

**A Written Interview with Mark Batterson,
Speaker at the 2014 Prayer Conference**

By Cathy Cryer

Dear Mark,

We are so looking forward to having you return to Central to talk with us at our Elevate Prayer Conference again Friday, Feb. 7! Thanks for being an effective, Biblically-based voice on prayer in a culture and time that desperately need to hear it.

We look forward to comments from and about not only “Circle Maker,” but also “Draw the Circle,” and “Drawing Circles Around Your Children.”

In preparation for your coming to Central, we would love to “talk” with you personally about your books and speaking, and how God is moving in and through you and them.

Cathy: When you present to groups using information from “The Circle Maker,” what is your greatest hope they will take away with them and put into practice in their own lives?

Mark: If people read the book, but it doesn’t change their prayer life, I’ve failed as an author. So my goal is simple: after people are done reading, my hope is that they’d start praying with greater intensity and intentionality. I want to help people cultivate a prayer habit. If you don’t build a prayer habit, you’ll never break the sin habit. I honestly believe that prayer establishes our potential in God’s kingdom. Prayer is the difference between the best I can do and the best God can do. So I hope people are inspired to hit their knees like never before. I also want to inspire them to dream big, pray hard, and think long.

Cathy: I have not read the original document, but someone I know did, and they noticed that Honi the circle maker’s story is not prominent within it. How did you pick up on it in such a large work? What drew you to it?

Mark: I love a good story, especially a true story. When I first discovered the true legend of Honi the Circle Maker I thought it was one of the most inspiring examples of prayer I’d ever heard. Who draws a circle and declares to the world that he will not come out until God answers? That humble boldness is what drew me to Honi. And the more I told the story, the more people resonated with the simple idea of circling things in prayer. Now, let me say up front, that you don’t have to circle things in prayer for God to answer. But lots of people have started praying a perimeter around dreams and promises and people and places. In fact, I’ve met with several

members of Congress who have started circling the Capitol in prayer. That won't make the nightly news, but it might change the course of history! Teachers are circling classrooms. Parents are circling children. Coaches are circling stadiums. Doctors are circling hospitals. And churches are circling cities. If you want God to break through, you need to pray through. And the simple idea of circling things in prayer is a helpful way of doing that.

Cathy: How has his story stirred/changed your personal prayer life?

Mark: Long before discovering this story, I had circled things in prayer. One of the most significant prayer circles was a 4.7 mile prayer walk around Capitol Hill, when National Community Church (his multi-site church in Washington, D.C.) was just getting started. Fifteen years later, we own three properties right on that prayer circle—a crack house that we turned into a coffeehouse, a 100-year-old movie theater that is now our sixth campus, and an \$8 million piece of property right on the expressway that we own debt-free. I just don't think it's a coincidence that those properties are right on the prayer circle. I think it's providence.

There is nothing magical about circling things in prayer. But, there is a biblical precedent: the story of Jericho. I love the way the Israelites kept circling Jericho. And I can't help but ask the counterfactual question: what if they had quit circling on day six? The answer is obvious: they would have forfeited the miracle right before it happened. We quit praying too quickly and too easily! My advice... Keep circling!

I used to pray ASAP prayers—I wanted God to answer every prayer as soon as possible. I'm now praying ALAT prayers, as long as it takes. The story of Honi has inspired me to dream big, think long, and pray hard. I believe that God honors bold prayers, because bold prayers honor God. The Heavenly Father loves it when we have enough faith to ask Him to do what only He can do!

Cathy: What feedback do you get from people who have read "The Circle Maker" as to how it has impacted them? Is it a surprise to you sometimes, or is it, in fact, often what you had hoped for?

Mark: I've received so many letters and emails from readers that I decided to write a sequel titled, "*Draw the Circle: the 40-day Prayer Challenge*." I wanted to share some of the miraculous answers to prayer that people have received. I'm always careful to point out that every prayer has to meet the two-fold litmus test: it has to be in the will of God and for the glory of God. But if it meets the test, we pray in the full authority that is ours as the children of God. And I'm finding

that the book is inspiring people to dream bigger and pray bolder.

I have a few favorite stories.

I love the story about the NFL coach who started circling his team's stadium before home games. I love the story about the man who circled a hospital 350 times and God answered his prayer with a successful transplant. I love the story about the multi-site church staff that drove around the five-state region that God has called them to reach. I also love the story about the man who was circling his bank praying for a financial miracle. He circled until the cops showed up! They thought he was casing it!

Be careful what you circle!

Cathy: You have another new book out titled, "All In." Is it about prayer as well? Or what did the Lord inspire in you for that book?

Mark: "*The Circle Maker*" is about drawing circles, if you will. "*All In*" is about drawing a line in the sand. After you hit your knees, you've got to get up and take a step of faith. You can't just pray like it depends on God. You also have to work like it depends on you. The message of "*All In*" is pretty simple: *either Jesus is Lord of all or He is not Lord at all*. There is no middle ground. I'm afraid we've cheapened the Gospel by letting people buy in without selling out. But the truth is this: the Gospel costs nothing, but it demands everything. I refer to "*All In*" as tough love. I don't pull any punches. It's a call to consecration—the full surrender of our lives to His Lordship.

Cathy: Do you have a new book in the works right now, and if so, what topic?

Mark: I just finished the final edits on a new book titled "*The Grave Robber*." It's a book on the seven miracles in John's Gospel. In John 2, Jesus changes the molecular structure of water, and turns it into wine. So He's the Wine Maker. Then He heals the son of a Roman centurion long-distance. So He reveals Himself as the Lord of Latitude and Longitude. When you reach the seventh miracle, Jesus calls Lazarus out of his tomb four days after he's died. Jesus is "The Grave Robber." He doesn't just make bad people good. He brings dead people back to life!

Cathy: When you have time to read, do you have a favorite book on prayer?

Mark: I love some of the books from yesteryear. One of my favorite authors is Leonard Ravenhill. His book, "*Why Revival Tarries*," is a classic.

Cathy: Thank you for taking time to help us get excited about your visit and the prayer conference Friday, Feb. 7. We also look forward to your speaking through our worship services

on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 8 and 9.

Come hear Mark Batterson in person at the 2014 Prayer Conference. To register [click here](#).