

Praying the Bible

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- [0:00] So this week, we're going to wrap up these five weeks, and we're going to talk about praying the Bible, which I've mentioned any number of times.
- And yeah, so this is a practice that, I mean, many of you are probably already doing, but this is a practice that I found really revolutionary for my prayer life when I really started to do it.
- And it solves some of the most common problems that we have when we go to prayer. So some of those problems, when we pray, we tend to kind of get into like a language rut, and we pray the same kind of words and the same kind of thing.
- And I find that boring after a while. But when we're just praying out of our heads, we're working with the furniture that's in our heads.
- And if that furniture doesn't change, that's what's going to come out, right? And we start to think, isn't God bored with this? I'm bored with it.
- [1:20] So that can be a problem. And if we're bored, right, we're not really motivated. Like, this doesn't sound like fun. I'm going to go pray. I'm going to say the same stuff.
- Our minds tend to wander. I don't think I need to say anything about that. I mean, you know, your head goes over there.
- And then at some point, you realize, whoa, what am I thinking about? This has nothing to do with what I was praying about. And then you try to rein yourself in.
- And, you know, depending on the day, you're going to do that better or worse. It doesn't always, it can be pretty hard to control, right? So I already said boring.
- That's the repetitive kind of thing. Sometimes we might pray through a list, which is helpful. And that will bring some variety to our prayers if we make the effort to maintain that list and keep it fresh.
- [2:22] And, you know, maybe we're rotating different things. There are all kinds of, you know, ways to do that, which, to be frank, I've just never done because it's like I have to organize this whole list and think about, well, who do I pray for on Tuesdays?
- And I don't know. It just, like, it just doesn't, you know, I probably should or should have at some point, but never really did. And, again, same things over and over.
- Now, we're praying about the same topics over and over. And I have it up there under problems. It's not really a problem, is it? Because we do want to pray for our family.
- We do want to pray for our loved ones. We do want to pray for things going on at work or things going on in school or things going on at church.
- We want to pray for our church. We want to pray for our pastors. We want to, you know, and these things, we don't want to just pray once and then, you know, maybe in six months I'll pray for that again.
- [3:26] We want to pray the same things over and over. And it's profitable for us. And it's appropriate. But if we pray the same things over and over in the exact same way, that's just going to get a little stale.

And we're going to feel like, you know, God, I just said this yesterday. Because you just said it the same way. And I don't think God is up there going, come on, a little something new.

Come on, this is like we did this yesterday, remember? You know, I don't think that God feels that way. But I do think it lessens our motivation and can become automatic in such a way that we're not actually praying.

We're just reciting the words. And I think that's the tendency when we're being repetitive day after day in our prayers is it tends to become like, you know, like a liturgy that becomes stale.

So this is, so this is, here's a solution. It's not the only one to most of these problems.

[4:34] Okay. It's not magic and it's still hard work. But I've talked before about, we've talked about reading, about Bible intake, and we talked about listening.

We talked about all kinds of different things in taking in the Bible. Then we talked about meditating on the Bible. So taking a very small section and going over and over that, maybe word by word, thinking about all the different implications of this phrase or that phrase.

It's really getting deeply into it and letting it get deeply into us, right? That's the goal, that the word becomes part of us. And so we've talked about that.

And that tends to, as we think about these things, we think about, you know, the greatness of God, or we think about the beauty of our salvation, or we're thinking about who Jesus is and what he's like, is going to naturally, thanks to God's spirit dwelling within us, is going to naturally evolve into prayer.

We're going to be praising God. We're going to be thanking God. We're going to be seeking God for help in, you know, an instruction that we see that we're falling short on or we're just struggling with.

[5:52] So that's going to happen naturally if we're meditating in scripture. And the cycle can just be, you know, in a given morning, say you have a half hour, so maybe you read for 10 minutes, maybe you meditate for 10 minutes, and you have another 10 minutes.

But maybe you read for 10, then you stop and meditate on something you just read. But as you meditate, you turn to prayer. And then you sort of run through that, whatever that prayer is, right?

So you come to something that's, say, an attribute of God, and you praise God for it. Then you might return to the passage you're meditating on. And then that might lead to prayer.

So there's this sort of cycle that can repeat. And that's often how my morning goes.

So it sort of cycles around. And so that all kind of happens at once, right, even the reading. So sometimes I'll stop the reading and just meditate. But sometimes I'll just read through whatever my thing is for that day chapter and then meditate.

[7:01] You know, as I said, when we were talking about meditation, a goal would be, and I know Dr. Whitney's goal, who was my professor when I took this class, his goal was to, he said, meditate every single day.

That if you have 10 minutes, read for 10, read for 5, meditate for 5. So, you know, so as we do that, we're going to find prayers naturally generated, but not always, okay?

So we can also read a chapter, meditate on something, and maybe it doesn't, like we're learning, and we're maybe seeing something, or maybe we're not seeing a lot that day.

We all have days like that, or the passage we have doesn't really, it doesn't really grab us. Then we might just say, I really just, I really need, I need to spend some time in prayer.

And then we might choose a different passage to just pray through. And this I have found, especially on days when, whether it's because of the reading I'm doing in the Bible, like whatever in my schedule is kind of dry, or I'm just not sure, it just doesn't, or I have something else on my heart, you know, or I have, it just doesn't quite hit and spur a lot of prayer.

[8:29] Or I might just turn to another, turn to another passage, and often that's going to be, that's going to be a psalm, but we'll get to that.

And some days I'm going to get up and I'm going to, A, not, maybe not have that much time, and just be in a frame of mind where, you know, even just sitting, just reading a chapter feels like, okay, this isn't going to get me where I need to get.

And I'm just going to choose something to meditate on and pray through, more or less at the same time, right? So some of that meditation is preaching to yourself, oops, keep hitting the mic, it's preaching to yourself, right?

And some of it is going to be speaking to God. So, for instance, this morning, my head was just kind of in a lot of different places, and I just, I've come to like the end of a chunk, I just finished the Pentateuch, and I'm kind of like, do I want to go on to Joshua, do I want to do something else, I'm not quite sure.

And so I didn't have a chapter ready to, oh, I'll just read this, and I just turned to a psalm and just started reading it slowly and meditating, praying, all mixed in together.

[9:51] And that often is a, it's a real help when I'm especially distracted or sleepy or short on time, anything like that. It tends to be more what I do.

Anyway, I'm sure there are variations on all of this that we might do, and you're not me, so you're not going to do exactly the same kind of thing.

But this is also described over and over in Puritan writings. If you start reading the Puritans and they talk about how they approach the scriptures, how they pray, you're going to see it's a lot of this.

And this is really where I learned it, was from reading through Puritan authors and recognizing that they really had the word in them deeply.

And I wanted that. I didn't just want, I just didn't want to like, okay, I know these words. I have this information. I really wanted the word to be part of me, and this is how, this is how they did it.

[10:49] And so I figured, well, I'm going to do this. And I have found it really helpful. So that meditation process really gets it to be more part of your own life and part of that furniture, right, furniture in your head, which helps you think further, learn more, pray better, all right?

So you might, if you're going to pray through a passage, you might just choose it out of your daily Bible reading. That's totally natural. This is often what I do. It may depend on where you are in the scriptures.

But, I mean, there's fruit for meditation all through, like, he gave us all of it. You can come to a genealogy and you think, well, this is, okay, been here, seen this.

But you can start thinking about all these individuals that God saw, all these individuals. Some of them, like, they're only named in a genealogy somewhere. And you think, this person had a whole life and a whole, and they didn't know they were in any way important, let alone they'd be recorded in what people are reading thousands of years.

And look at God's care for the individual. And you might be meditating on that. So there's truly, there's truly meat for meditating throughout the scriptures.

[12:06] But it's not all going to hit you the same way the same day. And if you have, you know, five chapters of genealogy, you may run dry there. I would, I'm sure.

So sometimes out of your daily Bible reading, and that's going to be totally natural. The thing I want to introduce is the idea of a psalm of the day.

This isn't rocket science and it's not new. It's not me. But there are 150 psalms. And let's say there are roughly 30 days in a month. Reading five psalms a day gets you through the psalms, basically.

Um, so this approach, I'd heard, you know, I'd seen schedules like that. Read five psalms a day. Um, but this is an approach that I kind of like better.

So this is something Dr. Whitney talked about. And again, it wasn't new with him or anything. But you're going to start with the day of the week. Um, so today is March 27th.

[13:13] So you're going to count out five psalms, which you're going to add 30 every time. So, so you start with today's date, 27. So the first psalm you might read it or you might pray is 27.

And then we go, you know, 57, 87, 117, 147. So then what you do is you have these five psalms and you're just going to skim through them.

And especially the better you know the psalms, the more this is going to feel like you just need to skim through them. But you start reading or you just read a little bit and you get the flavor of the psalm or you remember it or whatever.

Um, and one of them is highly likely to sort of jump out at you as the right thing for today. Um, and it won't always be the same out of these five, right? Next, you know, April 27th, it will be the same set of, the same set of psalms.

But so I, I chose for today Psalm 147. But, you know, in April it might be Psalm 27 or 57 or 87 or whatever.

[14:16] Um, so it gets you, it gets you looking at all the psalms through the course of a month. Um, and it moves you around in the Psalter. And there are, sometimes if you read like five in a row, you're going to get a lot of the same themes.

Because they are collected in a meaningful way. Um, and maybe that theme is not going to be what's really helpful for you that day. You know, not that you couldn't pray through them profitably.

But this way, you're getting, you're likely getting a bigger range. So it's kind of sort of random, but not really. Um, one of the advantages of doing something like this is you're not spending a whole lot of time thinking, okay, what am I going to pray through today?

You're not starting from scratch every day and thinking, well, you know, I just read another genealogy. I don't really want to pray through this. I want to do something else. What is it going to be?

And, you know, there's a whole Bible. I mean, it's like 66 books. And you can waste a lot of time just trying to figure that out. So making decisions, we don't need to be making a lot of decisions.

[15:23] It just, yeah, it can take a lot of time. You can get sort of distracted by that. So this is a way to narrow it down. Just flip through the five Psalms of the day. And I already said this.

So that's just a handy way to look at the Psalms. And the Psalms are, you know, they're written as prayers.

They're already prayers, right? So praying the Psalms. Now, they're not, like, some of it's not, but pretty much. So praying the Psalms comes very naturally because they are prayers, right?

So we put ourselves in the position of the writer and we're praying a prayer. It's not the only place you can pray through the Bible.

But it tends to be one of the most straightforward, simple way to do it. You can also pray.

[16:20] There are a number of New Testament passages that are fabulous to pray through. I mean, like a lot of it. In the epistles, those are jam-packed with, you know, you just take a verse and you meditate on that and pray that.

You know, you're reading Paul. You know, there's going to be, you know, five things that are amazing built into that verse. Not every verse, right? But there's a lot of meat there for prayer.

And we can look at that even though it's not written. It might, there are places where it's written as a prayer. And I pray through those a lot. But there are parts that are not written for prayer.

They're instruction or they're, you know, Paul's building an argument. But you, but you see what's in there and you go, wow, you know, you see a better glimpse of the gospel. You see a, you know, you see a highlight of what Jesus is like.

You see those kinds of things and, and turn that into prayer. It's just a little bit about other kind of genres. I, I often pray through parts of prophets.

[17:26] I'm a, I'm a big fan of Old Testament prophecy and some of it, like, you know, if it's just all this judgment on Moab.

I mean, I'll still pray that, but I'll be thinking about how does this, how does this apply? You know, and thinking about what is this wrong that, that the prophet is, you know, accusing this country of, or Israel or whoever, or he's addressing the priests or he's addressing, whatever.

What is, what's going on here? What, what did they do wrong? I'm going to meditate on that and think about that and I'm going to, you know, pray because we're, we're susceptible to all these kinds of sins, right?

So that's going to be food for meditation and prayer as well. Narrative sections, a little different in that you might not go like verse by verse through, say, you know, an account in Matthew about a healing, for instance.

You might not, you know, the first verse might be, and Jesus walked alongside the sea. Now, you don't really need to pray that, right? It's just kind of, it's just setting up a story, right?

[18:43] So you want to look at the whole thing then and see what is it really about? What's, what's going on here? And that might be food for your prayers that day. So it doesn't need to be just a Psalm.

It doesn't need to be just a prayer that's recorded in Scripture, though those are great and they'll come fairly easily. But really, I've prayed lots of, lots of different parts of the Scripture.

But what we're going to look at today is Psalm 147. It's one of the Psalms of the day. And I'm just going to spend a little bit sort of talking through how I would pray through this.

So this is the first verse. I've given you the whole thing in your handout. But for now, we don't, we don't need the whole thing. We will in a second. Or you start right at the beginning.

And there you have praise the Lord. And you have an invitation. And, and you're like, okay, this is what we're doing here, you know? And then he tells, he says, for, he's just giving you a reason to praise the Lord.

[19:55] For it is good to sing praises to our God. For it is pleasant and a song of praise is fitting. So I'm going to think about that. Why is it good to sing praises to our God?

What's good about it? Um, so, you know, this goes back to, this is, this goes back to the different ways of like meditating on a passage. But then you're going to turn it into prayer.

You know, Lord, I don't feel like singing today. Lord, but, but your word says it's good. Help me to see the goodness in it. Help me to, um, yeah, help me to, help me to delight in praising you.

Help me to enjoy it. You know, that might be, you know, a prayer. Another day it's going to be, I feel great praising you. I'm, this is so good. I'm just really grateful. You know, or anywhere in between, you're going to, you know, there might be something to, to pray in that first, uh, or that second clause for it's good to sing praises to our God.

You might just think about our God. He's our God. Like, Lord, you're my God. You know, that sense of really belonging to God. And, and just enjoy that in his presence and thank him and praise him for that.

[21 : 05] Um, and then again, it is pleasant. A song of praise is fitting. So this morning I was thinking about this and like, why is it fitting? Like, why is it, it, a song of praise.

I thought about how a song of praise really matches reality, doesn't it? Like around us, we don't see, we may not, I mean, we see all kinds of horrible stuff that don't make us want to praise God.

Right. But when we think about who God is and what awaits us in his presence and how he's going to make it all right and how in Jesus he conquered all the sin that's causing all the misfortune and tragedy and horrible things in our world, then you say, well, it is fitting.

This, this praise is, comports with reality, like real reality, not just the surface things that we're walking through today. So I was thinking about that. How is it fitting?

And just praising God that it is fitting, that, that he's, he's worth praising no matter what's going on here. And, and even more as we see how terrible humanity can be to one another, how evil, how, you know, whatever we're seeing, let alone the good things that God is doing in our lives and the, and the, the gifts and the treasures that we, that we experience and the whole range of what we walk through.

[22 : 28] And so we're just recognizing, well, why is praise fitting? You know, so this is, that was where my mind went and another mind and me on another day is going to go somewhere else. But that's just an example for that verse.

The next one, the Lord builds up Jerusalem. He gathers the outcasts of Israel. And here I just thought about, well, Jerusalem. Okay. That makes me think of the church in our age.

Um, the Lord builds up, you know, the place of his people, the place where he dwells is Jerusalem. He now dwells with his people. He dwells in us by his Holy Spirit.

The Lord builds up, the Lord builds up the church. And that's going to cause me to start praying for, for us, for, for this congregation, for, and for the church in other parts of the world, you know, build up the church in Ukraine, you know, build up the church, you know, and, and what's going to happen is you're not going to just be praying like for yourself through the whole thing.

You're going to, different things are going to come to mind. Um, so like the church in Ukraine or something, cause it's, you know, it's something you've been thinking about. We've been, you know, concerned with Ukraine. Lord, build up the church in this time, uh, and let your word go forth.

[23 : 45] And, and, and that prayer might, you know, it might wander a fair, fair bit away from the actual text of the verse. And that's okay. That's where you're, that's where the spirit is leading you as you pray.

And it's all good. Um, praying through. Through a piece of scripture doesn't mean you're like, you can only say things that are in there, you know, it's not, um, but it's a kickstart and it's a, it's a way to give you biblical language to pray.

Um, and then, I mean, he gathers the outcasts of Israel. Um, and you know, what is, what is the gospel, but a gathering of outcasts. We're all outcasts because of sin and, and he's doing that.

Um, you know, I'm, all kinds of things might come to my mind. Um, it might be gratitude for him gathering me as an outcast. It might be, um, similarly kind of gratitude for having a, not being an outcast anymore.

I belong to, I belong to God. I'm a daughter of the King. Um, it might be, uh, so I'm spending the afternoon with, uh, extended family celebrating my mother's 90th birthday this afternoon.

[24:59] Um, yeah. Uh, even, she turned 91, uh, on Friday, but she's celebrating 90. Anyway, uh, so, but I'm going to spend a lot of time with people who don't know the Lord.

Um, and I might think of them as these, they're outcasts, right? They're outcasts due to sin, just as we all, we all are, um, apart from Jesus. And I might be praying, Lord, maybe, maybe a seed can be planted.

Maybe, you know, uh, maybe some in our family who are believers might be able to drop a, a word here, there. Uh, um, so, you know, that's the kind of thing I'll, you know, I'll pray for because that's on my mind and it's going to come up in my, you know, as I, as I walk through the scriptures.

Uh, the next verse, he heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. And this is going to be a place where I'm going to pray for my own broken heart and my own wounds, but I'm also going to be thinking about people in my life who are walking through a hard time, who are struggling, who are brokenhearted, who are wounded and pray for them.

So it's going to cause me, um, so for me, all right, it's going to cause me to pray for more of those people on my list, whether that's a written list or a mental list.

[26:22] It's going to cause me to remember these people. Um, as I looked at this, you know, I thought of the Hodgkins family and prayed for them, you know, so it's going to be that kind of thing where the people on your heart are going to, are going to surface as you, as you read different parts of scripture and you see, you know, how this applies to them as well.

I'm going to be praying for them. And, and here we have, we have this promise to pray, right? We talked a little bit last week about, uh, giving God reasons for answering our prayers.

Well, here's, this is who God is. This is who our God is. He heals the brokenhearted so we can pray with confidence, uh, that he desires to heal, heal the brokenhearted.

And we can pray for our struggling friends and loved ones and, and have the confidence of praying God's words back to him. Um, he's, this is, this is who he is.

And so it just gives confidence and, and builds faith. Um, and I talked a little bit about that last week too, I think is, you know, I can tend to just sort of think, well, God's, he doesn't really answer prayer.

[27:28] Um, but as I read this, my faith is built. Like, of course he cares for the broken heart. Look at, look what it says. And I know this, you know, and, but it, but it boosts my faith.

It reminds me of who God is. And then, then I pray with more faith for those who are struggling or for, you know, whatever I might be dealing with on that day or for, I, I thought about, uh, the people of Ukraine who have lost loved ones and how in the midst of this tragedy, how I just, just how wrenching that must be and how, uh, overwhelming to continue to be in a war zone, but you're also grieving.

And it's just, uh, you know, I can only imagine. Um, but those are the kinds of things that came to my mind and I prayed about that I might not have, um, otherwise. Uh, he determines the number of the stars.

He gives to all of them their names. I'm just going to throw it out. What kinds of things might you pray, you know, with this verse? What kinds of things might come to your mind? That would take me straight back to the genealogies and I'd be looking up what those names mean.

Okay. That is really interesting. Yep. Yep. Yep. What else? He has the power to gather the outcast. If he can number the stars, he has the power to make good on those words.

[28:59] Yeah. That's faith building, isn't it? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. He's not surprised that he orders all things so we can be confident that he's in control.

Yeah. Yeah. And we can, we can praise God for that here. We can, um, we can consider again, like Kelly did, the outcast, uh, the brokenhearted, those who are wounded.

Um, he, he knows them by name. Um, and we can praise him for that. He knows me by name. Um, uh, uh, another, uh, Psalm that I meditated on this week was Psalm 84.

And just, there's pictures there of the sparrow has found a nest in the, whatever, rafters of the temple. And I thought, I have a nest. I have a home where I belong, um, with God.

Um, and how comforting that has been, um, and I'm thanking him for that and asking him to help, help me live out of that, you know, with the confidence that I have a place of belonging with him and that one day I will be there in a, in a greater way than I am now.

[30:20] Um, so yeah, um, I'm going to stop. I'm going to stop there. Um, and what I'm going to ask you to do, um, we're going to, you could probably, when I, we can probably stop the recording or, yeah, because what we're going to do is I gave you all of Psalm 147.

Um, if you have another passage that's on your heart that you've read today or something like that, that you would like to try praying through, by all means, I don't care. I just wanted to provide something, um, as a starting place.

Um, and I'm going to ask you to just pray through a passage of scripture. Um, I'm going to give you 10 minutes, which is probably going to feel like a long time.

Uh, but, uh, once you sort of zone in, I don't think it will be such a long time. Um, and just, I just want you to try it right now.

Um, and, and let's just spend some time in prayer putting into practice, uh, some of these things. Um, so I hope those of you who, uh, are listening or watching later, uh, also took your 10 minutes.

[31:40] Um, if not, you can turn it off now and do it. Um, I'd love to hear your feedback. Any, uh, what was that experience like for you?

I appreciated going, being able to go slowly through each, like, phrase, um, and think about that.

I think normally I just, like, read through it and kind of try to figure out holistically, like what, like even in a chunk of what's going on here. And I think slowing it down really helps me personally. Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm. Sometimes I feel guilty after long periods of not doing this, but it was comforting to feel that, um, familiarity, like, like riding a bike.

Yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah. I still know how to do this. Yeah. God is still close even when I don't draw near to him. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[32:48] Yeah. Yeah. For me, this can be a real, uh, sort of a, sort of a shortcut to that kind of connection with the Lord that, uh, can be lacking if I don't make the deliberate and intentional effort.

Um, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Anyone else? Mary? I focused on a different psalm, psalm, uh, her passage, I guess I should say.

Mm-hmm. Psalm 19:14, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing and acceptable in your sight, and Lord, my God, my rock, and my redeemer.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I actually focused on the last line, the last half of the last line of the second stanza, and just found myself praying for myself, for lots of people, that our, our hope would be God's best love.

Yeah. Yeah. Just took that and just, the Lord just helped me run with it. Yeah. Lots, lots of things to pray for. Yeah.

[34:09] Yeah. Just that simple. Yeah. That one line was. Yeah. And I think part of, you know, having something like that to pray for the people we care about, you know, it's, it's, it's easy sometimes to pray for the surface issue, right?

To pray for health. And it's, and it's good to pray for, you know, for healing and for, you know, help for the doctors and that kind of thing when we're praying for someone who's, who's ill or for ourselves or whatever.

But boy, I want someone praying that I would hope in his steadfast love also, you know? So it's not either or, but, but I often, I think it's easy to go, oh yeah, so-and-so has that thing coming up.

They have a, they have a big job interview and I want to pray for that. But this helps me also pray for heart matters and spiritual matters. And, and I find that, yeah, I mean, that's, don't you want people praying that stuff for you?

Debbie. I will sometimes pray the prayer at the beginning of Colossians for my children specifically and just go through that very slowly. Yeah. That God would bring about those things in their lives.

[35:28] Yeah. And you know, when you're praying scripture, you're praying according to God's will. Yep. Which is a comfort. Yeah. Yep. Yeah. Yeah. There's that confidence. Yeah.

It's also a sense of community. All of the people starting with the psalmist who wrote these words down, everyone who used this as their songbook, including Jesus and the people, the worshipers of his day, it's just, I don't know, there's something really neat about that.

Yeah. Yeah. The cloud of it. Yep. Yep. Yep. Yeah. It was good just to reconnect with people I wanted. I was reflecting on that part that Matt mentioned too, but just, it's easy, I think, some of them would bring in charlash for God, the sense that like we disappoint and we fail, we kind of impute this disappointment in him, but it's just good to be reminded that he takes pleasure in the people who relate to him as a loving father.

He wants to be known, like that's not a huge ask. I was like, oh, I think I might do that. It's reassuring to be like, he's not asking me to have lovely achievements.

He's not asking me to do outrageous things that may be in my cards. I don't know. He has good work for me to do, but ultimately he wants me to trust that he's loving. When I'm able to do that, I have a position of stability in him where I can go out and love people.

[36:49] I don't fear people's reaction and I'm free to love them well because I know who I have in heaven. That was reassuring to just remember who he is. I love the early verses where he heals the brokenhearted and bites up their wounds, but then it says he determines the number of the stars and he gives names to them.

I was thinking how unimaginably beautiful and powerful stars are. God, his endeavors to heal the brokenhearted is similar to his creation of the stars.

Yeah. And that is just and the importance that he places on stars, he places on the brokenhearted. Yeah. Yeah. So he goes, I looked at that same person and the thing that I saw was like, who cares about the stars?

You guys? What God does, therefore. Yeah. Like, why wouldn't he care about the brokenhearted?

Yeah. Because the stars, like, I'm colorblind, so maybe they're not so well. Yeah. Like, there's lots of stars, and, like, in the scheme of things, to us, like, the sky would be less interesting, but they're really, like, inconsequential, from my perspective.

[38 : 21] Yeah. Yeah. It's kind of, God knows all the sparrows and how much more about it. Right, right. Yeah. Yeah. Sparrows, stars, yeah, whatever.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. There was something just encouraging, going, that everyone in this room was praying to God, as I was.

The Lord builds up Jerusalem, He builds up His church. Yeah. And, we're being built up. Yeah. In real time, as we meditate together on God's Word.

Yeah. Yeah. I spent most of the time in the third stanza there. So, He strengthens the bars of your gates.

I was thinking about His protection over the church and, and that He would strengthen the bars and keep out evil. and then, He blesses your children.

[39 : 24] I prayed for the kids right now in Sunday school. And, you know, I don't always think of that. Right? And, and then when He sends out His command to the earth, His word runs swiftly.

I just started praying about the gospel going forth into places where it's not heard, where there's no Christian witness, where people don't have the scriptures in their heart language.

And I don't remember the last time I prayed like that for unreached people in that way. Now, I didn't have a specific place, but, you know, all those prayers, God hears and He knows what to do with them.

And, and that's what I love about this is just that it opens up my range of regular praying far beyond my own little circle.

And it makes, makes my, my prayers much more God-centered because the scriptures are God-centered, right? It's about God and it's, and it lifts our eyes to see how great He is and how much He loves us and all these kinds of things we've been sharing.

[40 : 41] You know, they're all about that, right? They're about who God is and therefore how He cares for us and how He loves us. So, let me just see.

How about distraction? Was it, was it hard? Were you distracted? I mean, it's, it's weird in a room like this, I have to say, I was distracted. But, um, I think this was the first when I wasn't distracted.

But I usually don't get this quiet at the time. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

you know, if your mind wanders somewhere in the middle of it, you have something to go back to. You have an anchor in the text that you're praying.

If your prayers have gone far afield from this, it doesn't matter. You're praying, and that's fine. But when it starts being about, you're starting to think about what you're making for dinner this week, then you go, oh, wait, but I can come back. And you can pull yourself back much more easily, I think.

[42 : 22] When you have something in front of you. So I think it's easier to get back on track. As well as, I don't get as distracted when I pray this way. Two things about distraction.

I've found writing my prayers can help me stay focused. More so than anything else I've done so far. The other thing, too, about anchoring it to this is if you're in a situation where you're going to get pulled away.

Like, you don't, like, well, I've got time to pray, but, you know, two minutes later, baby Christ, you're going to take me away. You know, this gives you something to go back to once you're taking care of whatever issues crop up.

Yep. Yep. Yep. It'll also put, you know, it may just lock a phrase into your head that you can carry with you throughout the day.

Yeah. Yeah. So it's been helpful to me. In the morning, I also get very distracted. So I'll just keep a to-do list, like, by my Bible, in my Bible, and as it comes to mind, I'll just write it down, and then I'll go back to praying.

[43 : 32] Yep. And that way I don't feel like I have to remember, like, oh, I have to get my son new shoes or whatever. Right, right. Because it's written down and it's done. Yeah. Yep. Yeah, that can work.

Unless it then becomes a, oh, I'm thinking a to-do list. Which is what happens to me. Yeah. So I'm just like, oh, what else do I need to write down for today? Yeah. Yeah. So, yeah, I mean, different things, and try whatever works.

Yeah. Yeah. The simplicity of the Samba Dei method, like, helps me. Because if I have too much structure, I freak out.

Uh-huh. Like, ah, there's no way I can keep up with this reading plan. There's too much. Yeah, yeah. Oh, I'm not holy enough, and, oh, George Mueller's so much better than me. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

And then, but if it's too little structure, then it's like, well, what do I do? Yeah. I guess I'll just read the next chapter from the last thing I read. Right. And I'll just kind of, you know, it's nice when it's like, what's today?

[44 : 39] Okay, 27, okay, okay, I can have some choices, but not too much choice. Right, right. And so it frees my mind from spiritual performance anxiety, I guess.

Sure, yeah. Like, as if anyone else is watching, I don't know who I'm performing. Yeah. I guess I have this idea sometimes that God will not be pleased, but then that's ridiculous.

Right. But I think we've all been there. So, yeah. Yeah. So, this is, that's what I have for today. We have a few more minutes. If there's any other, any questions about today or about any of the other weeks or comments or anything, I'd be happy to hear.

Thank you, Gloria. You're welcome. All right, I'll ask a question.

Okay. Just to be back with anybody who's raised children, what are some good healthy ways to help start helping children to incorporate stuff, especially kids who are outside-the-box thinkers maybe and aren't going to be a little linear and enjoy journaling like that?

[45 : 56] I love being like type A and having my fancy pens and paper, but for kids and just outside-the-box thinkers that aren't kids, what are some tips or things you found helpful to create general structure that would be meaningful and possibly lead them in good habits?

That's a great question. I don't have any answer. Did I wait for the bus in the morning? No, I'm on the bus. Okay. One thing I need to do again, I have the Dwell Bible app, and we watched one of those really great sight and sound plays about Esther, and so I put on Esther with a message, so it was very conversational.

I listened to Esther for like a week, and that was actually pretty cool because it was very plot-driven and like, dude, this is messed up. Like, they were really getting that. So I need to like, that's actually a good way to get into like, using the message version out loud can be helpful.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think sometimes just doing it with them. Yeah.

And then seeing you do it. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

[47 : 28] Yeah. We're taking turns praying at the end of time. It doesn't always have to be bad. Yeah. Yeah. I was like, one thing, so I'm like my third kid, but like, I remember like desperately being quiet times when I had two under two, and I would be like, Drew time and one time Bible time, and I was really like, I desperately need this to be quiet.

Yeah. And I've loosened up a lot, and so now like, I just do my quiet time in the morning. I get interrupted 50 times between everybody. Yeah. But you know, it's also, John came and sat in my lap, and he's like, why are you coloring your Bible?

And can I color your Bible? I was like, all right, you can color these lines green. What does this mean? Well, green means this is wisdom stuff. So like, I feel like, it's nice to see that, I have improved. It's like, wow, I wish I could have done this, you know, 10 years ago and had two under two.

That would have been great. Yeah. Probably growing up kids, but. But yeah, I've had to kind of let go of like, quiet time is not to be quiet. Yeah. You can teach them to respect it, and I'm like, hey, I'm going to have quiet time.

Can you guys go wrestle in the basement maybe? Like, you know. We try to, you know, and it's still a mess. Yeah. Yeah. Debbie. I used to sometimes say, I'm talking to God. How dare you interrupt me?

[48 : 40] What did they do when you said that? Didn't mean a whole lot to that. Now I'm talking to God about you. Yeah.

There's clearly no magic formulas, Callie. Sorry. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Sorry. Back. There are some fun memorization apps for devices.

And there's strategies to help you remember, like, you read the verse through, and then the next time it leaves some words out. And, yeah, there's different apps, and it's a great way of, it's a great tool for memorizing scriptures.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Might be for some people. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So my son's only two, so take this, but all the salt.

But it's actually been really encouraging to listen to Christian music in the car with him. Mm-hmm. Because then during the day when he's just playing trains or cars, I can hear the melody.

[49 : 51] Yeah. He's absorbing something, you know, even though we're just in the car, which is dead time, really. We can redeem it a little bit. Yeah. And I find myself singing in the car, too, without even teaching, you know.

Yep. And if you're a model for him, like, hopefully he catches something. Yep. Yeah. And so starting young, too, because you don't really know how much they're catching or how, mm-hmm.

Like, he's singing, like, melodies to hymns that I didn't even know he was paying attention to. Yep. Yep. So it's encouraging. Yeah. Yeah. They pay attention to a lot that we don't think they're paying any attention.

Yeah. Yeah. Which is good and bad, but yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Good.

Oh, Matt, sorry. Have you talked about Carson's book, Praying with Paul? Oh, excellent book. It's a great book. I haven't.

[50 : 47] That's okay. But, yeah. It's hard to be what you said earlier. Yes. Like, if you're looking for a book to think about how to grow in prayers, it's a book by D.A. Carson called Praying with Paul that walks you through all the prayers in the epistles.

And it changed my prayer life because it gave me the freedom to say it's okay to pray these spiritual principles, these spiritual things that Paul prayed for these churches as the primary things at one level.

Yeah. As a focal point. Yep. You know, his subtitle is The Priority of Paul in His Prayers. Yeah. Yeah. You know, he does not pray for practical situations, but he doesn't pray very much for them related, you know, compared to praying for their growth in the gospel, their love for one another, their, you know, conviction of sin, their, you know, continuing in perseverance and that sort of thing.

So, so just shifting gears from kids to adults. Yeah, yeah. That's just a great book to read and was very helpful in teaching me how to pray through the scriptures in a particular way.

Yeah. No, it's a good one. Is it in the book store? It should be. I'm not exactly sure. We haven't, I haven't ordered books in a while, but I'm pretty sure it is.

[52 : 09] Shameless book for the women at work Bible study group. We're doing that book at the moment. Oh, for real? The first time I went through that book, I went, oh, I didn't know what I learned.

Yeah. Yeah. So the other side of your hand, oh, geez, they're backwards. Anyway, there's like nothing there, but Donald Whitney does have a, I meant to bring it.

It's just a little book, Praying the Bible. It will say pretty much what I have already said. But if you, you know, if you want to look back on it or anything, and that's, yeah.

Yeah. So thank you very much. I want to say again that I relied heavily on Dr. Whitney's material, and it was really helpful for me, and I just, I want to give him credit for a fair amount of this, and just the way that, the way he taught it was really helpful for me.

So I want to give credit where credit's due. And thank you for your attention, and it's been really great, and I appreciate all your responsiveness.

[53 : 26] It's been really wonderful. So thank you. Thank you. Thank you.