

STUDY GUIDE
GROUPS / INDIVIDUALS

SIX SESSIONS

JIM CYMBALA

Bestselling Author of *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*



LIFE-CHANGING
PRAYER

Approaching
the Throne of Grace

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SIX SESSIONS

JIM CYMBALA

WITH KEVIN AND SHERRY HARNEY

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Life-Changing Prayer Study Guide

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CONTENTS

<i>A Word of Invitation</i>	7
<i>How to Use This Guide</i>	9
SESSION 1: The Throne of Grace	11
SESSION 2: Receiving Mercy	29
SESSION 3: Perfect Peace from God.	49
SESSION 4: Praying with Faith	63
SESSION 5: God Brings the Answer.	85
SESSION 6: The Church That Prays Together	103
<i>Additional Resources for Group Leaders</i>	121

SESSION ONE

THE THRONE OF GRACE



The throne of grace is a spiritual place. It's not a location geographically that you can visit, but the promises concerning it are so immense that they're almost beyond belief. God has so much to say about the throne of grace and what will happen in our lives to change them for the better when we approach it in faith. All kinds of wonderful things happen at the throne of grace.

JIM CYMBALA

OPENING REFLECTION

If you could snap your fingers and be anywhere in the world immediately, where would you go? Some people would want to be transported to a childhood home. Others would want to be on a mountaintop or distant seashore. There are people who absolutely love the Disneyland theme parks, and they would want to go there. Some would want to stay near home and others would want to be on the other side of the planet.

Now, let's add to the fun of our imaginary instantaneous trip. Who would you want to take with you? It might be a spouse, a child, a grandchild, a friend, or maybe a group of people. Some folks might want to take someone they rarely get to see. Others might want to be reunited with a loved one who has passed away. Some creative people might decide to go to their imaginary place with a historical person they have never met. Since this is all imaginary, the sky is the limit. Any place. Any person.

Get the picture in your mind. With the snap of your fingers, you would be in the most desirable place with a favorite or fascinating person. How amazing would this be? What would you pay for this? How much joy would you experience? What stories would you have to tell when you were done and came back home?

The truth is, there is a place you can go that is better than your wildest imagination. There is someone already waiting there for you who is closer than your best friend, more loving than your kindest relative, more interesting than anyone you have met on this planet, and more generous than you can imagine or dream. There is a place you can go immediately, any time, and it costs you nothing to get there. And this place is not imaginary; in fact, it is the most real place in the entire universe.

The reason it costs nothing for you to go there is because someone else has already paid the fare. Jesus gave the full price so that you can have complete access to the God of the universe. This place is called *the throne of grace*. It is more beautiful than your wildest imagination can comprehend, and you will find a loving welcome every time you arrive.

Get ready. The way is open. It is stunning. God is waiting to welcome you. Are you ready to go?

TALK ABOUT IT

Welcome to the first session of Life-Changing Prayer. If you or any of your fellow group members do not know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to get things started, discuss the following questions:

- If you could go to any place on the planet right now, and have anyone there with you, where would you go? Whom would you meet there?
- Why would this be such a special time?

VIDEO TEACHING NOTES

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

What happens at the throne of grace

Who may call on God at his throne of grace

The way to the throne of grace

The surprising provision and miracles we receive

Why we can ask God with confidence

We can know God is ready to meet us . . . now

My favorite Scripture is Jeremiah 29:11. God says in his Word, “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” That Scripture helped me, because when I didn’t have a plan for my life, I didn’t have any hope. When everything around me seemed like it was harming me, God reminded me that he had a great plan for my life. It is not to harm me, but it is to prosper me. God is just so faithful. He has just been so faithful in my life. —SHERENE

GROUP DISCUSSION

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

1. Think about a time you felt God’s presence in your life as you cried out to him. How did this experience affect you?

2. Read **Hebrews 4:14–16**. What do you learn about Jesus in this passage? How should these truths compel you to draw near the throne of grace frequently and confidently?

3. As you read this passage, what do you learn about how God sees you? Why is it essential for you to see yourself through God's eyes if you are going to draw near the throne of grace with absolute assurance that you are always welcome?

4. Read **Hebrews 10:19–25**. According to this passage, what has Jesus done to open the way for us to draw near the Father with confidence? Why is it essential that we remember the work and love of Jesus as we draw near the throne of grace?

5. Read **Hebrews 9:6–14**. What contrasts do you see between the human priests in the Old Testament and Jesus, the great and final High Priest? How is the ministry, sacrifice, and work of Jesus better than all that came before him?

CLOSING PRAYER

Use the following prompts to guide your group as you approach God's throne of grace together:

- Thank your heavenly Father that he has opened the door wide and invited you into his presence at all times.
- Give praise to Jesus for making the way for you to draw near through the willing sacrifice of his own life and through the power of his death-defeating resurrection.
- Pray for confidence and boldness to draw near the throne of grace as a normal part of your life.
- Cry out to God for a specific area of need, provision, or protection that has been shared by one of your group members.
- Lift up words of praise and adoration to the God who has made a way for you to be in intimate communication and relationship with him.

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, who talk to him, and who ask him to help them.



Between-Sessions Personal Study

SESSION ONE

Reflect on the content you've covered this week in *Life-Changing Prayer* by engaging in any or all of the following between-sessions activities. The time you invest will be well spent, so let God use it to draw you closer to him. At your next meeting, share with your group any key points or insights that stood out to you as you spent this time with the Lord.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Take time in personal reflection to think about the following questions:

- ▶ Think about when you first started calling out to God and seeking him in prayer. You might have been a child or an adult; a Christian or someone who was seeking the truth. What were your first prayers like? What happened in response to those prayers?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Take some time this week to commit this simple but powerful Bible verse to memory:

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (HEBREWS 4:16)

Then make this a prayer and personalize it:

My God, I approach your throne of grace with confidence, for I know there I will find mercy and grace to help me in any and every time of need!

Pray this often, and then draw near to the God who is waiting for you and who is always excited when you come near.

Those who call upon the name of the Lord are answered by a God who has an ear that is never shut to their prayers.

GET TO KNOW THE HIGH PRIEST

One reason we may not draw near God's throne with confidence is because we do not have a clear understanding of who Jesus is and what he has done for us. Each of us can continually grow in our understanding of what Jesus did for us on the cross and in his resurrection. This week, take some time to study the following passages on the person and ministry of Jesus. Use the space provided to keep notes of what you learn.

PASSAGE #1: Isaiah 53:1–12

- What does this passage tell you about Jesus?

- What does this passage say Jesus did for you?

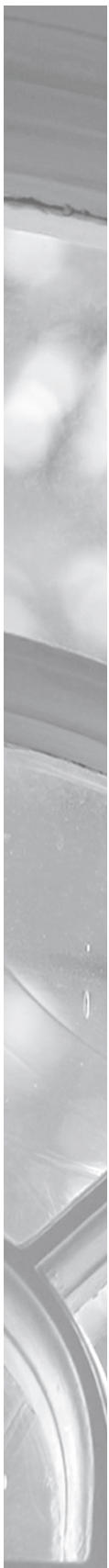
- What new understanding have you gained about Jesus's sacrifice?

PASSAGE #2: Philippians 2:1–11

- What does this passage tell you about Jesus?

- What does this passage say Jesus did for you?

- How does Paul say you are to respond to Jesus's sacrifice?



PASSAGE #3: Colossians 1:15–23

- What does this passage tell you about Jesus?

- What does this passage say Jesus did for you?

- How does Paul say you are to respond to Jesus's sacrifice?

PASSAGE #4: Hebrews 10:1–25

- What does this passage tell you about Jesus?

- What does this passage say Jesus did for you?

- How does the writer say you are to respond to what Jesus has done for you?

PASSAGE #5: Revelation 5:1–14

- Why is Jesus worthy to take the scroll in this passage?

- What do the angels say about Jesus as they praise him?

- What new understanding have you gained about worship from this passage?

Jesus Christ is not only our Savior but also our High Priest. He is the one who connects us to God the Father.

EXTEND AN INVITATION

We all have people in our lives who do not yet know Jesus as the Savior and leader of their lives. These people are welcome at the throne of grace. Remember, each of us had a time in our lives when we cried out to God before we were in a relationship with Jesus. At our moment of conversion, we began the conversation with God as a rebel and finished as his child. This means that God hears the prayers of sinners, rebels, and nonbelievers.

With this in mind, the next time you are talking with someone who is not a follower of Jesus and they share a deep need, let them know that you will be praying for them. As the Holy Spirit leads, you may even want to share the information from this study and invite them into a conversation about approaching God's throne of grace. If they are open, actually pray with them right in that moment, modeling the reality that the throne room of God is always open. Make your prayer simple, understandable, and bold—and pray in the name of Jesus. This simple invitation will show this person that God is ready and available at all times!

We are not coming to a throne of judgment. We are coming to a throne of grace.

JOURNAL, REFLECTIONS, AND NOTES

As you reflect on what God is teaching you through this session, use the space provided to write any key points or questions you want to bring to the next group meeting.
