

WEEK TWO— BUILDING OUR FAITH

We trust that as you wrestled in prayer through last week's study in Isaiah, God was revealing more and more of himself to you. It still amazes me that a "Holy, holy, holy" God gives us a spirit through his Son that allows us to cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Gal. 4:6). We have an majestic and loving God!

As we enter our second week, we'd like to encourage you to read the book, "Fields of Gold", by Andy Stanley. Some of you read through this book two years ago when we first embarked on our journey. We are asking you to read it again knowing it will be a fresh encouragement to you in continuing on your journey.

During the next seven days, this guide will highlight many of the principles and scriptures in "Fields of Gold". These daily readings only give you small tastes, so you'll need to read the book in its entirety to get the context and powerful stories. Reading the book will also give God a chance to speak to you personally beyond what is provided in this prayer guide. We ask that you give God that opportunity.

With this book being a quick read, you may find it preferable to set aside a couple hours to read it through in one sitting. You can also choose to read it (and keeping ahead of the prayer & study guide), by doing a chapter each day for the next seven days. If you so choose, begin with the Introduction and Chapter 1 on Sunday, wrapping up with Chapter 7 and the Epilogue on Saturday.

May God bless you and draw you closer to him on this Journey!

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Sunday, November 14th

"Fields of Gold" begins with the story of Jeremiah Clary, a wheat farmer trying to survive the decade long "dust bowl" drought of the 1930's. Jeremiah, like every other farmer, is wrestling with anxiety as he decides whether to plant some more of his dwindling seeds as many others had been blown away by the scorching winds. *Should I hold onto my seed? What if another storm comes... what if my efforts get wiped out again... what if... what if?*

Mr. Stanley writes, "In our world the 'what ifs' manifest themselves in circumstances such as diminishing retirement accounts, unexpected expenses, and worldwide economic turmoil... *What if I give away too much? What if there's not enough left for me? What if...?*" pg. 13

"In Matthew 6:33, Jesus assures us that when we seek His kingdom first with our seed, we need not fear being wiped out: *...he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.* (NLT)" pg. 16-17

Questions to Ponder:

In thinking through my finances, do I tend to store up seed or look for new crops to sow? Who or what influenced me to live that way?

Prayer Focus:

Ask God to open your eyes to who He is and the truths He will be revealing throughout this next week.

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"As a pastor, I see two kinds of givers: people who give what's left over, and people who give off the top and live on what's left over. The first group isn't greedy. They just operate by different priorities. They see themselves as responsible for meeting their own needs. And whatever's left over goes to helping God's work... The second group sees everything as belonging to God, including the responsibility to meet their daily needs." pg. 32-33

"The problem with giving leftovers is that your generosity can never exceed your ability to meet your own needs. If you prosper, there may be some left over. But the minute you face financial uncertainty, generosity takes a back seat." pg. 33

Questions to Ponder:

What keeps me from putting a greater trust in God in taking care of my needs?
What do I feel are my basic needs in life? How do I feel I am trusting God for those needs?

Prayer Focus:

Take some time to pray as the Spirit leads, while asking him to show you how you can trust him to provide your basic needs.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-11 (NIV)

Over the next three days, we will be looking at three key insights drawn from these passages...

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. {7} Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. {8} And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. {9} As it is written:

"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

{10} Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. {11} You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.