

Fascination With God

Materials taken from Pray with Your Eyes Open by Richard L. Pratt, Jr.

1. Introduction to WLB and study.

- note that this is not an exhaustive study on prayer but a life on life study
- meant to be an encouragement to deepen one's prayer life
- introduce 3 books

2. What is Prayer?

- As a beginning point for today, we can define prayer as “a believer’s communication with God”. That definition will be added to as we go through the study.
- Read Rev. 3:20. This certainly applies to salvation, but notice the last part of the verse refers to intimate and joyous fellowship between Jesus and the believer. That is prayer. Prayer is a work of the Holy Spirit. Our job is make ourselves available for prayer.
- To pray aright, we need to acknowledge that we are absolutely dependent on God, and to believe in Him. Hallesby calls this our helplessness. Think of the sinner and the Pharisee praying in the temple, - the Pharisee had belief in God, but no sense of his helplessness. Likewise, without faith, helplessness is a vain cry in the night, or as Pratt puts it, no different than wishing on a star. Prayer, rather than a duty, is essential for life; it is a way to acknowledge the one who provides for all our needs. It is essential for a meaningful existence as a Christian. Life-giving prayer rests on a foundation of recognizing our need for God; it begins with the attitude of a dependent servant.
- Psalm 123:2
“As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master,
As the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress,
So our eyes look to the Lord our God,
Till he shows us his mercy.

3. Looking at and Addressing God in a Meaningful Way

- We often treat prayer as a spiritual shopping list. We walk into God’s general store, give a perfunctory nod in His direction, and proceed to the real reason we came – the grocery list. How easy it is to forget that we are dealing with a divine Person, not a heavenly mail-order catalog. When we focus too much on what we need, we are bound to neglect the One whom we need.
- The Bible provides countless ways of Addressing God – have group list some of the titles for God, provide handout at the end.
- Psalm 68:5 illustrates a useful principle in addressing God:
“A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.”
 - In the Psalms, God is frequently addressed in ways that correspond directly to the needs of the one praying. If the Psalmist is calling on God to save him

from enemies, he calls to the Almighty and powerful God, if he seeks forgiveness, he calls on the God who is gracious and slow to anger.
- E.g. of young man who needed to focus on the forgiveness of God, not his justice.

4. Contemplating God through Description

- The practice of including descriptions of God in our prayers helps us focus more intensely on the character of God.
- E.g. of Daniel.
 - “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands” Dan. 9:4
 - Daniel is praying and asking God to return the Jewish captives to their land. He speaks of God as great and awesome hoping to see the power of Babylon over Israel broken. He also concentrates on God’s faithfulness since he hopes that God will continue to be faithful to the promises He has made.
 - Describing God in ways that answer our needs brings us hope and strength.

5. Contemplating God through Metaphor

- Metaphors are implicit comparisons that are made without the words like or as. Metaphors are useful because they require our imaginations to determine precise meanings, create vivid mental images and the lead to emotional reactions.
- List some Biblical metaphors for God:
 - o Rock
 - o Fortress
 - o Light
 - o Lamp unto my feet
 - o Shield
 - o Eagle – shelter under His wings
 - o Hen that gathers its chicks
 - o Lion
- Pick one of the above metaphors, how does it represent the character of God? What is the emotional impact?
-

6. Contemplating the actions of God

- Throughout the Bible, God intervenes in human history to perform mighty acts of salvation. This is not just the history of the Jewish people. It is our history and we should reflect on these actions of God.
- Psalm 77:11-20.
- Focusing on the future redemption can also be a subject of prayer
- God’s activity in providence. In last week’s sermon, Preston spoke of each of our stories – focus on your story in prayer, go over the events and thank God for his involvement in your life and in orchestrating your story.
-

7. Using the following form as a guide, take 5 minutes and write a prayer to God – no petitions or intercessions, just concentrate on the character of God

O Lord, you are _____ (give a brief description of God) _____. You deserve all our worship and adoration. You are like _____ (metaphor) _____. We see _____ (describe some sights associated with the metaphor), _____ and we think of _____ (Describe a characteristic of God) _____. We hear _____ (Describe some sounds associated with the metaphor), _____ and we think of _____ (Describe a characteristic of God) _____. As we think of these things our hearts, _____ (describe your emotional reaction) _____. I praise you Lord, for You are _____ (give a brief description of God) .