Teaching Notes

*The Circle Maker* by Mark Batterson

Chapter 2

For January 13, 2013 Zadok Orchestra Lifegroup

1. Intro
   1. Pray.
   2. Hand out red circle prayer request cards (3 each).
   3. Today we are going to cover chapter 2 and then we’re going to talk a little bit about how we can make it personal.
2. Teaching
   1. “Bold prayers honor God, and God honors bold prayers. God isn’t offended by your biggest dreams or boldest prayers. He is offended by anything less” (Circle Maker, 13).
      1. ***Jeremiah 33:3****: ‘Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’*
      2. Personal story: Corvette: Asked God to show me if He really loved me, and He did, by giving me a black Corvette that was the car of my dreams, that He paid for and took care of for years. That was the first time I felt God’s love, and I got saved shortly thereafter. ([Show/link to photo](http://www.fromhispresence.com/about/corvette-lowres/).)

3. As we discussed last week, “*God is for you”* (Circle Maker, 13).

*4. He loves you:* ***Romans 8:31-39****: “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?****32****He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?****33****Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.****34****Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.****35****Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?****36****As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”* ***37****Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.****38****For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,****39****nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

5. So He has given us the right to pray and expect answers.

*6.* ***James 5:16-18****:”**Confess your trespasses**to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.****17****Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.****18****And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”*

*7.* ***Hebrews 4:14-16:*** *“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.****15****For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.****16****Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

B. “There is nothing God loves more than keeping promises, answering prayers, performing miracles, and fulfilling dreams. That is *who* He is. That is *what* He does. And the bigger the circle we draw, the better, because God gets more glory” (Circle Maker, 13).

* + 1. ***Isaiah 55:10-11****: “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,* ***11****So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”*
    2. In John 12:27-28, Jesus prayed one of the most heartrending prayers recorded in the Bible. He was about to go to the cross and had just gotten done telling His disciples that He was to be offered up. Then He turned His words to the Father and said:
    3. ***John 12:27-28*** *“****27****“Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.****28****Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.””*
    4. The heart cry of Jesus was for the Father to glorify His own Name in Jesus. We can and should have the same heart cry: “Father, glorify Yourself in me!!”
    5. He has promised that He would glorify Himself again.
    6. But we can’t expect the Father to glorify Himself in us unless we allow Him to. It’s just like salvation: we have a choice. We have to be willing.

C. HUGE KEY: “Drawing prayer circles starts with discerning what God wants, what God wills. And until His sovereign will becomes your sanctified wish, your prayer life will be unplugged from its power supply. … The goal is glorifying God by drawing circles around the promises, miracles, and dreams He wants for you” (Circle Maker, 14).

1. Praying for something that is not God’s will for your life would be like God singing in G and us accompanying Him in Db. Nothing gets accomplished and everybody’s miserable. We have to tune in to God’s key.

D. How to figure out what God’s will is:

1. Charles G. Finney said, in his book “Power, Passion, and Prayer”: “*Prayer, to be effectual, must be in accordance with the revealed will of God. To pray for things contrary to the revealed will of God is to tempt God. There are three ways in which God’s will is revealed to men for their guidance in prayer.*

*1. “By express promises or predictions in Scripture….* [Jamie: Reference 2 Tim. 3:16-17: *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,****17****that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” Where Scripture is clear about what God’s will is, we have no need to wonder if we should pray for that thing or not. We should just pray for it.]

*2. “By His Providence. … God often makes it clear to those who have spiritual discernment that it is His will to grant such and such blessings.* [Jamie: Reference Amos 3:7: “Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.”]

*3. “By His Spirit...”* (Finney, 188-189). [Jamie: Reference Romans 8:26-27: *“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us**with groanings which cannot be uttered.****27****Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”*

E. Batterson said: “Prayers are prophecies. They are the best predictors of your spiritual future. *Who you become* is determined by *how you pray*. Ultimately, the transcript of your prayers becomes the script of your life” (Circle Maker, 14).

1. We need to “Dream big, pray hard, and think long” (Circle Maker, 14).

2. Story of Mark Batterson’s failed church plant, hesitant move to DC, new church plant, and first prayer circle: 4.7 miles around Capitol Hill. National Community Church has since grown into one church with 7 locations.

3. All the miracles he has experienced, he attributes to drawing prayer circles around the promises of God.

F. Conclusion:

1. “Miracles are the by-product of prayers that were prayed *by you* or *for you*. And that should be all the motivation you need to pray. God has determined that certain expressions of His power will only be exercised in response to prayer. … We have not because we ask not, or maybe I should say, we have not because we circle not. The greatest tragedy in life is the prayers that go unanswered because they go unasked” (Circle Maker, 16-17).

2. “If you do pray, all bets are off. You can live with holy anticipation because you never know how or when or where God is going to answer, but I promise you this: He will answer. And His answers are not limited by your requests. We pray out of our ignorance, but God answers out of His omniscience. We pray out of our impotence, but God answers out of His omnipotence. God has the ability to answer the prayers we should have prayed but lacked the knowledge or ability to even ask” (Circle Maker, 17).

3. “… Your prayers have the potential to change the course of history” (Circle Maker, 17).

III. Application & Discussion:

A. Explain prayer cards and album.

B. Take a moment for each person to fill out their prayer cards. Requests can be spiritual, family, financial, work, ministry, relationships, or anything else.

C. If they have a promise to claim, tell us what it is and write the verse on the prayer card.

D. Ask each person to share their prayer needs with the group.

E. If they don’t have a Scripture to support their need, ask the group if anyone has any ideas for promises we could circle.

F. Put the prayer cards in the album.

G. I will take them home to pray for them this week. Make a tic mark on each card as it is prayed for.

H. A different person can take the album home every week. (Someone who will be in church the next week, b/c we’ll need it back each week.)

I. When you get an answer, we need to label the card as answered, and we’re going to keep drawing prayer circles around each need until God answers each prayer.