What Should I Pray For?

Jake faces a heart-wrenching problem in his prayer life. Now in his mid-thirties, Jake has been an active Christian for most of his adult life. Prayer has been an important part of his faith walk and has given him great comfort not only for him personally but also in his relationships with others. However, a situation with his brother, Andy, who is five years younger, has forced Jake to re-examine the focus of his prayer commitment and how others might interpret his praying for them.

Up to this point, he has prayed for his loved ones by not only asking for guidance and protection for each one but also with a focused attitude when specific needs have cropped up. Jake now faces one of those specific needs. Andy was diagnosed with skin cancer three years ago, but subsequent periodic tests over several years had shown it to be in remission. However, initial results from his most recent visit to his doctor indicate that the cancer may have recently spread to Andy’s internal organs. He is to go back for additional tests next week. Andy has had a very positive outlook on his condition for these past years. However, Jake could tell that this latest news has had a devastating effect on Andy’s morale.

Jake wants to go further than he has in the past and call Andy to tell him that he has not only been in his prayers over the years but that he would be praying now in advance of the next medical appointment. Jake’s real concern is how Andy will respond. The major problem causing this concern is that the two brothers have not been close over the years. Both were brought up in the same Christian family and had regularly attended church and its youth-related activities. Since those early days, their relationship could be considered cordial but not strong enough to permit any discussion of the Christian faith that is so fundamental to Jake’s life. Most troubling for Jake at this time is that Andy had been growing in his faith years earlier but is no longer even calling himself a Christian. In fact, his attitude toward the Church has become increasingly negative. Several years ago, Andy had been attending his local church when he had a major argument with the pastor. The issue did not seem important to Jake, but it has had a lasting effect on Andy. He has not again returned to any church.

It has been very difficult for anyone to persuade Andy to reconsider the problem and resolve the issues he has with the Church. Interestingly, Jake has been looking for an opening during these years to help Andy reconcile his problems and return to being an active member of the Church. He thinks that perhaps Andy’s medical condition might be an opening for him to make a major stride in witnessing to his brother. However, he also recognizes that not only will Andy possibly ask if Jake has been regularly praying for him, but also, if so, why the cancer has spread during this time. Could Jake’s talking with Andy about praying for his upcoming doctor’s visit in light of Andy’s current attitude actually drive Andy further away? Furthermore, the men’s
mother has always believed that the Lord would provide the opportunity for Andy to repent and accept Christ as his savior. She feels that neither she nor Jake should attempt to push the issue. While Jake disagrees with his mother, he knows that he must be careful not to create more of a family-wide problem.

Although he recognizes that this is his personal problem to resolve, Jake has come to you, as a part of his Bible study group, for biblical insight into how he should proceed. It is not just the idea of praying for a specific situation that Jake is most concerned about. He is interested in the broader role of prayer, as it pertains to engaging in it for the specific benefit of others. Using scripture as the necessary base of your reply, you must advise Jake both on what he specifically should pray about and how he should relay such a prayer to his unbelieving brother.

**ASSIGNMENT**

Prayer is a critical component of any Christ follower. Recognizing this, use your Biblical understanding to address Jake’s unique situation.
My Scriptural Research:

Group Scriptural Research:

Decisions / Recommendations:

Primary Scriptural References: