

Introduction:

Prayer is the **PATHWAY** to experiencing **INTIMACY** with God.

*⁵“And **when you pray**, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But **when you pray**, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And **when you pray**, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.*

Matthew 6:5-8

Decluttering prayer

1. Prayer is not a **PERFORMANCE**.

Matthew 6:5

Religion is all about performance. Relationship is all about presence.

2. Prayer is not a **SECRET FORMULA**.

Matthew 6:7

Developing intimacy with God

1. View prayer as **NECESSARY**, not just a nice idea.

¹⁵ Yet the news about Him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 5:15-16

2. **APPROACH** your heavenly Father who loves you.

⁹ “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!

Matthew 7:9-11

3. Set aside a **SPECIFIC** time and a **SACRED** place.

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35

4. **PRAY**.

Discussion Questions:

1. After hearing this message, how has your view of prayer changed?
2. Why is “decluttering” our prayers so important? What are some practical ways you can do that today?
3. How does recognizing God as approachable and loving change your perspective of prayer?
4. What steps will you take this week to develop intimacy with God through prayer?

Introduction:

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.*
- ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,*
- ³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.*
- ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.*
- ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.*
- ⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
He lifts His voice, the earth melts.*
- ⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

Psalm 46:1-7

“The deepest destiny of your life is to descend ever deeper with quiet yet ever-increasing intensity into the endless love of God.”

- Dane Ortlund

Eight Words

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

Psalm 46:10a

Be Still

HURRY is the great enemy of the soul.

Know

PRACTICE the presence of God.

I am God

Which means **I AM NOT** God.

Names of God

- Yahweh Nissi = He is my banner
- Yahweh Jireh = He is my provider
- Yahweh Raah = He is my shepherd
- Yahweh Tsidqenu = He is my righteousness
- Yahweh Rapha = He is my healer
- Yahweh Shalom = He is my peace

Steps to stillness

- **PHYSICAL** stillness.

Find a quiet space without technology distractions.

- **MENTAL** stillness.

Write down the “to do” lists that keep popping up and push through distracting thoughts.

- **EMOTIONAL** stillness.

Hand over to God your fears, hurts, unforgiveness, self-righteousness, things that have made you angry at God, or anything you’re holding onto.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever prioritized the wrong thing? What was the consequence? How does this challenge you to prioritize what's truly important?

2. Ryan mentions, "hurry is the enemy of the soul." Take some time to identify the areas where you feel hurried. What practical steps will you take today to "be still"?

3. Why is it so crucial to understand that you are not God? What implications does this have on the way you approach decisions in your life?

4. In the teaching, Ryan mentions a few of God's names. How has God shown up in your life as:
 - Yahweh Nissi = He is my banner?

 - Yahweh Jireh = He is my provider?

 - Yahweh Raah = He is my shepherd?

 - Yahweh Tsidqenu = He is my righteousness?

 - Yahweh Rapha = He is my healer?

 - Yahweh Shalom = He is my peace?

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¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it.

John 14:13-14

Why do some prayers go unanswered?

- We just don't **PRAY**.

⁷ "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Matthew 7:7-8

- We have **UNCONFESSED SIN**.

¹⁸ If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;

Psalms 66:18

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

1 Peter 3:12

- We come with the **WRONG MOTIVES**.

³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

James 4:3

- We fail to practice **GENEROSITY** and **JUSTICE**.

¹³ Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered.

Proverbs 21:13

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

Matthew 22:37-39

Three theologies to embrace in the tension of unanswered prayers:

- A theology of **PAIN** and **SUFFERING**.

Genesis 3
Romans 8:18-22
John 16:33
Philippians 3:10-11

- A theology of the **CHARACTER** of God.

“All of God’s acts are done in perfect wisdom, first for His own glory, and then for the highest good of the greatest number for the longest time.”

- A.W. Tozer

- A theology of **SALVATION** and **SANCTIFICATION**.

Romans 5:1-5
James 1:2-4

Jesus’ unanswered prayer:

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³ He took Peter, James and John along with Him, and He began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁴ “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” He said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

³⁵ Going a little farther, He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him. ³⁶ “Abba, Father,” He said, “everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.”

Mark 14:32-36

Discussion Questions:

1. What new insight have you learned about why some of your prayers go unanswered?
2. Which of the three theologies, “a theology of pain and suffering,” “a theology of the character of God,” and “a theology of salvation and sanctification,” is most challenging to you? Why?
3. Read Mark 14:32-36. How did Jesus’ unanswered prayer fulfill a greater purpose? How does this impact your life?
4. What is keeping you from completely surrendering to God’s sovereign will? Take some time to prayerfully ask God to help you surrender your control.

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Prayer is the **PATHWAY** to experiencing **INTIMACY** with God.

¹ Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

Exodus 3:1-4

Five foundational truths to hear from God:

1. God is **CLOSER** than you **THINK**.

Theological ideas to understand

Psalm 139

- Transcendence of God:

He is holy and set apart; He's not part of Creation in any way.

- Immanence of God:

He is present and intimate in His creation, but He is still distinct from it.

2. God is in the **EVERYDAYNESS** of **LIFE**.

Waiting for a 'burning bush' moment (something spectacular) can cause you to miss God's activity in your everyday life.

3. God longs to **SPEAK** to **YOU**.

How does God speak?

- Through His Word. 2 Timothy 3:16
- Through His Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:10-12, 16
- Through other people. 1 Corinthians 12:7-8
- Through His Creation. Psalm 19:1-4
- Through visions and dreams

4. God will not **COMPETE** for your **ATTENTION**.

We have a hearing problem – We must turn down the noise.

We have selective hearing – We hear what we want to hear not what we need to hear.

5. God **INVITES** you into **RELATIONSHIP**.

Revelation 3:20

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever felt like God was far? Read Psalm 139. How does God's transcendence and immanence give you a new perspective?
2. How can you intentionally notice God's presence in your everyday activities?
3. What "noise" do you need to turn down/off to hear God? What steps will you take?
4. Do you find yourself having "selective hearing" towards God? How is He calling you to trust Him today?
5. Instead of rules and trying to work your way to God, He invites you into relationship. How does this truth impact your life?