



The  
Circle  
Maker

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## Sermon Series: The Circle Maker

### Week 1: The Circle Maker

### Week 2: Dream Big

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## Background Information for Parents

The opening scene to *The Godfather* may be one of the most memorable in cinema history. The scene opens up as Bonasera, a local undertaker, describes the horrific details of the tragedy that his daughter experienced at the hands of her boyfriend. Bonasera explains to the Godfather that he sought restitution for the crime through the criminal justice system, but the young man was merely given probation instead of being put behind bars. Due to the ineptitude of the legal system, Bonasera has sought out the services of the Godfather for proper justice to be served.

The Don answers him by making the point that before this meeting, Bonasera never made any attempt to build a relationship with him. They were not friends because prior to this request, Bonasera wanted nothing to do with him. Vito Corleone points out that Bonasera is only speaking to him because he wants this one thing from him. Bonasera begs him saying that he will do anything if this one request is answered. And in one of the most memorable lines in the film, Don Corleone replies by saying, “Some day, and that day may never come, I’ll call upon you to do a service for me. But, until that day—accept this justice as a gift on my daughter’s wedding day.”

This is a perfect illustration for the way prayer is viewed by so many people. So often, we want nothing to do with God at all until we have a request. We do not want to build a relationship, but when something happens and we need God’s services, we go to him expecting him to just jump up and take care of it. A tragedy strikes, a job is lost, a loved one is injured and we seek out the help of God. We beg him and plead with him to perform a miracle. But after the crisis is averted, we go back to our normal routine and totally ignore God until the next time we find ourselves in a predicament that only God can get us out of.

We are launching a new series based on the book by Mark Batterson entitled *The Circle Maker*. This book is about the importance of prayer. All month our student ministry team will be talking with your students about the importance of a healthy prayer life. Our hope is that you seize this opportunity to make it a priority to pray with and for your students and to lead them to become disciples who pray without ceasing. This is what the apostle Paul says about prayer at Philippians 4:6 – 7(ERV): *Don’t worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks for what you have. And because you belong to Christ Jesus, God’s peace will stand guard over all your thoughts and feelings. His peace can do this far better than our human minds.*

**The Circle Maker:** The idea of The Circle Maker is derived from an ancient Jewish legend about a man named Honi. In the midst of a drought in the first century BC, Honi traced a circle with his staff and declared to the Lord that he would not exit the circle until God granted rain. Because of this prayer, the rains came and the Legend of the Circle Maker was born. Drawing circles is a different way to refer to prayer. Our hope is that through this teaching our students will learn to pray big and pray hard. There are some things in life that only God can deliver and we need to constantly be in prayer in order for them to happen.

**Dream Big:** So often, we do not pray because we don't know what to pray for. In order to have big prayers, we need to have big dreams. If our dreams are outrageous, our prayers will be outrageous because only God can make outrageous dreams actually become reality. We want to teach our students to pray big, hairy, audacious prayers because they have big, hairy, audacious dreams. When we begin to dream big, we begin to truly trust in God because prayer is the only way those dreams come true.

**Pray Hard:** During the Battle of Jericho, the people of Israel were instructed by God to march around the city of Jericho seven days in a row. What if the people of Israel stopped after the sixth day? At Luke 18: 1 – 8, Jesus tells the story of the persistent widow to teach his disciples to never stop praying. How many times in our prayer life do we get weary of asking God to intercede in a situation? And how many times in our prayer life do we stop praying just before God works a miracle? This week's teaching will focus on praying hard and not stopping until God moves.

**Think Long:** Rarely are really big dreams accomplished overnight. If our dreams are big enough, they should take years to achieve. The biggest of dreams outlast our lifetime. So often, we are shortsighted in what we pray for. But our prayers have eternal lifespans. What we pray for today can echo for generations. This week's teaching will focus on expanding how we think about our prayer life. Instead of focusing on what is going on in the present, we want our students to begin thinking long-term with their prayers. How can their prayers today affect their lives forty, fifty, or even sixty years down the road? How can the prayers that they pray today affect their children, grandchildren, and generations to come?

## **Around the Dinner Table**

For each week in this series, we will provide resources for you to use to teach and disciple your students about prayer. We will post pertinent resources to help you teach your students how to pray and what to pray for. Our hope is that this series will open lines of communication between you and your students and help you begin praying regularly with your children. What better place to begin praying with your family than around the dinner table?

Each week, we will post a **Reading Guide**. If you do not already regularly read and study the Bible, we want to encourage you to do so as a visual example for your teens to follow. But we know that life gets in the way and as soon as someone mentions a reading guide, tons of things suddenly pop up on your calendar. We understand that reading guide can be constricting, so we are programming in "grace days" each week. The **Reading Guide** will be three short passages of Scripture each week that you and your students can read through together or separately (whichever you can convince them to do).

We want to encourage you to spend some time around the dinner table (even if it is only one time per week) discussing three things.

- What did you read?
- What did you learn?
- What are you doing to do about it?

Our hope is that this will be simple enough that it will not be like pulling teeth to get your teens to participate and not too time-consuming that it never gets done. But also meaningful enough to generate biblical conversations and promote healthy parent-child relationships. Please do not hesitate to give us your feedback on how this is working and how this can improve.

## Scripture Memorization

The last thing that we want to encourage you to do is memorize Scripture together as a family. Whenever you see your child in the hall or staring blankly into the fridge, ask them if they know the memory verse. This is another great way to grow together in your relationship with Christ. Use this verse to talk to your teens about prayer and its importance.

This month's memory verse is the last half of 1 Chronicles 16:11(ERV):

**Depend on the Lord for strength. Always go to him for help.**

## Monthly Action Step

Each month, we want to give you some practical application to what you and your students are talking about together. Here is this month's goal:

**Pray four times as a family. You can pray about whatever is on your heart, but make sure you do it with the entire family.**

## Encouragement

Parents have such a huge responsibility and it is easy to feel like you are fighting a losing battle. But one of the best weapons that you possess in the battle for the hearts and souls of your children is prayer. This month dwell on this quote from a great female author named Stormie Omartian;

**“The most important thing we can pray about for others is that they will know God better and that He will help them understand His will, grow in spiritual wisdom, and live lives that honor Him. We can pray that they will become more like Him and bear the fruit of His Spirit.”**