

**M**any have some faith in God, but hesitate to trust Him fully. They fear that nothing will really ever change. For them, God is still on probation. As time passes without dramatic changes, hopeful expectations gradually fade. These guidelines will help you pray for someone who is hesitating to follow Christ. Pray for the heart-strength that he/she will need to trust God fully and enter the life God has for them.

### **1. Pray for the strength to make the moves they need to make**

Most people get accustomed to a way of life that is frustrating and often disappointing. Eventually they lose heart, and find that they can't find the will to lay hold of changes and to walk in different ways. Pray that God will strengthen your friend to do what they must do to lay hold of the good things He desires to give them.

- **Strength for weak hands to hang on to hope.** Ask God to help them get a grip on what He gives. Imagine them holding on to hope as if it were a lifeline to their future. Christ Himself is the power pulling them closer. They just have to hang on.
- **Boldness for wobbly knees to move toward God's call.** Ask God to fortify their readiness to make the decisions they'll need to make to answer Christ's summons to follow Him.

#### **Isaiah 35:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way;*

<sup>4</sup> *say to those with fearful hearts,*

*"Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, He will come with vengeance; with divine retribution He will come to save you."*

### **2. Pray for God's voice to assure them of the moves that He will make**

The Almighty God does indeed desire to come to your friend, intending to bring lavish, powerful changes. Can you imagine God getting through to your friend's inner being? "Don't be afraid. I am on the way. I am going to change some things. Most of all, I am going to change you." What kind of fears have formed in the heart of your friend? How does God want to give assurance that He is preparing drastic but good changes in his/her life? Pray for God to speak to the heart of your friend in a way that personalizes the salvation He's bringing.

#### **Isaiah 35:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> *Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.*

<sup>6</sup> *Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy...*

### **3. Pray for the healing of spiritual disabilities**

Isaiah mentions four ways that people are incapacitated to recognize Christ and move into the life He offers. Which one of these disabilities best describes your friend? Ask God to bring the change.

- **Sight for the blind.** "Grant them vision to see You and how near and marvelous You are."
- **Hearing for the deaf.** "Open their ears so that they can hear You speak and grasp the truth."
- **New legs for the lame.** "Give them new power to walk with You and to dance with celebration."
- **Clear voice for the silent.** "Give them words and will to be outspoken with newfound joy."

#### **Isaiah 35:2**

<sup>2</sup> *...They will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.*

### **4. Pray for the revealing of the magnificent beauty of God**

Pray that their hope would be confirmed by experiencing the incredible beauty of God's love and power.

This particular set of guidelines is designed to help people follow some of the ideas found in Isaiah 35 to pray for people to find God-given courage to venture into the changes God wants to bring in their lives.

### **Examine God's ways.**

For your own preparation, take a close look at Isaiah 35 before leading the time of prayer. This particular text is directed to an entire people who have become despondent, fearing that they will never be rescued from a painful, prolonged predicament. The truths are very applicable to the ways that God works to bring salvation to individuals. Facilitate a brief discussion of Isaiah 35:3-4 at the beginning of the prayer time. Before you ask for God's work, get refreshed in a vision of God's ways. Consider how God prepares people to step with faith into the changes He wants to bring in their lives. You don't need to solve the difficult mystery of how God empowers people to be saved in order to pray for hope for those who despair.

1. **God wants people ready to move.** Consider Paul's words which imply that Christ's saving grip is the main event, but that God enables people to grab hold of the one who has firmly grasped them: "...that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12).
2. **God wants people expectant that He will move.** One fear that can paralyze pre-believers is a despair that God will ever bring any real changes in their lives. The false logic goes something like this: "If I'm ever going to get any justice or any real change, I'm going to have to do it all myself. No one will help me." Why does God want people to have their hearts relieved of such a fear? What about the language of vengeance and retribution in verse 4? God wants His followers to live in forgiveness if they have been wronged, and to count on God to be the one who contends with enemies and ultimately, bring any vindication that they really need. Many people carry deep disappointments and foreboding that God will not act decisively against evil in their present circumstances.

### **Pray for God to work.**

Lead your prayer group in four rounds of prayer:

1. **Pray for people to be strong and ready to embrace the changes God is calling for.** These are simple "Get-them-ready-for-action" prayers. The participant's guide lists two specific ways.
2. **Pray for God to embolden their hearts to hope.** These are also prayers of preparation. Ask God to somehow get a message across at the heart level that leaves people in a state of renewed anticipation that He will do great things. Verse four authorized some "declare-prayers" which are spoken as if they are addressed to the person being prayed for. An example: "(insert name), do not fear! God is on the way to meet you. He desires to change you. He is going to vindicate you in due time. You can count on Him."
3. **Pray about spiritual disabilities.** Have fun guiding this section. You might have participants choose which one of the four disabilities best describes the person they are praying for. Find a creative way to pray for each of these miraculous changes—the eyes, ears, feet and mouth of hope—that overcome despair.
4. **Pray about the experience of God's excellencies.** Seeing the glory of God is the heart of all true hoping. Urge your people to pray that this verse would become a reality in the lives of those they pray for. The reason you will have to encourage them to pray earnestly is because most Christians don't feel that they have personally seen, sensed or experienced the glory of God. Urge them to pray that the beauty of Christ's glory would be clearly revealed, even in ways that surpass their own experience.