

# Prayer

(experiencing awe & intimacy with God)

desert breeze  
community church



Saturday & Sunday, March 7 & 8, 2015

Ray Davis

## “The Greatness of Prayer” Ephesians 1:15-19

“Prayer is beyond any question the highest activity of the human soul. Man is at his greatest and highest when upon his knees he comes face to face with God.”- MLJ

“The greatness of prayer is nothing but an extension of the greatness and glory of God in our lives.” – Timothy Keller

### It’s Supremacy:

- The most important thing God could give to us is to have the “eyes of our hearts enlightened” in order to know Him better. Vv17-18; Eph3:14-19; Phil1:9-11; Col1:9-14
- The heart is the control center of the entire self. It is the warehouse of one’s core commitments, deepest loves, and most foundational hopes that control our thoughts, feelings and actions. V18; Pro4:23
- Without an enlightened heart good circumstances can lead to overconfidence and bad circumstances can lead to discouragement because God is an abstraction rather than our most satisfying reality. Vv18-19
- Prayer is not merely a way to get things from God but a way to get more of God himself. Prayer is a striving to “take hold of God” (Is64:7).

### It’s Integrity:

- If we give priority to the outer life, our inner life (Heart) will be dark and scary. We will not know what to do with solitude, be uncomfortable with self-examination, and have an increasingly short attention span for any kind of reflection.
- Even more seriously, our lives will lack integrity. We become game players & mask wearers and won’t know how to go into the inner rooms of the heart and deal with it. We turn ourselves into hypocrites.  
Matt15:8-9, 23:25
- To discover the real you, look at what you spend time thinking about when no one is looking, when nothing is forcing you to think about anything in particular. Matt.6:21; Luke6:43-45

- If you aren’t joyful, humble, and faithful in private before God, then what you want to appear to be in public won’t match what you truly are. Matt6:5-6
- Giving priority to the inner life doesn’t mean an individualistic life. Knowing the God of the Bible better can’t be achieved all by yourself. Corporate and private prayer are a necessity.

### It’s Hardness:

- There is nothing great that is also easy. That’s why prayer is one of the hardest things in the world. If you struggle greatly in this, you are not alone. Job23:3
- The first thing we learn in attempting to pray is our spiritual emptiness, but we must press on and move from duty to delight.
- When your prayer life begins to flourish, the effects can be remarkable.

Prayer is awe, intimacy, struggle—yet the way to reality. There is nothing more important, or harder, or richer, or more life-altering. There is absolutely nothing as great as prayer.

### Growing Notes

- 1) What do the two quotes from the sermon introduction tell us about prayer? Why do you think a person’s prayer life rises or falls with their concept of prayer and God?
- 2) Read Ephesians 1:15-19. What stands out to you from this text? What is the most important thing God could give to us in the best or worst of times? What is the “heart” (V18; Pro4:23)? What are the results of an unenlightened heart? How is prayer more than getting things from God?
- 3) What are the consequences of focusing on my outer life more than my inner life (Matt15:8-9, 23:25)? How can you discover the real you (Matt6:21; Luke6:43-45)? If you aren’t joyful, humble, and faithful in private before God, then what you want to appear to be in public won’t match what you truly are (Matt6:5-6). Explain.
- 4) Why do you think that prayer is so hard for so many? What can you expect to happen when your prayer life is flourishing? What is God speaking to you from this Bible study? Pray.