jesus, human like us, will understand. And Jesus, God as is the Father, is able to aid.

It is important, when we have heard the voice of God calling us to act, and still feel inadequate, that we turn to Jesus as High Priest and realize all that He is able to do for us.

**Do you tend to think of God as sympathetic to the hardships and difficulties of humanity? Why or why not?**

**According to this Hebrews passage, how are we to approach God?**

**What are we promised we will receive when we seek God?**

## MOVE

There is a difference between *believing in God* and *believing God*. We can believe in God and know he is there, but to really believe God's words to us in the Bible, now that is a whole different thing altogether. Imagine if we start believing God's words to us and praying accordingly, imagine how God might answer those prayers if we would just believe him. There are two traps we can fall into when it comes to prayer. Let's talk about the first. The first trap is to believe that God doesn't answer prayer, so we just don't pray at all. We have not, because we

don't even ask. It is a sad state when we stop believing altogether, when God is just waiting to hear from us.

On the flip side is the second trap where we somehow believe that we can just claim things we want from God, like a drive-thru McDonald's. There is a difference between approaching God boldly with authentic prayers and manipulative prayer where we basically believe if we name it, we can claim it. God is no man's butler who just delivers what we claim for ourselves. If that is the posture of our hearts, then we don't want God; we just want his stuff.

Let's not fall victim to believing that God doesn't answer prayer. Let's ask with boldness and belief. Like Jessie said in the message this week, if we are struggling with belief, we can start there and ask God to help us in our unbelief then. Either way, let's start somewhere.

Let's finish with reading Luke 11:11-13

Do you tend to believe that God is a good father who gives good things or do you struggle with believing God cares about you and your prayers? Why?

Do you think how you grew up might have affected how you view God as a father?

Throughout this study today, is there one area of your life this week where you know you need to begin to circle with big prayers?

## PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

## TO GO.

Know that God is able. As you go throughout this week, continue to meditate on this word for you:

***Ephesians 3:20-21***

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

### ***Additional Reading Resources:***

***Circle Maker*** is a great book on praying specifically for our lives, relationships, hopes and fears by Mark Batterson