

Pray 2: The Woods

Movie Discussion Guide

You've seen the movie—now talk about it! Take time on your own or with a few friends to investigate how the issues highlighted in *Pray 2* influence your life.

Each topic is divided into three key components: *Starting Points*, *In The Word*, and *Now What?* Feel free to direct questions or feedback about this study or the film to producers@crossshadowproductions.com.

Kidnapped

Starting Points: *Pray 2* begins with Laurie's kidnapping. In her fear, she turns to prayer. What causes *you* to pray? Do you wait for something bad to happen or do you pray throughout your day?

In the Word: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 shares these words on prayer:

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul explains that prayer is more than words we say with our heads bowed. Prayer is *talking with God*. We are encouraged to pray in ongoing conversation with God throughout the moments of our day, regardless of our circumstances.

Now What?: Over the next week, take five minutes at the end of each day to write (or type) your thoughts to answer "How I Prayed Today." List all of the times and ways you can remember talking with God. If you don't like your list, improve the next day and track your progress. You'll be surprised how monitoring your prayer life for seven days will change how you pray.

The Campout

Starting Points: The teenagers of *Pray 2* enter the film on their way to their fall camping trip. The campers are excited about the time together and look forward to this annual tradition. Why is an event like a camping trip so much fun? What is it about spending time with friends that we enjoy?

In the Word: The first people to follow Jesus regularly gathered together. We are told, "*They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and*

enjoying the favor of all the people” (Acts 2:46-47). They shared meals, friendship, and opportunities to talk about their faith with others who shared their values.

Likewise, we are encouraged when we invest time with friends who share our faith. We enjoy the community, the fun, and the common faith we share in Christ.

What Now?: Choose a time to spend together with some of your Christian friends in the next couple of weeks. Whether a camping trip like in *Pray 2* or simply a night together at a friend’s house, schedule an opportunity for fun with friends who share your faith.

The Shape of Fear

Starting Points: On Emily’s talk show, Emily interviews Laurie regarding her kidnapping. She asks, “How can you say God took care of you?” Her question reveals the common concern many of us have when we question, “Where is God when bad things happen?” How would you answer this question?

In the Word: The Bible promises that those who trust in Christ will spend eternity in heaven. However, the Bible never promises heaven on earth. Instead, we are told:

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed” (1 Peter 4:11-13).

In Peter’s situation, some people who followed Jesus were being mistreated because of their faith. Peter’s advice was not to question that God allowed suffering, but to rejoice that they shared in suffering just as Jesus did.

This does not minimize our pain, but indicates that *pain is not without purpose*. Some of our greatest impact in life is due to how we respond during times of trouble. In Laurie’s case, she used her pain as an opportunity to speak about the love of Christ and shared proceeds from her book to help support her church.

What Now?: Share a problem area you are facing right now in your life. How could this problem cause you to depend on God and communicate his love? Encourage one another in your group and pray for one another for strength to endure your present difficulty in a way that honors God and helps others in the process.

The Word

Starting Points: During the campout, the students of *Pray 2* spend time studying the Bible together. Is it important to read God’s Word? Why or why not?

In the Word: The longest chapter of the Bible, Psalm 119, focuses on the value of understanding God’s truth. In it, the songwriter reveals, “*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you*” (verse 11).

In addition, God’s Word is often called perfect. Why? 2 Timothy 3:16 shares that truth from God is literally “God-breathed.” It is an extension of a perfect God designed to help us choose what is right and live a life of purpose.

Many people wish they could ask God their tough questions about life. Yet the Bible already provides God’s answers to many of the key issues of life. When we read it, we hear God’s view on the issues of life and grow deeper in our spiritual journey.

What Now?: Discuss or write down “Three questions I would like to ask God.” Over the next week, see what answers you can find in the Bible to the three questions you selected. You may be surprised how much God has already said in response to your questions.

[NOTE: To find the related verses to your questions, use the concordance in the back of a Bible or search for keywords online at www.biblegateway.com.]

“I Love You”

Starting Points: After Laurie’s interview, her daughter leaves with Laurie’s parents. As Laurie says goodbye, she remembers to tell her daughter, “I love you.” Do you regularly tell your family members or close friends that you love them? Why or why not?

In the Word: The night before Jesus was crucified, he shared a final meal with his closest friends. During this time, he shared, “*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*” (John 13:34-35).

Interestingly, Jesus did not command them to love other people in these verses. He instructed them to love *one another*. Why? Because when a group of people really loves each other, it causes others to want to join them.

What Now?: On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you and your friends show love to one another through your words and actions? Do you find yourself using too much sarcasm or neglecting to show encouragement toward one another?

Take a few moments in your group to have each person to receive encouraging words from the others in your group (as time allows). [For example, when it is Jake’s turn, each person says one thing they really appreciate about him and why he is important to them.] You may be very surprised at how powerful this exercise works.

Church

Starting Points: Around the campfire, Pastor Dave asks one of his students, “So, I haven’t seen you around church much lately. What’s up?”

Dave then shares his story of how he was reminded of the importance of church involvement. How did his story of the coal removed from the fire influence the student listening to the story? How did it impact you?

In the Word: Hebrews 10:25 shares to, “...not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

God realizes that a commitment to regularly worship with others is not easy. However, he encourages us to continue gathering together to help one another in our faith. Together, we each challenge those around us to move forward rather than to give up or accept a mediocre lifestyle.

Next Steps: As a group, create a “church challenge” or “youth ministry challenge.” Commit to “actively” attending every time possible for the next six weeks. Actively attending means to show up with the purpose of encouraging others in some way. This could include an actual role helping with music or greeting people or a more informal role of encouraging those around you and contacting those who don’t show up.

Another Man’s Sins

Starting Points: In the final minutes of the film, the villain calls his brother. Our villain feels set up, exclaiming, “One man shouldn’t pay for another man’s sins.” It doesn’t seem fair. How is this idea similar to what Christ has done for us?

In the Word: The apostle John wrote that the purpose of Christ’s death was to pay for our sins: “*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins*” (1 John 4:10). Even though we don’t deserve it, Jesus died in our place. *Through him* we can have a relationship with God and eternal life.

Now What? Spend a few moments ending your time together with prayer. Specifically thank God for being our substitute by sending Jesus to die for our sins.

Before praying, remember to challenge those in your group to make sure each person has chosen to accept this gift of life Jesus offers.

Romans 10:9 explains, “...it is with your *heart* that you believe and are justified, and it is with your *mouth* that you confess and are saved.” If you are uncertain about your relationship

with God, take a moment right now to believe in him and to confess that you will follow him with your life.

For more information on *Pray 2* and other films from Cross Shadow Productions, log on to www.praythemovie.com.

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