

April 18/19, 2026

“The Bible and Borders”

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Beyond the
Weekend

SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY, + ACT.

2026 Focus: 12 Months of Prayer | **April:** Prayers of Petition

Each month, journey through a different biblical model of prayer.

Day 1 [Deuteronomy 10:17-19](#) | Bibles and Borders

And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. Deuteronomy 10:19

Deuteronomy captures a pivotal moment in the story of God’s people. Moses addresses the Israelites before they enter the promised land of Canaan. Through Moses, God reminds Israel that he is establishing a relationship with them and they are becoming a nation through him. He tells them to follow his instructions on how to live in this new land. They should not follow the surrounding nations. Instead, they should reflect God in every way they live. These instructions are challenging! Not only is Israel commanded to imitate God through their actions toward each other, but also toward people that are not like them. They are to show love to foreigners and to the fatherless and widows among them. His Word is to be their guide.

We too are commanded to look to God’s Word as the primary voice that shapes how we move through the world. Rather than the culture around us, his Word instructs us in how to think, act, and live. This is as challenging to us as it was to Israel! However, when we stand firm on his Word, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we reflect the character and glory of our good God. God’s Word reiterates that all people are made in the image of God *and* that humanity is sinful. God cares about the least of these *and* is serious about redeeming the broken, sinful places in our communities and our hearts.

TODAY: Take a moment to ask God to shape how you relate to the world around you. Pray: *Lord, above the current of the times and rush of culture, please shape my thinking, words, and behavior.*

Day 2 [Leviticus 19:33-34](#) | God’s Heart for the Vulnerable

The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God. Leviticus 19:34

The beginning of Leviticus 19 opens with a terrifying command: “Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy” ([Leviticus 19:2](#)). Israel is getting to know the God of their rescue. They are fresh out of slavery in Egypt and need to understand who God is. Here, he reiterates his character and instructs his people to imitate him. Be holy. A non-negotiable to this is how they care for the foreigner in their midst. Do not mistreat them, but treat them as native-born. This is radically different from the gods of the Egyptians who have enslaved them. God shows compassion toward the vulnerable. Israel is to be a light to the nations as they share his love.

Thousands of years later, Jesus echoes the same words when he calls his people to love God and love others as themselves ([Matthew 22:37-40](#)). The gospel shines when we love the way Jesus loves. This includes noticing the

foreigners in our midst, offering hospitality and help. It might involve assisting when someone moves into the neighborhood or offering the open seat at church. It could be sharing a meal or household tools. This generosity is not disorderly. It is wise and intentional. In a culture that tells us to love our own and hate the other, we proclaim God's reign through our actions toward the immigrant among us.

TODAY: Take an inventory of your community by writing a list of those who could use your hospitality and help. Pray over this list, and then take one step this week to meet a need.

Day 3 [Acts 17:26-27](#) | God's Design

God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. Acts 17:27

Paul speaks to the assembly in Athens, distressed that it is a city full of idols and the Greeks don't know the God of Israel. He notices an altar made to "an unknown god" and begins laying down the foundation that will connect this altar to Jesus, the Son of God. He starts by sharing how God made the world and everything in it, including nations and their boundaries. Even the order of the nations has been crafted by God so that people can know Jesus. As one who has traveled across borders, Paul recognizes that boundaries and government play a crucial role in accomplishing God's mission.

We too should value God's created order as we are shaped by our commitment to his Word. Boundaries for nations are necessary and part of his good plan in a sinful, broken world. They offer protection and distinction. They do not dehumanize; rather, they reinforce humanity. Government done well operates in a similar way. Elsewhere in the New Testament, Paul writes that government is used by God to restrain evil ([Romans 13:3](#)). There are moments when Jesus followers should speak out against unjust government. Even still, caring for the vulnerable should include interceding for our leaders. We are called to pray for God's will to be carried out through them. Those who are vulnerable thrive most when evil is restrained.

TODAY: Establish the habit of praying for the government and for its leaders at all levels. Go deeper into our discussion about the Bible and borders on our *Beyond the Weekend* Podcast. Find it wherever you listen to podcasts or on YouTube [HERE](#).

Day 4 [Matthew 28:19-20](#) | Living in the Tension

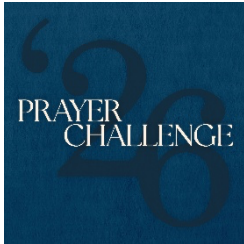
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19

These are some of the final words Jesus tells his disciples. Go. Make disciples of all nations. They understand what it means to be a disciple. They have been practicing it for the last three years. And they certainly know what it means to go, because they've traveled with Jesus throughout Judea. But all nations? The closest these country boys have ventured outside Israel is Samaria, and even then, Samaritans are more like distant relatives. This means navigating the cross-cultural tension of telling people about the love of Jesus and also their need for repentance and rescue. It requires nuance and wisdom.

As followers of Jesus, we too are invited to live in the tension. Human beings are simultaneously the crown of God's creation—his image bearers—and yet, we too are the cause of sin. No place is this tension more visible than when we step into the vulnerable places of our world. We are challenged to see everyone with value and worth and to care for the vulnerable. Yet, we also see that government has a role to protect and restrain evil. As people living in this specific time and place, we can love our country, but we must remember that our eternal zip code belongs to the kingdom of heaven. When the world comes to our doorstep and we interact

with our immigrant neighbors, we have an incredible opportunity to share Jesus through our actions and words.

TODAY: Where is God inviting you to share the gospel? Pray for opportunities and open doors to share him with others.



Day 5 [Philippians 4:6–7](#) | Prayer and Worry

This year in Beyond the Weekend, journey through different biblical models of prayer—one each month. April's focus is Petition: bringing our needs before God.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6–7

Paul writes from prison to believers in Philippi—a church that he started on his second missionary journey (see [Acts 16](#)). Paul reminds them about the identity of Jesus and what it means to find their joy in him. Writing from his own experience, Paul counsels them to look to Christ in all things and walk in a manner worthy of the gospel ([Philippians 1:27](#)). Such a way of life implies always praying, especially when faced with anxious or troubling thoughts. As Paul has modeled in prison, these believers are to turn their troubles and trials into prayer, trusting that the God of all peace will guard their hearts and minds.

Much like the believers in Philippi, we too need to turn our troubles into prayers. The basic counsel of Scripture on the matter is to worry less and pray more. Such counsel does not come from a cold-hearted God who dismisses our problems but from one who cares deeply about us and wants to meet us in our difficulties. We can pray, trusting that God is working, able, and willing to carry us through any situation.

TODAY: Turn your anxieties into prayers. Be assured that you have a God who loves you and wants to hear from you. Reflect upon what has been troubling your heart, and then turn your cares and concerns over to God in prayer. As you do, be assured that his peace will guard your heart and mind.