

August Development Guide

SUBJECT: STANDING IN THE GAP



CORE VALUES: Let Love Lead, Start With People, Take Faith Risks, Make It Count

INTRODUCTION

In a world where we rely heavily on smartphones for information, connection, and satisfaction, we often overlook a far greater source of guidance and peace—God. Unlike phones, which track our app usage, calls, and notifications but leave us anxious when they fail, God is all-knowing, always accessible, and provides lasting peace. This teaching explores the concept of “standing in the gap” through intercessory prayer, emphasizing how Christians can shift their focus from temporary distractions to a powerful, faith-driven practice of praying for and with others. By engaging in intercessory prayer, we strengthen our spiritual “hedge” of protection and build up others, fulfilling God’s call to intercede.

KEY POINTS

1. The Power of Prayer: Connecting to God

Prayer is a direct conversation with God, our ultimate power source. Unlike the temporary satisfaction of technology, prayer offers permanent peace and guidance. It’s an opportunity to align with God’s will and experience His presence, whether alone or with others.

- **Scripture:** Matthew 18:19-20 (NIV) – *“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”*
- **Application:** Prayer is not limited to private moments like before meals or bedtime. God desires us to pray spontaneously, especially in community, to foster connection and share His love.

2. Standing in the Gap: Intercessory Prayer

To “stand in the gap” means to intercede for others through prayer, strengthening their spiritual defenses and inviting God’s intervention. This act of faith requires a willing heart and openness to the Holy Spirit’s guidance, even when we feel unqualified or hesitant.

- **Scripture:** Ezekiel 22:30 (NIV) – *“I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.”*
- **Application:** God calls us to pray for others, even strangers, in everyday situations. Hesitations like fear of stumbling or feeling less eloquent are natural but should not stop us. God values the heart behind the prayer, not perfection in delivery.

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3. Strengthening the Hedge: Speaking God's Word

A spiritual “hedge” represents God’s protection around us. Speaking God’s Word strengthens this hedge, while fear, worry, and sin create vulnerabilities that the enemy exploits. Intercessory prayer helps reinforce this hedge for ourselves and others.

- **Scripture:** Job 1:5 (NIV) – *“When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for [his children] to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, ‘Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ This was Job’s regular custom.”*
- **Example:** Job’s fear for his children created a hole in his hedge, allowing the enemy to attack. In contrast, speaking Psalm 91 during personal trials can restore peace and strengthen faith, as it did for the author during a fearful time.
- **Application:** Replace negative words or fear with God’s Word. Memorize and declare scriptures like Psalm 91:14-16 to combat fear and build a stronger spiritual defense.

4. Overcoming Hesitation in Group Prayer

Many Christians feel unqualified to pray aloud in groups, fearing judgment or inadequacy. However, prayer is about the heart, not eloquence. Corporate prayer fosters unity, encouragement, and confidence in God’s will.

- **Scripture:** 1 John 5:14-15 (NIV) – *“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.”*
- **Application:** Embrace opportunities to pray with others, even if it feels uncomfortable. Group prayer amplifies faith and builds community, as seen in Jesus’ example in the Lord’s Prayer and His intercession for Peter (Luke 22:31-32).

5. Avoiding Judgment, Building Up Others

When others struggle, it’s tempting to judge or distance ourselves, as Job’s friends did. Instead, God calls us to stand in the gap, offering prayer and encouragement to strengthen their hedge rather than enlarging their vulnerabilities.

- **Scripture:** Luke 22:31-32 (NIV) – *“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And*

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when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

- **Application:** When someone shares a struggle, respond with immediate prayer rather than a vague promise to pray later. Use your experiences of God’s faithfulness to encourage others, saying, “I’ve been there, and God’s Word will carry you through.”

PRACTICAL STEPS TO STAND IN THE GAP

1. **Be Intentional:** Look for opportunities to pray with others in daily life—family, friends, or strangers.
2. **Speak God’s Word:** Memorize and declare scriptures to combat fear and strengthen your spiritual hedge.
3. **Embrace Vulnerability:** Don’t shy away from group prayer due to fear of inadequacy. God uses your willingness, not your perfection.
4. **Act Promptly:** When someone shares a need, pray immediately to avoid forgetting or dismissing their request.
5. **Trust the Holy Spirit:** Let the Spirit guide your prayers, even when you don’t know what to say.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is my biggest takeaway from this teaching on intercessory prayer?
- In what situations do I hesitate to pray with others, and why?
- Which scriptures can I memorize to strengthen my faith and combat fear?
- Who is God prompting me to pray for today, and how can I take action?

CONCLUSION

God is looking for people to stand in the gap through intercessory prayer, building up others and strengthening their spiritual hedges. Unlike the temporary satisfaction of smartphones, prayer connects us to an all-knowing, ever-present God who offers lasting peace and guidance. By speaking God’s Word, overcoming fear, and embracing opportunities to pray with others, we fulfill His call to intercede and multiply His Kingdom.

- **Challenge:** Commit to praying with or for someone this week, whether in private or in a group, and trust God to work through your faith.
- **Key Verse:** Ezekiel 22:30 (NIV) – *“I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.”*