JM Jason Mayfield

SERMON OUTLINE FOR PASTORS

THE 27-MINUTE ROUTINE

How to Build a Daily Bible Reading and Prayer Routine

> A daily time with the Lord is built, not stumbled into: 15 minutes in the Bible, 7 minutes in prayer and 5 minutes in worship, held together by simple triggers at the same time and in the same place.

MAIN TEXT
1 Corinthians 2:1-5

SERIES
Stand-alone message

FIRST PREACHED
November 8, 2026

BY
Pastor Jason Mayfield

AT A GLANCE

THE MESSAGE

1. Prep comes first and is mostly not spiritual. Getting up, brushing his teeth, the black sweats, the coffee and the same chair at the same time are triggers that carry him into the secret place.
2. Read the Bible for the first 15 minutes. It is the cornerstone: if you do not pray, read the Bible. Engagement means at least four days a week, through the whole Bible at least every 18 months, and then repeat.
3. Set yourself up to keep reading: a physical Bible you like, one of three translations (NLT, NIV, ESV), a plan between 90 days and 18 months, and managed expectations, because the goal is to read it and insight compounds over time.
4. Pray for 7 minutes: thank God for one thing you mean and ask for three to five specific things, written down and tracked. Expand the time by praying the Word, usually the Psalms, and by praying in the Spirit, tied to Romans 8:26-28, and change your posture to remember who you are talking to.
5. End with 5 minutes of worship as the off-ramp from the secret place, with songs that are Jesus-focused and that bless you, so that even a clunky morning ends with a win.



WATCH IT PREACHED

youtu.be/4sDGXki_jJ4



READ THE ARTICLE

jasonmayfield.com/messages/the-27-minute-routine

PREACHING NOTES

Before You Preach

This message is a demonstration more than a sermon. It was taught sitting in a brown leather chair, with a small lap table, coffee, several Bibles and pens within reach. If you preach it, bring the props and let people see how it actually works.

Two cautions. First, people will hear this as a rule. It is a model, offered the way a keyboard company shows you what a keyboard can do: use what helps you. Second, keep the Bible section from swallowing the prayer and worship sections. Reading is the cornerstone, but the people in the room also need the seven-minute prayer model and the off-ramp of worship.

Introduction

This morning I want to do something I have never done in a service. I want to take you into my time with the Lord.

I got saved around the time I was 12 years old. Almost as soon as I got saved, I heard people say you need to pray and you need to read the Bible. But I never saw anybody do it. I went to intercessory prayer meetings with the lamp and the boom box and 50 people walking around doing their own thing, and I could never translate that into my own personal time with the Lord. I saw preachers with Bibles, but I never saw them in them.

So over the years, as I built these systems for myself, I kept thinking: let me open up the curtain and show people what this is.

A STONE'S THROW

> LUKE 22:41 ESV
>
> [41] And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed,

Here is the principle I try to follow. Jesus was close enough for the disciples to see Him pray and far enough to keep what He prayed. You can perceive enough of what the experience is like, and I can still protect what I am praying for.

A USER DEMONSTRATION

> 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 ESV
>
> [1] And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. [2] For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. [3] And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, [4] and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, [5] so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

There are two ways to read "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4). One is the demonstrative kind, the kind you picture when people fall down at the altar. But there is another idea of demonstration that we lack in the body of Christ: a user demonstration.

Illustration: the keyboard. When a company comes out with a new keyboard, they show you a demonstration of everything it can do. At the end of the day I am going to use my keyboard the way I use my keyboard. But if they show me enough, I can say, "Oh, I could do that."

That is what I want to do this morning. I want to give you a user demonstration of spending time with the Lord.

1. The 27-Minute Model

The model is very simple:

- **15 minutes** reading the Bible.
- **7 minutes** in prayer.
- **5 minutes** in worship.

2. Start with Your Prep

Before you do any of that, you have to prep. Under the old covenant, the high priest had to bathe before he went into the Holy Place (Leviticus 16:4). That is not what I am talking about. I am not talking about a time to confess sin and get right with God before you read and pray.

I am talking about getting up, going to the bathroom and brushing your teeth. You have to get up and get going.

Illustration: my morning. I get up, go to the restroom and brush my teeth. I put on black sweatpants, a black sweatshirt and brown house slippers. I start my coffee from an app on my phone while I am still in the bathroom. It is store-bought coffee; I am easy. I pour it in a yellow cup, which is the reason our church has yellow coffee cups. Then I go sit in the same brown leather chair. In our house it is called the brown chair of meditation.

Most of this is not spiritual. Most of this is just go do it.

YOU ARE BUILDING TRIGGERS

What you are doing is building triggers that prepare you to go into the secret place and receive. This is not a Christian book, but *Atomic Habits* by James Clear is probably the best book about spending time with the Lord that has nothing to do with spending time with the Lord. He talks about how one trigger sets you up for the next thing.

I have done this so long that when I get my coffee in the morning, a trigger is already carrying me through my time with the Lord. When I put on that black sweatshirt, it is like putting on an ephod. It is not supernatural. It changes my mind.

Illustration: the Bible at the business meeting. When I used to meet with business owners, I always took my Bible. If I am going to talk to you about QuickBooks with a Bible in my hand, I am going to talk to you about QuickBooks under the anointing. It is a trigger.

Illustration: same Bat-time, same Bat-channel. I grew up watching Adam West's Batman, and every episode ended by telling you to come back at the same Bat-time on the same Bat-channel. Prayer works really well that way. Same time, same place. There is a reason it is called a secret place: you need a place that is yours.

3. The First 15 Minutes: Read the Bible

You can read the Bible in an average of about 12 minutes a day and get through it in a year. Spend 15 minutes.

Bible reading is the cornerstone of your 27 minutes. If you do not pray, read the Bible. Do not try to fix your prayer first. Go read. A word will set you up for more success than prayer will. People who pray but do not know the Word will sometimes see powerful things happen, but to go pray a bunch of ignorant mess for two hours has no merit in it. You need to know the Word so you know who you are talking to, what He is going to do and how to address Him.

WHAT BEING ENGAGED WITH THE BIBLE MEANS

- **Read at least four days a week.** If you read four days a week, you win the week, because four is more than three.
- **Read through the whole Bible at least every 18 months.**
- **Repeat.** The Bible is not a one-time book. It is a lifetime book. The more you read it, the more you will see, and the more you will grow.

The Center for Bible Engagement has reported from surveys that people who read the Bible one, two or three days a week show about the same results in their life and faith as people who read it no days a week. At four days a week, those measures rise sharply, and from four to seven days a week there is little further change.

I am well above 30 times through the Bible, and about a week ago, feeling the pressure of being a pastor, I walked into the little library room in our house, started reading and saw something I had never seen before. It does not matter how many times I have read it. There is going to be something for me today. And if there is nothing for me today, there is going to be something the day I need it.

Illustration: the verse I could not find. I was teaching a class at a church in Michigan and wanted to add a verse, and I could not find it anywhere: not on Google, not in my Bible software, not on Bible Gateway. I had skipped my Bible reading that morning. I looked all day. The next morning I opened my daily reading, and it was in the first three verses. I fully believe the Lord did me dirty on that the day before, so I would understand the value of coming to the Scripture every single day. It was in my morning time with the Lord waiting for me, and I chose not to show up.

A well-known motivational speaker recently tried to dispel some beliefs of Christianity because he read the Bible once in four days. I do not care about you reading the Bible one time. I am past 30 times, and I am still trying to figure stuff out. You better show up and repeat.

4. Find a Physical Bible You Like

The more you like to hold the Bible, the more you will hold the Bible. The more you hold the Bible, the more you will read the Bible. The more you read the Bible, the more you will walk in revelation.

Show the Bibles you use: a thinline that is easy to carry, a wide margin Bible you can write in, a floppy Cambridge wide margin. If you have never read the Bible, a black pen and a yellow highlighter will get you as far as you need to go right now.

Three guidelines:

- **You like it physically.** If it is too heavy or sits funny, you will not like it. A small lap table goes a long way if you read in a chair.
- **You can read the translation.** I recommend three: the **NLT**, when you need a Bible you can understand at 4:00 in the morning, though it is less word for word; the **NIV**, a little more word for word and easy to comprehend, which my wife uses every day; and the **ESV**, a good academic Bible, which is what I preach from and use every day.
- **It helps you reach the goal.** A larger print is easier to glance at in a chair. I like a tighter print at a desk. In my experience, the tighter the print, the more my brain shifts into gear to focus.

The New King James has very good footnotes, and I am partial to the New American Standard from 1995. But read one of those three and it will get you where you need to go.

5. You Need a Plan

Ready, aim, fire is not going to work in Bible reading. You need something that takes you day by day. You can find Bible reading plans in the Power 27 app at power27.app.

- **Thirty days is too fast.** You are reading too much to get what you think you are getting.
- **Ninety days is the fastest** you should read it for it to still make sense, and that takes about an hour a day.
- **A chapter a day is too slow.** It takes more than three years, and the context disconnects from itself.
- **Eighteen months is the slowest.** Read in a rhythm of 90 days to 18 months.
- **Do not get stuck in topical plans.** You need "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). There is stuff hiding in the Bible waiting for your situation that you are never going to find if you just read on peace every day.

Illustration: Psalm 23. My grandmother, bless her heart, read Psalm 23 every day. I think she got about everything she was going to get out of it after the second week. Do not buy into some superstition that keeping the Bible will protect you. You need the Word.

Do you need to read the Old Testament? Yes and no. It is valuable and it is helpful, and I recommend reading the whole Bible. But if you get into Isaiah and you cannot do it anymore, go read Romans. The New Testament will get you where you need to be.

You do not need a study Bible. Just read the Scripture. It will explain itself.

Illustration: Isaiah. I had been through the Bible more than 20 times, and Isaiah was white noise every time. Then I opened to Isaiah 1 in this Bible, sitting in my chair, and all of a sudden the book opened up. Every page had something on it. I started writing in the margins. Twenty-plus times through before it happened.

MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Your goal is not to understand the Bible. Your goal is to read the Bible. I know people with PhDs who do not get it all the time. Everybody has a bad day reading the Bible. I do not get something every day, but it compounds over time.

We have been taught to go to the Scripture for our daily bread, and we should pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). But you may not get a word today. I got an insight 14 or 15 years ago sitting at my kitchen counter with Honey Nut Cheerios, and today it shapes my life. If you can get one gem, one treasure, you will pay what it costs. Jesus said the kingdom is like a man who, on finding "one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:46).

TWO TIPS FOR STAYING ON TRACK

- **Use an audio Bible.** Read along with the text. When I read the Bible in 90 days, the narrator of my audio Bible has spent more time with me in prayer than any other human being in the world.
- **Try binaural beats.** With headphones, a tone in each ear helps me focus when I read. I use an app called brain.fm.

6. Pray for Seven Minutes

The best base model I have ever seen is this one. It is not super spiritual, and this is all it takes:

- **Thank God for one thing, and mean it.** Not "Lord, we thank you for the day." If you have stage four cancer and the doctor says it is gone, that deserves more than a day on the thank God list.
- **Ask God for three to five things you actually need. Write them down and track them.** The Lord wants to bring glory to His name. Keep a record of what you asked Him to do.

Do not pray "just be with" prayers. I do not pray, "Lord, just be with Ashleigh today, and just be with Jocelyn, and just be with Ali." I know them too well for that. I can pray specific things over them, because I either want something to happen for them or I want them to behave a certain way in my house.

That will take up seven minutes. You may do it in four minutes the first day. Talk it out with the Lord. Treat Him like three things:

- He is above you, so honor Him.
- He cares, so tell Him how you feel.
- He is the one who approves the check.

Illustration: the $2,000 check. I once drove four or five hours through fog at 4:00 in the morning to preach at a church, and on the way I prayed, "Lord, I need to reap something off of this." They gave me a $200 check, and I was thankful. I got home, checked the mail on the way to Publix, and there was a $2,000 check. The Lord gave me the honorarium through Blue Cross Blue Shield.

EXPANDING YOUR PRAYER TIME

Pray the Word. Toward the end of prayer I go to the Psalms and scan until something catches. Turn the verse into prayer.

> **PSALM 85:1 ESV**
>
> To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. [1] LORD, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

"Lord, I thank you that you are favorable toward your people. You are going to restore my fortunes. Anything I have lost, you are about to bring back. You will put me in a position where, like Solomon, if I have a problem, money can solve it." Solomon wrote that "money answers everything" (Ecclesiastes 10:19).

> **PSALM 84:1 ESV**
>
> To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. [1] How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!

“Father, I thank you that I can just spend time in your presence today.” That takes nothing to pray.

Pray in the Spirit. Seven minutes is my baseline. Then I pray in the Spirit, and I partner with the Lord over a few targets: my finances, or something going on in the family that I do not know what to do with. People always ask how to start praying in the Spirit, but they never ask when to stop. I stop as soon as I start thinking about what is coming out of my mouth, because now I am not in the spirit, I am in the mind.

> ROMANS 8:26-28 ESV
>
> [26] Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. [27] And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. [28] And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

I do not know how to pray for what I need. I am limited. But even though you do not know, the Holy Ghost knows what to pray for. And notice what comes right after. We quote verse 28 all the time and miss the context. It is hard for me to read it and not make the connection to praying in the Spirit. When you want things to start to line up for you, there is a power in praying in the Spirit. I am more spirit-filled when none of you are around than when we are in this room.

TWO TIPS FOR PRAYER

- **Keep a list.** Write things down.
- **Change your posture.** I often get down on my knees with my face in the crack of my Bible. I do it to remember who I am talking to. Even though we can “with confidence draw near to the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16), I want to temper my boldness a little. I can hold Him accountable to His Word, but I never want to talk to the Lord like I am His boss.

7. Five Minutes of Worship

Worship is the off-ramp from the secret place. What I have given you so far is 23 minutes, and that could run to 90 minutes depending on the day. Some days I read a lot and do not pray as much, and some days it goes the other way. There is an ebb and flow. If you are a plumber, that guy with toilet water on his floor needs you at the house. He does not need you in prayer for five hours, but you need your time in the presence of the Lord.

If you are new to this, the mornings are going to be clunky. Worship helps, because you get to end confidently with a win under your belt. I use headphones so I can turn it up.

How to pick the song:

- **It is Jesus-focused.** Not all worship songs are. I do not need to sing about what I have. I need what the Lord has. Sing about the blood.

- **It blesses you.** The songs we sing on Sunday are chosen for this generation. In the morning, sing what blesses you, whether that is a newer song or “In the Garden” out of an old hymnal.

And if you did not pray well and did not read well, I have great news: the bass player, the drummer, the worship leader and the choir are about to come into your headphones and help you out.

Conclusion

Here is the whole thing:

- **Prep:** same time, same place, simple triggers.
- **15 minutes** in the Bible: four days a week, through the whole Bible at least every 18 months, and repeat.
- **7 minutes** in prayer: thank God for one thing and ask for three to five.
- **5 minutes** in worship: Jesus-focused and a blessing to you.

The Power 27 app at power27.app walks you through the model, and at the end it recommends a worship song.

Do not wait until you feel spiritual. Go do it.



ABOUT

PASTOR JASON MAYFIELD

Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, an author, and the creator of POWER 27. He has given more than 20 years to the local church and helps pastors and ministry leaders lead BIG.

Free outlines, articles and leadership resources: **jasonmayfield.com**

You are welcome to preach from this outline. Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. www.esv.org