

FOCUSED LIVING PRAYER July – Sep. 2022

David Andes

The second week of Wimbledon is here! I've (David) always loved watching the superstars on the Center Court. During the Wimbledon coverage, tennis lovers will inevitably be treated to flashback footage of past stars like Rod Laver or Billy Jean King. And you quickly notice that they are playing with wooden tennis rackets! Now, the difference between wood and the composite materials used in rackets today is night and day. **The old wooden rackets are obsolete.** That's not to say they're bad. In fact, the grip might feel 'just right' in your hand. It's just that you can't win with a wooden racket today! It's just not an effective racket for winning.



And it got me thinking. What ineffective “wooden rackets” am I tempted to win with in my Christian life?

- Reading my Bible ...without having the mindset of “meeting with God”
- Meeting with accountability brothers ...without being transparent
- Serving God ...without a prayerful dependence on God
- Leading my wife...without first submitting to God
- Disciplining my kids...without ever sharing stories of my own failures and weaknesses with them
- Confessing my sin...without truly entrusting the guilt and shame into God's hands.

Anytime I attempt to attain a spiritual goal by striving in the flesh, I'm picking up a wooden racket. And it never brings me to the winning destination I want. The Apostle Paul said it this way: **“Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh (Gal 3:3)?”**

The book of Hebrews was written to some Jewish Christians who were reaching for the old familiar wooden racket. Their “wooden racket” was a reliance on the Law and the Sacrificial system to stay right with God. But the writer calls out to them: “Those things had their time and good purpose but they are obsolete now. They are NOT effective for salvation and sanctification now that Jesus, the BETTER One, has come (Heb 7:22; 8:6,13). **“God had provided something better for us”** (Heb 11:40). The ‘something better’ is the fullness of salvation in Christ and the Holy Spirit's empowerment to live a God-pleasing life.

As we continue through this summer tennis season (with an eye on the U.S. Open in September 😊), let's say farewell to our old, familiar wooden rackets and continually rely on Jesus who is BETTER on every point.

“glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh” (Phil 3:3b).

Ministry Prayer Requests

Leadership Team – We praise God for the staff team God has raised up in Focused Living. (Karl, German, David, and our new treasurer, Jason Yarborough.) Pray for God's continued protection of our unity and favor on our collective ministry. Pray that God would rule and overrule at our **Aug 14th** board meeting as we launch our various ministries this fall.

Forums – The attendance for our summer “Fueled Series – Finishing Strong” is the largest it's ever been. Praise that More and more men are coming to the realization that they need the daily sustenance of God's Word and the relational connection with a few other men. *“Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders build in vain* (Psalm 127:1). Pray that this momentum will continue into the fall as we take a deep dive into the Gospel of Mark under the theme, “Follow Me”. The fall season of forums launches the week of **Aug 22nd**. Pray for Karl and David as they put the teachings together.

GRIP – Our fall season of GRIP discipleship kicks off on **Aug 29th** and runs for 100 days. Join us in praying that God will bring together the pairings He wants and just the right Team Shepherds.

OUTREACH – Pray for FLM men Bill Manley and Derek Gowdy as they lead a missions trip to Guatemala under the umbrella of Focused Living **July 9th – 16th**. The team focus will be medical clinic, VBS, and deepening a relationship with a local school.

FLM Ministry partner, Sinclair Salters, is spearheading a basketball camp **July 12th – 15th** to reach the youth that come from the roughest parts of Columbia. Pray that many will be personally introduced to the Living Hope - Jesus.

Perry Bowers Family Prayer

The Bowers are finalizing the needed home revisions for completely settling in to Chattanooga. Enjoying making connections in our neighborhood.

Grateful for the new proximity to our children and grands. Connecting more frequently gives much joy and opportunity to notice ways to pray and to affirm these grands as they navigate this challenging culture.

Pray for still hearts as we wait on God to lead in relationships and ministry. Praise for a recent time to be with Perry's dad, brothers and meeting his youngest brother's fiancée.

Missing SC but clearly know this new chapter is right where we need to be.

David Andes Family Prayer

Continued prayer for a Christian influence in Cameron's life beside his parents. Pray that he will increasingly own the principle, 'You reap what you sow'.

Continued thankfulness for Austin's weekly rhythm of activity and the servants who assist him!

Pray that Katherine would experience the Father's sustaining grace as she serves her aging parents and her maturing boys.

Pray that David would minister from an overflowing heart in love with Jesus. *"Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in this body I live by faith"* (Gal 2:20)

German Wright Family Prayer

German - Balance and wisdom. Balance in different leadership positions held. Wisdom for decisions to be made in these positions.

Sandra - wisdom and discernment for greater order, structure and prioritizing on every level.

Caleb - continued growth in new position.

Karl Reed Family Prayer

We are always in need of prayer as parents. Parenting is continually challenging. We now have 2 teenagers and 3 younger ones and there is a big difference in how we need to parent each child. Please pray for wisdom, patience, humility, and daily reliance on God's Spirit.

We just celebrated 18 years of marriage in June. Please pray that God continues to deepen our relationship as husband and wife. He has been faithful in this over the years and we desire more.

Please pray as we work to build relationships with our neighbors. Pray for deeper connections and for opportunities to speak about the sustaining faith we have in Jesus.

Please join us as we continually pray over our children. Evelyn (15), Anthony (13), Lillian (7), Charlotte (6), and Jackson (3). Pray that God will draw their young hearts toward Him and that they will be protected from the pressures of this world and the lies of the Deceiver.