

## STUDY GUIDE

**Monday, August 31 – Read Psalms 25:1-5** Pressure to make decisions, solve problems, and boost performance is the norm in many workplaces. That pressure can weigh you down. Prayer is a powerful tool for turning to God so you can release the pressure and ignite your leadership. The writer of the Psalms faced extreme challenges in his work, too. Hundreds of people reported to him. Competitors sought to kill him. His future was often uncertain. In the midst of the daily chaos, the psalmist turned to God in prayer. Psalm 25 can serve as a template for your own prayers. The prayer opens with offering your inner-most self to God. “To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul” (Psalm 25:1). These words help remind you to whom you belong. It continues with an affirmation of your relationship with God. “O my God, in you I trust” (Psalm 25:2). When you’re unsure about what to do, you can trust God to guide you. The prayer then asks God for insight. “Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me” (Psalm 25:4-5). You can ask God for insight into the unique problems you face during your day. There are many ways God can give you the answer. You might get understanding by reading the Bible and seeing scripture in a new light. Or you might hear advice from members of your Christian community that changes your way of thinking. Or God might give you insight directly in your time of prayer. All these are ways that God leads you in truth, as it says in Psalm 25:5. When you need guidance at work, a quick prayer can connect you to God and open the doorway to God’s truth, helping you to work and lead in the best possible way.

**Tuesday, September 1 – Read Jeremiah 29:4-7** The Bible encourages you to pray for the place where you work. Your prayers could open doors to more people coming to know the Lord. And it’s good for you too, according to Jeremiah 29. “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jeremiah 29:7). Seeking the welfare of your company is important, whether or not the people in charge believe in God. In Jeremiah’s letter to the exiles, the Israelites were being asked to pray for the Babylonians – people who were actively hostile to God, and who had drawn the Israelites into captivity. Even so, God told the Israelites that praying for the Babylonians would be the key to the Israelites’ blessing. By blessing others, you’re blessed too. This has always been an integral part of God’s Covenant. God expressed the link to Abraham in this way: “Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him” (Genesis 18:18). God’s provision is so great that there is always enough to go around. Making prayer part of your leadership could bring greater blessings than you currently imagine.

**Wednesday, September 2 – 1 Timothy 2:1-3** You might get so wrapped up in your own work responsibilities – including keeping the boss happy – that you forget your boss needs prayer as well. No matter what kind of relationship you might have with your boss, the Bible urges you to pray for him or her. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 says that all people who are in “high positions” deserve multiple types of prayers. The Bible uses three terms – “supplications, prayers, and intercessions” – to remind you to pray for your boss (1 Timothy 2:1). Pray that your boss is blessed with wisdom to make good decisions. Pray that God gives him or her success at work. And pray for God’s peace in the midst of uncertainty. 1 Timothy 2:2 also lists another way to pray for your boss: thanksgiving. It may seem counterintuitive to thank God for your boss, especially if you have a difficult one. But 1 Timothy 2:2 says to pray for “all” people in high positions, not just the ones you like. Look for something about your boss you can thank God for. For example, you can be grateful that your boss has to make the difficult decisions and face the consequences, not you. Or perhaps you’re grateful that you have a job at all. If so, thank God in prayer. The promise of prayer is that you can lead a “quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2:2). It allows you to be a peaceful presence in your workplace. Praying for your boss changes you in a positive way, and you might just see positive changes in your relationship with your boss too.

**Thursday, September 3 – Philippians 4:2-9** People were created to live and work in community with one another – in other words, with other people. Different perspectives improve the product of your work, but differences can also be a source of conflict. The letter to the Philippians gives this advice to coworkers in conflict with one another: “Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God... whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these

things" (Philippians 4:6–8). If you're stuck for a way to pray for your coworkers, thank God for anything that is honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent, or praiseworthy in them (Philippians 4:7). It may take a while to come up with a list, but it's worth the effort. Focusing on what's positive in someone else changes your heart and allows God to work in your working relationship. God promises that his peace "which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7) will come into your heart and mind when you pray for the people around you. You can start experiencing that peace by seeing the good in the people you see every day. This simple prayer could ignite a whole new level of excellence in the work that you produce individually and together.

**Friday, September 4 - Matthew 6:7-13** Through your work you have the opportunity to impact many people. There are the people you see every day who are influenced by your attitude and your prayers. There are also people you don't see on a daily basis who experience the benefits of your work. You have the chance to ignite all these people through short purposeful prayers throughout your workday. Prayer in the workplace doesn't need to be a big production. It could be a quick "please" or "thank you" whenever a new person crosses your path. One customer service representative made a habit every time the phone rang of saying "Thank you, God, for the person I'm about to talk to." The prayer didn't take longer than one ring to say, and it changed the way this worker approached the phone call. As a result, whoever was calling left the interaction feeling blessed. Jesus said, "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words" (Matthew 6:7). You don't need to devote hours of time to prayer in order to bring God into your workday. Quick prayers are enough. Martin Luther said that prayer should be "brief, frequent, and intense." Whoever crosses your path today, whether it's a customer, a coworker, or the person who empties your trash can, take a moment to pray for them. Expect God to do the rest.

*Adapted from: [www.theologyofwork.org](http://www.theologyofwork.org)*