



# Think Long

*We can't dream big without thinking long. We often want God to do things at the speed of light, but in God's kingdom, things happen at the speed of a seed planted in the ground that has to take root before it can bear fruit. This is about trusting His timing—and with the Lord, "A day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day" (2 Peter 3:8). We need more patience and more persistence . . . and that's a byproduct of time and experience.*

MARK BATTERSON

## First Thoughts

In 1785, a French mathematician named Charles Joseph Mathon de la Cour wrote a parody mocking Benjamin Franklin's optimism. Franklin was the founder of the *Poor Richard's Almanac*, the most widely read periodical in eighteenth-century America. De la Cour fictionalized about "Fortunate Richard" leaving a small sum of money in his will, to be used only after it had collected interest for five hundred years.

De la Cour was trying to poke fun at Franklin's optimism, but instead of taking offense, the seventy-nine-year-old Franklin wrote De la Cour a letter and thanked him for his excellent idea. Before his death on April 17, 1790, Benjamin Franklin bequeathed a thousand pounds to his hometown of Boston and a thousand pounds to his adopted city of Philadelphia. It wasn't a huge sum of money, but it was given with one stipulation. It was to be placed in a fund that earned interest and supported the public good for two hundred years. Then, and only then, could the funds be released.

For two hundred years, Franklin's endowment earned interest. At the end of that time, both funds were valued at approximately twenty million dollars.

It was Benjamin Franklin who said, "A penny saved is a penny earned." He understood the power of compound interest. Franklin said, "Money makes money. And the money that money makes, makes money." Compound interest is the difference between you working for your money and your money working for you. And it doesn't just apply to finances!

There is a compound interest to our prayers! When a prayer is answered, it accrues interest by starting a domino chain reaction. And our prayers don't die when we do! Prayer has no

expiration date. You never know when or where or how God will answer, but He always answers.

Prayer is playing the long game. Why? Because our prayers are eternal.

## Getting Started

Before watching session 4, as a group read, pray, and meditate (RPM) on Joshua 14:6–12:

<sup>6</sup> Now the people of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. <sup>7</sup> I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, <sup>8</sup> but my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly. <sup>9</sup> So on that day Moses swore to me, ‘The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.’

<sup>10</sup> “Now then, just as the LORD promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! <sup>11</sup> I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. <sup>12</sup> Now give me this hill country that the LORD promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.”

*Take a minute to pray and meditate on this passage; then write down your personal reflections. What was one thing that stood out to you from the Scripture?*

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*Now take a few moments to review any reflections you recorded from the daily readings you completed in Draw the Circle during the week. What are some of the insights you wrote down that you would like to share with the group?*

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## Watch the Video

Play the video for session 4. As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

Dream big, pray hard . . . and think long.

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Praying ALAT—“as long as it takes”

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Caleb was fighting a battle for future generations—as we are.

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We don’t plant seeds of faith for ourselves.

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God remembers His promise to David . . . six kings later.

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The greatest tragedy in life

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## Group Discussion

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

1. Read **1 Kings 18:41–46**. Have you ever thought God said *no* to a prayer, but it turned out to be a *not yet*? What does this story tell you about praying for an answer ALAT—for as long as it takes?

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2. In the video, I share the story of an African American pastor who prayed with so much authority and intimacy with God that, by comparison, it seemed as if I had never prayed. This man's example also inspired me to get to know God that way. Have you ever known someone like this? Someone who is closer to God than you are? Someone who inspires you to pray with more authority and more confidence? Explain.

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3. Read **Luke 11:1–4**. Clearly, the disciples had prayed before and knew how it was done. So why do you think they were making this request? What were they looking for Jesus to provide in asking Him to “teach” them to pray?

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4. In the video, I share how my grandfather had a profound impact on me when I heard him pray for his family. Is there someone in your life who has left such a legacy of prayer? How have that person’s prayers impacted you?

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5. What God does for you is never just for you! It’s also for the next generation. Have you ever reaped where someone else has sown? Have you ever been blessed in a way that you know you don’t deserve? Share it with the group.

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6. Your prayers will live on long after your time on this earth is over. What are you doing to leave a lasting legacy of prayer for others?

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## Personal Reflection

Conclude today's session by reflecting on these questions on your own.

1. What are some prayers you've prayed for which you received a *no*, *yes*, and *not yet* answer from God? Write these below.

No: .....

Yes: .....

Not yet: .....

2. Think for a moment about the way you typically make requests to God. Do you tend to pray ASAP—as soon as possible—prayers? Or do you pray ALAT—as long as it takes—prayers? Rate yourself on your tendencies on a scale of 1–10.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

ASAP

ALAT

3. Walter Wink said, "History belongs to the intercessors." Who are the intercessors who have shaped your life? How have they shaped your life?

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4. Have you ever experienced "the sleeper effect"? Are there blessings that you believe trace back to someone else's prayers? Explain.

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## Next Steps

According to rabbinic tradition, when the twelve spies were doing reconnaissance in the Promised Land, Caleb split off from the group and visited the place where Israel's matriarchs and patriarchs were buried—Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. It was called the Cave of Machpelah, and it was located in the hills of Hebron.

I can picture a forty-year-old Caleb falling on their graves, and swearing on their graves, that he'd be back to claim the land they were buried in. That's where he is forty years later!

Now let me fast-forward.

Caleb wasn't just claiming Hebron for himself or his family. More than five hundred years later, David would be crowned king in Hebron. "David also took the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its towns. Then the men of Judah came to Hebron, and there they anointed David king over the tribe of Judah" (2 Samuel 2:3–4).

Hebron was David's first capital. So Caleb was staking claim to Hebron for King David. What God does for us, He's doing for the next generation! He doesn't just answer prayers once. He answers them over and over and over again.

The question is this: *What are we doing that will make a difference a hundred years from now?*

# Draw<sup>the</sup> Circle

## DAILY REFLECTIONS

### Session 4 Personal Study

This week, as part of your forty-day challenge, I encourage you to read days 22 to 28 in *Draw the Circle*—one reading each day—and use the questions in this section to reflect on what you’ve read. Be sure to note these reflections in this guide or your journal, as there will be a time at the beginning of next week’s session to share your thoughts with the group.

## Day 22: Prayer Fleece

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**KEY TAKEAWAY:** When God gives a vision, He always makes provision.

1. Read **Judges 6:33–40**. How did Gideon ask God to confirm His promises? How did the Lord respond to these requests?

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2. When is it appropriate to offer a “prayer fleece” to God and ask for His confirmation? What are some cautions in doing this?

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3. What are some signs you’ve received in the past when you’ve asked God for confirmation to your prayers? How did this encourage you to continue?

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## Day 23: Not Now

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**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Sometimes God's *no* simply means *not yet*.

1. Read **Acts 1:4–5**. Why did Jesus instruct His disciples to wait instead of immediately striking out to share the gospel? What might have happened if they didn't wait?

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2. When have you received an answer to prayer that you thought was a *no* but was actually a *not yet*? What did you learn through the experience?

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3. How does it help to know that waiting doesn't delay God's plans and purposes but will always expedite them in your life?

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## Day 24: Find Your Voice

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**KEY TAKEAWAY:** If you want to find your voice, you need to hear the voice of God.

1. Read **2 Timothy 3:14–17**. How does Paul instruct Timothy on how to know the voice of God and continue to walk in His ways?

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2. What are some ways you have heard God speak to you through His Word?

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3. How do you reduce the “noise” in your life so you can hear God’s voice?

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## Day 25: A Prophetic Voice

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**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Prayer is the way we recognize potential in others.

1. Read **1 Corinthians 14:3–4**. What does Paul say is the value of “prophesying” among believers in Christ?

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2. How has prayer helped you recognize the potential in others?

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3. How do you see yourself as a “prophet” in the lives of your family and friends?

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## Day 26: Game with Minutes

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**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Change of pace + change of place = change of perspective.

1. Read **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18**. What do you think it looks like to “rejoice always,” “pray continually,” and “give thanks in all circumstances”?

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2. What are some ways you pray for people as you go through your day? How has this affected your relationships with them?

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3. If you want God to do something new in your life, you cannot keep doing the same old thing. What are some ways you will mix up how and when you pray this week?

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## Day 27: Double Circle

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**KEY TAKEAWAY:** If you want to break the sin habit, you've got to establish a prayer habit.

1. In **Matthew 17:18–21**, the disciples asked Jesus why they had been unable to cast out a demon from a child. Jesus replied, “This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting” (verse 21 NKJV). What does this tell you about the level of spiritual warfare that was taking place in this situation?

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2. What do you think of when you hear the word *fast*? What is the value of fasting from something when it comes to the effectiveness of your prayers?

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3. What are some things you need to “double circle” with prayer and fasting?

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## Day 28: Quit Praying

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**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Don't just pray about it; do something about it.

1. Read **James 2:14–17**. What does James say about faith without actions when it comes to serving others?

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2. In what ways can praying become a form of spiritual procrastination? What evidence of this have you seen in your own life?

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3. When is a time in your life when God has instructed you to quit praying about something and get to work on doing it?

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