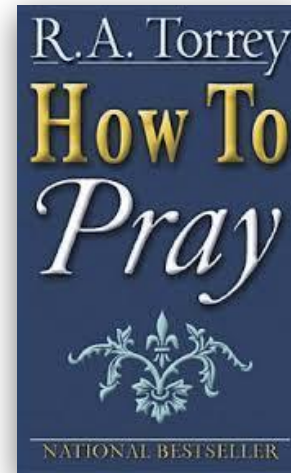
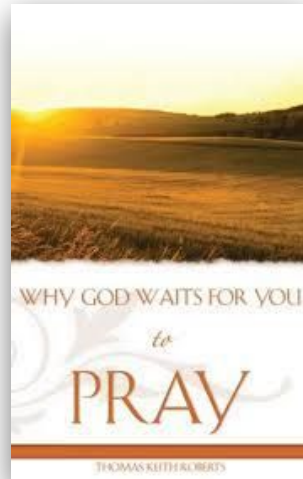
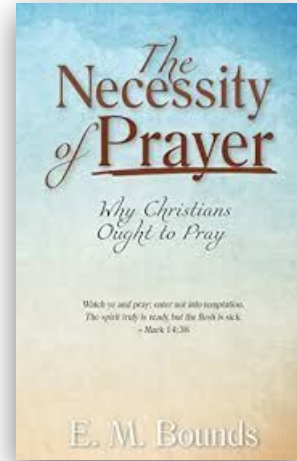
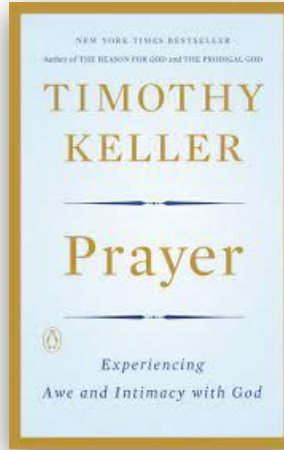
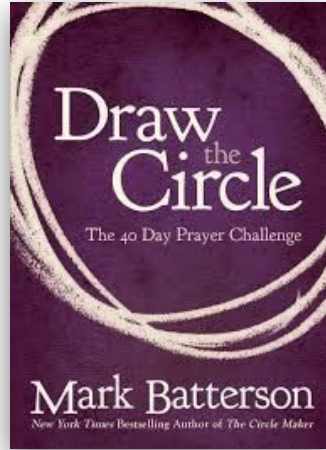


Prayer



Prayer by Timothy Keller

Introduction

Two types of prayer? Which is correct?

Communion centered

- Prayer is a means to experience God's love
- Personal communication with God
- Know oneness with Him
- Promises a life of peace
- Regularly surrounded by His divine presence
- Experience of God's presence is most difficult for people to find

Kingdom centered

- Fervent supplication for kingdom to come
- Kingdom to come to the world and our own lives
- Obedience to God's Will
- Conformity to God's purposes

Psalms has evidence for both!

Communion centered

Psalms 27:4 One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

- David says he seeks to know the presence of God, and has directly asked God for this blessing

Psalms 63:1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

Psalms 63:5 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,

- In order to be satisfied, David desires to be in the presence of God via this communion

Evidence for Kingdom centered prayer

Complaint, cries for help, Calls for God to exercise His justice on the world

Psalms 10:1 Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

- David asks why God is standing far off and hiding

Psalms 10:12 Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand forget not the afflicted.

- Here is a cry for help for those in need

Psalms 10:14 But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless.

Psalms 10:18 to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

- Just two verses after his cry for help, David admits that God does see and acknowledges the help from God, then ask for justice

What about Scriptural theology of prayer?

Reasons in God and our created nature that we can pray

Hebrews 4:14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- Jesus Christ is our mediator, and He isn't an unsympathetic one and will petition God on our behalf
- We have communion with our mediator (Christ), and we can receive mercy and grace (Kingdom)

What about Scriptural theology of prayer?

Reasons in God and our created nature that we can pray

Romans 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

- Not only is Jesus Christ our mediator, but the Holy Spirit dwells in us
- This is communion with the triune God as well as ultimately preparing us for His Kingdom

What about Scriptural theology of prayer?

Reasons in God and our created nature that we can pray

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

- Communion with God is achieved with the Spirit becoming our intermediary
- The Spirit does so according to the will of God (Kingdom)

What about Scriptural theology of prayer?

Reasons in God and our created nature that we can pray

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

- We can be transformed into the same image (communion)
- We can be with the Lord and the Spirit in freedom (Kingdom)

What about Scriptural theology of prayer?

Traditional forms of prayer

- Adoration
- Confession
- Thanksgiving
- Supplication

The profound experiences

- Awe of praising His glory
- Intimacy of finding His grace
- Struggle of asking for His help

What then is prayer?

Prayer is both awe and intimacy, struggle and reality.

Each should be a major component of our prayer over the course of our lives.

Chapter One: The Necessity of Prayer

We have to pray - but How?

- Western society has an interest in spirituality, meditation, and contemplation (similar to Eastern religions)
- There are fewer organized, routine religious services, yet a kind of spiritual craving remains

What has Christian church been doing?

- There is a strong movement towards ancient meditation and contemplative practices
- There are teachers and coaches for centering prayer, contemplative prayer, and “spiritual disciplines”



An “Intelligent Mysticism”?

We aren't called to choose between truth & doctrine or a life filled with Spiritual power and experience. We are instead to ask the Holy Spirit to find our theology.

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

- The Spirit of God assures of God's love (adoption as sons)
- He enables us to approach God as children in our cries
- Is there with us during our acknowledgement of God's sovereignty and His place in our lives

- He also comes alongside us and adds a more direct testimony

1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

- Peter teaches that the 1st century Christians had not viewed Jesus with their own eyes but loved Him for what He had done
- The joy that they experienced in this love is inexpressible

Chapter Two: The Greatness of Prayer

What did Paul pray for?

Ephesians 1:15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

Paul prayed that the church/brotherhood would know God better.



Paul didn't pray for the world's needs, peace, or health?

Of course he did, but he knew that knowing God was the most important

1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,

- Here, Paul directs us regarding to whom and for what to pray

The fuller knowledge of God is most important

Even if our prayers don't lead to "good" circumstances?

Ephesians 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- Paul is praying that the Spirit can strengthen us so that Christ can dwell in our hearts
- If we understand the reality of God, we're less likely to fall into overconfidence and spiritual indifference
- At the same time, the love of God becomes an infinite consoling presence rather than an abstract thing that we call upon only when life's circumstances hit

Prayer isn't just to get something from God

Our inner (prayer) life should not be based on our outward circumstances

Isaiah 64:7 No one calls on your name, striving to take hold of you. For you have hidden your face from us and made us melt because of our iniquity. 8 Yet LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we all are the work of your hands.

- Prayer is striving to get more of God for ourselves
- This is similar to how we embrace someone nowadays to show our love for them
- We cannot be the clay unless we yield to Him through this avenue of prayer

The Integrity of Prayer

At moments that you are alone, do your thoughts go to God?

Matthew 6:5 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

- Jesus shows that the greatest test of our spiritual integrity is not being called to pray in public, but that we *want* to pray in private when no one else is there
- This does not imply that we live the life of a monk; we are called to pray and worship with the church

Hardness of Prayer (seriously, why is it so hard?)

Nothing that is great was ever easy

Job 23:3 If only I knew how to find him, so that I could go to his throne.

- Job was seeking after God to present his petitions and find relief
- Similarly, we can experience loneliness and hunger - our first step in prayer is recognizing these attributes in ourselves

Job 23:8 “Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I do not perceive him; 9 on the left hand when he is working, I do not behold him; he turns to the right hand, but I do not see him.

- Even after much spiritual discipline of praying, we may still experience times that we don't “feel” God; that means He is unseen but still there, and seeking us!

John 4:23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

The Centrality of Prayer

The Bible is all about God, and we read about prayer in every book!

1 Samuel 12:23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way.

Psalms 65:2 O you who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come.

Hebrews 5:7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

Acts 1:14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Acts 12:5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

The Richness of Prayer

Defining prayer tries to reduce it to its essence; prayer is rich with immenseness and infinities

1 Corinthians 2:10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

Psalms 73:17 until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end.

Chapter Three: What is Prayer?

Are all forms of prayer the same? If not, how do we define/discern real prayer?

Darwinian model says prayer is a way for human beings to adapt to their environment “similar to the mentality of a child and the neurotic, the chief trait of which is infantile magical thinking”

Carl Jung believed that prayer was more of a turning inward than a reaching outward.

Both Freud and Jung believed prayer is contemplation (inward turning) was a higher form of prayer than a petition to a divine being

Heiler spoke of inwardly focused “mystical” and outwardly focused “prophetic”, and held the latter as the higher form.



Mystical Prophetic

God isn't Same-as-me, nor is He Far-from-me

Colossians 1:27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

- The Bible isn't just the inspired Word of God, but a dynamic spiritual power - that's both mystical and prophetic
- Prayer is not becoming merged with the Godhead or a dissolution of the boundaries between ourselves and the universe
- Prayer is definitely not self-salvation
- Prayer is ultimately a personal, communicative response to the knowledge of God

Prayer is an Instinct and a Gift

Prayer is a personal, communicative response to the knowledge of God

- Prayer is profoundly altered by the amount and accuracy of Knowledge of God
- Prayer (with no to limited knowledge of God) is a human instinct to reach out for help based on a very general and unfocused sense of God - at this point, it cannot be a true conversation

John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name, 13 who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.

- We learn that we are not only subjects/servants but truly children of God when we believe; this changes our internal narrative

Galatians 4:5 to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!"

- We can truly converse with Him as our Father

Prayer is a Conversation

All prayer is responding to God

- "Hearing" precedes asking; this implies that we have heard the Bible
- All prayers are not alike or equally effective in relating to God
- Instinctive prayer is like an emergency flare in reaction to a general sense of God's reality
 - We don't know where it's going; we're just reaching out for help
- Just like conversations, the ones that go deeper will reveal not just information but our very selves/being
 - This conversation will become a true connection to God

Galatians 4:9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

- We aren't just sharing ideas or thoughts but specifically sharing ourselves in order to continue a deeper conversation that God started (and He's waiting!)

Chapter Four: Conversing with God

The Trinity is one God in 3 persons who have known and loved one another before the dawn of time.

John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. 6 “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 8 For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

- This is not a wordless love; they have spoken to one another (“words that you gave me”)
- Language is intrinsic to personal relationships, whether on this earth or with God
 - Prayer isn't a wordless hyper consciousness

Meeting God through His Word

God's words have a power infinitely beyond our own

Genesis 1:3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

- God's action is not separate from His word - they are one and the same!
- Communication from God is therefore communion with God

Isaiah 55:10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

- Our words need deeds to back them up, and even then, can fail to achieve their purposes
- God's Word does not fail its purpose
- His actions are an extension of Himself (therefore, so are His words/Bible)

Praying through Immersion in His Word

We were all spoken to before we spoke.

- All speech is answering speech
- Like children, our vocabulary is limited to what we learn; we speak only to the degree we are spoken to
- Our prayers should arise out of immersion in the Scripture
- We should listen, study, think, reflect, and ponder the Scriptures until there is an answering response
 - Do we have to read Scripture every time before we pray? No!
 - The impact on us will be dynamic
- God is complex - as with other personal relationships, we should expect to feel frustrated or confused at times, but amazed and comforted at other times!

Verbal Prayer

Your rationality (through spoken prayer) is not a limitation or a barrier between you and God

1 Corinthians 14:15 What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.

- We are praying in words to the Father through the Son who is the Word
- Rationality is requisite for your mind to be a part of your prayers

Colossians 3:1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

- Most (not all) movement of prayer is upward towards God (and not necessarily inward or introspective)
- We come not only as sinners but children secure in His Love with forgiveness and acceptance

Tragedy of Untethered Prayer

Anne Lamott says it doesn't matter whom or what we pray to

Nothing could be further from the truth!

- You cannot grow in a relationship with someone when you know nothing about them
- Based on that, then there would be no need for prayer
- If we don't know God and His will, we will instead create a God that matches what we wish Him to be and what our life to be like
- If God is not the starting point, then the only driver of prayer will be our emotional or physical needs
- This essentially narrows prayer to a "give me" session
- If we leave God out, we will instead mine our own feelings, impressions of God, etc., essentially willfully deceiving ourselves

Finding the Heart to Pray (being God's House)

David wanted to build a house for God; God had another plan

2 Samuel 7:27 For you, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you.

- David needed courage? God gave it to him?
- God spoke directly to David, so God speaks to us in His Word; we respond to Him just as David, in prayer

Ephesians 2:20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

- We who believe in Him will become God's "house"

Chapter Five: Encountering God

In prayer, we address a triune God, and our prayers can only be heard through all 3 Godhead working in perfect unison

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

- Jesus received full authority to make decrees everywhere
- He does not ask us to baptize in multiple names but rather one name, indicating a triune God
- God has one nature, one character

Our Heavenly Father

God's words have a power infinitely beyond our own

John 17:23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

- As adopted children, we are loved with the same love as Jesus (no difference!)
- This also means we have the same access as Jesus (prayer)

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

- God puts his very nature, His Spirit, within us
- While God is the father of all, it is only those who have been adopted by grace through faith that can be "sons"

Spirit of Adoption

Anyone with real faith will desire to pray because, through the Spirit, our faith becomes audible.

Romans 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

- The Holy Spirit actually leads us to prayer!
- We address God in the same way Jesus addressed him in prayer (Abba, like papa)

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

- God puts his very nature, His Spirit, within us
- While God is the father of all, it is only those who have been adopted by grace through faith that can be “sons”

Spirit of Adoption

The Spirit enables us to long for future glory, even if we don't know what to pray for in the here and now.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

- The Holy Spirit understands that we know that all things will work out for good through God, but we may not know what that good actually is
- That groaning of the Spirit is actually from inside of us, expressing a deep longing to do God's Will and see His glory

The Mediator

You know how comforted you are when you hear someone pray for you? Then we should be infinitely more comforted that Jesus intercedes for us!

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Hebrews 8:6 But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

- Jesus has taken the place of the intermediate steps of the past, such as sacrifices, temples, offerings, rituals, etc.
- He is the only high priest who could offer himself (and not a lamb) as a sacrifice; he is able to help those who are being tempted

The Mediator

Jesus is not only the God on the other side of the chasm, He is also the bridge for that same chasm.

Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. 15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. 16 For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.

- He is a mediator of a new relationship with God that cannot fail because it is based on His faithfulness, not ours
- We can approach God because He became like us, so that we might be forgiven and justified by faith apart from works (We don't need another sacrifice if we have the Perfect One!)

How to Pray by R. A. Torrey

Chapter 3: Praying and Obeying

We are told we receive whatever we ask for

1 John 3:22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

- This is definitely not a carte blanche to ask for whatever we desire
- Instead, we should study His Word to learn what He desires from us
- This is not merely a keeping His commandments in order to get what we want
- As with pleasing our earthly father, we have to study what he desires
 - The same goes for pleasing God - there may not be a specific command regarding a certain action, but we have to decide if it is pleasing to Him
 - We should not ask “what is the harm” but rather “does this reduce the role of the Spirit in our life”?

In Truth

Our prayer should be sincere.

Psalms 145:18 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

- If we want to know His will and truly live that Will, we must ask in all sincerity
- For example, we can ask God to make our husband more faithful, our congregation to be revived, or to be filled with the Holy Spirit
 - If we aren't sincere, we would not consider that a more faithful husband might lead to him quitting his job and moving the family, a congregation that might have actually undergo a radical transformation and completely change everything they do, or hostility and animosity from the world and other Christians
- Once we acknowledge that we desire the higher gifts despite the “downfalls”, then we can be assured we are calling on him “in truth”

Draw the Circle by Mark Batterson

The 40 Day Prayer Challenge

Pray to God regularly

Acts 10:2 a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.

- Cornelius prayed to God regularly. When you pray to God regularly, you never know when God will invade the routine of your regular life
- You too can live in holy anticipation, knowing that God is preparing your opportunities
- Cornelius' prayer led not only his family to salvation but opened the door and his heart to God's Plan for billions of other people

Draw the Circle

Established by God

Proverbs 16:9 The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

- We cannot create the divine appointments - all we can do is keep them.
- We can't plan God-ordained opportunities - all we can do is seize them.
- We cannot perform miracles - all we can do is pray for them.
- Our job is to hear His voice.
- "Establishes" can be translated as "determines", "prepares", "firmly decides"
 - The smallest details that we cannot see are important to God

Draw the Circle

Amazing Things

Joshua 3:5 Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.”

- Consecration is a complete surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- We have to relinquish everything to Him - our time, our talents, our treasure.
- There is nothing that belongs to us, not even ourselves.
- Like the author did at Gate D8 by keeping his promise to God and kneeling to pray, so do we have to give all of ourselves to Him, including prayer.

Draw the Circle

Write It Down

Habakkuk 2:2 And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.

- What is it that you are praying for? Write it down!
- Your prayers can be more powerful and specific if they are written down
- This can also improve your accountability to others (and God!)
- It also can increase your faith as you watch and wait for His answer!

Draw the Circle

God's Limits?

Job 12:22 “He uncovers mysteries hidden in darkness; he brings light to the deepest gloom. 23 He builds up nations, and he destroys them. He expands nations, and he abandons them.

- Until we are convicted that God's grace and His power know no limits, our prayers will be small.
- Once we embrace the omnipotence of God, our prayers will be larger to match our God-sized dreams.
- How big is your God?
 - Is He big enough to heal your marriage?
 - Is He bigger than an MRI or CT scan result?
 - Is He bigger than your worst sin?
- If He is bigger than all those things, won't you pray like it?

Draw the Circle

Speak to the Mountain

Matthew 17:20 He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

- There comes a moment when you must quit talking to God about the mountain in your life and start talking to the mountain about your God.
- You should proclaim His power and His sovereignty and His faithfulness by standing on His Word and clinging to His promises
- We are His Children - shouldn't we act like it and pray like it?

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Draw the Circle

We have to ask

James 4:2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

- God has determined that there are some things that He will only do in response to prayer
- If we don't ask, God cannot answer.
- We have to work like it depends on us and pray like it depends on God

Draw the Circle

Lord, Do not delay

Daniel 9:19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”

- This is not an ASAP call out of God; rather, it is us asking God to stand by His Word (which means we have to know and believe His Word)

Psalms 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

- Are we willing to pray that it will take long enough and be hard enough for God to receive the glory?

Draw the Circle

Set your foot

Joshua 1:3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.

- Didn't God promise Joshua everything? Then why did they have to circle Jericho for 6 days, and then even more on the 7th day?
- A "40 day" prayer challenge is the same way - we are to pray until God answers, whether it seems like the answer is on day 1 or day 413
- God is not a genie in a bottle, and our wish is not His command, but His command had better be our wish!

Draw the Circle

Not Now

Acts 1:4 Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before.”

- When it came to spreading the Gospel, it wasn't a rocket start?
- They first worshiped and prayed together
- Waiting doesn't delay God's plans and purposes: it expedites them
 - How? The praying while waiting prepares you; shouldn't we do more of it to be prepared faster?
- Waiting is the fast track to whatever it is that God wants to do in our lives

Draw the Circle

Quit Praying

Matthew 25:23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

- When everything in our lives is said and done, God won't be saying "well thought", "well planned", or "well prayed"
- His "well done" will be due to the action on our end in being that servant

Draw the Circle

Abide in Me

John 15:7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

- One of the surest ways to get into God's presence is to get into His Word
- This will require more than just a casual reading
 - The Bible wasn't meant to be read - it was meant to be memorized and meditated upon!
 - It was meant to be prayed and practiced!

Draw the Circle

Holy Ground

Exodus 3:5 Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”

- You won’t believe this, but God knows where you are!

Then God appeared to him in a burning bush.

I have a feeling that Moses got up that morning, put on his sandals, and picked up his staff, figuring it would be an ordinary day just like the day before, and the day before the day before, and the day before that. But you never know when or where or how God will invade the routine of your life.

Jewish scholars used to debate why God appeared to Moses in a burning bush. A thunderclap or lightning bolt would have been more impressive. And why the far side of the desert? Why not the palace or a pyramid in Egypt?

They concluded that God appeared to Moses in a burning bush for one simple reason: to show that no place is devoid of God’s presence, not even a bush on the backside of the desert. So they gave God a name I’ve learned to love: *The Place*. God is here, there, and everywhere. So it doesn’t matter where you are; God can meet you anywhere.

A few years ago, I heard author Ken Gaub share one of the most amazing prayer testimonies I’ve ever heard. He and his family were driving on I-75 near Dayton, Ohio, when they decided to stop at a restaurant. Ken’s wife and children went right into the restaurant while he stretched his legs. As he walked past a nearby gas station, he heard a pay phone ringing. The phone kept ringing, and Ken thought it might be some sort of emergency, so he answered it. He heard the voice of an operator, who said, “Long distance for Ken Gaub.”

Ken almost passed out. He said, “You’ve got to be kidding me. I was just walking in the middle of nowhere and heard this phone ringing.” The confused operator said, “Is Ken Gaub there?” After making sure there weren’t any candid cameras, he said, “This is Ken Gaub.”

A voice on the other side of the line said, “Mr. Gaub, my name is Millie. I’m from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. You don’t know me, but I need your help.” She went on to explain that she had just written a suicide note but had decided to give prayer one more shot. She said, “God, I don’t really want to do this.” And as she prayed, she remembered seeing Ken Gaub on television. She thought to herself, “If I could just talk with him, he could help me.” But this was pre-Google, making it extremely difficult to track him down. As she prayed, some numbers popped into her head, and she wrote them on a piece of paper. She couldn’t help but think, “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if God were giving me Ken’s number?” Then Millie said, “I decided to try calling the number, and I couldn’t believe it when the operator said it was you.”

Millie asked Ken, “Are you in your office?” When Ken said no, Millie sounded surprised. She said, “Then where are you?” Ken said, “You made the call. Don’t you know?” She said, “I don’t even know what area I’m calling. I just dialed the number on a piece of paper.” Ken said, “You won’t believe this. I’m in a phone booth in Dayton, Ohio.” Millie replied, “What are you doing there?” Ken said, “Answering a pay phone!”