

June 22, 2003

Week Thirty-three: "Prayer and Praise"

Day One: Small Group Study Guide

Read: Psalm 138 (p. 681)

Read: Commentary (p. 682)

Reflect: How would you define worship? What is the difference between public worship (Sunday gatherings) and your life as worship?

Dig: List all the reasons that the Psalmist gives for worship:

Why is "gods" in quotation marks and what might it mean to sing praise before the "gods?"

How do these passages help you understand this Psalm and its reference to "gods"?

Psalm 96:4-5 (p. 654)

Col. 2:15 (p. 1376)

Romans 12:1-2 (p. 1295)

What does God exalt when we praise him? Why is that important?

Apply: Read this Psalm quietly to yourself, noting how living out this prayer will increase your freedom from fear and guilt and anger. Then pray it again out loud as a statement of faith and praise to the God who controls all things. Now live in the confidence of your faith this day.

Week Thirty-three: "Prayer and Praise"

Day Two: "Levels of Prayer"

Read: Psalm 95 (p. 654)

Read: Commentary (p. 655)

Reflect: How often do you pray so as to listen and hear God? What have you heard?

Dig: What "postures of worship" do you see described in this Psalm? How do they compare to our usual postures of worship?

Considering verse 8 of this Psalm, read Exodus 17:1-7 (p. 83). Why might the Psalmist choose to remind his readers of this event?

The three levels of prayer (petition, dialogue, intercession) are listed in the commentary. Where are they found in Psalm 95? At what level do you find most of your prayers?

Apply: Make a short list of people you could pray for. Now intercede for them as you begin the day, asking God to meet their needs and then watching how God answers such prayer.

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Day Three: "Praying in the Spirit"

Read: Jude 20 (p. 1481)

Read; Commentary (p. 1480)

Reflect: In your experience, what does "praying in the Spirit" mean to you? Do you often pray with the Holy Spirit in mind? Why or why not?

Dig: What does the opening to this letter to Jude (verse 3) tell you about the purpose of this book?

How does it fit with verse 20?

Notice the thoughts surrounding the phrase "and pray in the Holy Spirit." What clues does the context give you to understanding this phrase?

Look up Romans 8:26-27 (p. 1290). What does this tell you about "praying in the Holy Spirit"? Is speaking in tongues even mentioned?

According to the commentary, which two members of the Trinity are constantly praying on our behalf?

Apply: How does this lesson bring more freedom to your prayer life? Choose an issue or concern of your life and ask the Holy Spirit to take your groans and incomplete prayers to God the Father on your behalf.

Week Thirty-three: "Prayer and Praise"
Day Four: "Effective Prayer"

Read: 1 Samuel 12:16-24 (p. 307)

Read: Commentary (p. 308)

Reflect: How often do you turn to God in prayer? Who really manages your life, you or God?

Dig: Why did God answer Samuel's prayers so dramatically and immediately?

See Psalm 66:18 (p. 634) for part of the biblical answer in this regard.

See also James 4:2-3 (p. 1444) for more truth about effective prayer.

What does verse 23 teach you about your own prayer life?

Apply: Ask God to give you a more effective prayer life by making you more righteous. Now, who should you pray for today?

Week Thirty-three: "Prayer and Praise"
Day Five: Praying for the Lost"

Read: Jonah 4 (p. 1018)

Read: Commentary (p. 1017)

Reflect: Do you have any sense for the heart of God for lost people? Have you ever seriously prayed for lost people? Why or why not?

Dig: Read John 14:6 (p. 1221) and answer this question: are people really lost without Christ?

Read Acts 4:10-12 (p. 1239) and answer the question: are there many ways to the same God?

How does Jonah describe God in verse two? Why would this make him angry?

In what phrases do you see God's compassion?

In what ways does this passage of Jonah 4 bother you? (bring you under conviction?)

Apply: Turn to Matthew 9:36-38 (p. 1089) and use this passage as the basis for your prayer before you go out to face the day.