

A Life of Prayer.

Week #3: How does God speak - Part 1

January 20, 2019

Learning prayer is never easy, because it includes a large helping of biblical truth coupled with deep personal experience. It's one thing to study prayer, but it's entirely another to practice it. Prayer can be clear yet confusing, wonderful yet confounding, hopeful yet discouraging. For some, prayer is all about communion with God, while for others it is about bringing God's Kingdom to earth as in heaven. For some it's deeply personal. For others mostly cosmic. Many treat prayer like rubbing the lamp and demanding God do something about the mess our lives have become. Many others have abandoned prayer, because the desired outcomes have not been realized. Some see prayer as pure mysticism. Others see only pragmatism.

With the hope of cutting through the confusion, we are beginning 2019 by opening the scriptures together to learn more about prayer. Our goal is to build a biblical foundation that will lead to a robust practicing of what Jesus so clearly embraced in his life & ministry.

Study Questions: *God's preferred ways of speaking - part 1.*

1. How and when have you struggled in hearing from God in your prayer life? What made it so hard for you?
2. Pastor Ken said that God has five preferred ways of speaking to us - Creation, the Bible, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Church.
 - In which of these have you encountered God most powerfully, and heard his voice most clearly? Why?
3. Has our generation's current study of natural science made hearing God speak through Creation harder or easier?
 - What do you see in Creation that proclaims God's identity and message to you?
4. The Bible contains a lot of conversations God has with people. Which five or six of them has He used to speak most clearly and powerfully to you?
 - Are God's words in the Bible enough for you? If not, what are they missing?
 - Read 2 Timothy 3:16. How has God used the Bible to teach you; to rebuke you; to correct you; to train you in righteousness?
5. Read John 1:1-18. What does God say in Jesus that He does not say without him? (Think very carefully about this ...).
 - Read John 15:15. If Jesus really has made known to you everything he learned from his Father God, how does this impact your prayer life? ... what else do you need to know?
6. Eugene Peterson writes, "*By plunging ourselves into the sea of God's language found in the Bible -studying, thinking, reflecting & pondering the Scriptures with our searching hearts and minds - we will learn to pray, perhaps just as slowly as a child learns to speak.*"
 - How well have you learned to speak the language of the Bible - in which we discover the story that God tells about Himself .. and about us?
 - Will you commit this year to "plunging" into the Bible? As we focus as a congregation on prayer, read through the New Testament looking specifically for what God says and teaches about prayer. Stop at these points. Study them. Learn. Share. Grow.
As a way of helping, search the internet for sites that list the biblical texts on prayer.