

## Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 | Standalone Teaching

### “Upward, Inward, Outward”

Every Christian understands the importance of two daily practices: *praying* to God and *reading* his Word. However, many believers find these tasks daunting because they are *unsure* how to *begin*. Feeling overwhelmed by the expectation to pray and read the Bible *without* clear guidance can lead to frustration. It's like having a *destination* without *directions*. So, to successfully engage in prayer and Bible reading, we must learn what, exactly, we ought to pay attention to. And in both areas, our focus should be threefold: upward, inward, and outward.

1. The focus of our prayer should be...
  - i. Upward: **Adoration** for who God is and **appreciation** for what he's done.

**READ:** Psalm 150 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> **Praise** the Lord! **Praise** God in his sanctuary; **praise** him in his mighty heavens! <sup>2</sup> **Praise** him for his mighty deeds; **praise** him according to his excellent greatness! <sup>3</sup> **Praise** him with trumpet sound; **praise** him with lute and harp! <sup>4</sup> **Praise** him with tambourine and dance; **praise** him with strings and pipe! <sup>5</sup> **Praise** him with sounding cymbals; **praise** him with loud clashing cymbals! <sup>6</sup> Let everything that has breath **praise** the Lord! **Praise** the Lord!

**Takeaway:** Praise **reinvigorates** our love for God.

- ii. Inward: **Affirmation** of God's commandments and **confession** of misconduct.

**READ:** Isaiah 66:1-2 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Thus says the Lord: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? <sup>2</sup> All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is **humble** and **contrite** in spirit and **trembles** at my word.

**Takeaway:** Penitence **reconciles** our relationship with God.

- iii. Outward: **Supplication** for our needs and **intercession** for the needs of others.

**READ:** James 4:2-3 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

**Takeaway:** Petition renews our need for God.

2. The focus of our bible reading should be...

i. Upward: Meditation on God's word and the immersion of its principles.

**READ:** Psalm 1 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; <sup>2</sup> but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

<sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. <sup>4</sup> The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; <sup>6</sup> for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

**Takeaway:** Scriptural contemplation guides the way of man.

ii. Inward: Memorization of God's word and the recollection of its principles.

**READ:** Psalm 119:9-11 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. <sup>10</sup> With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! <sup>11</sup> I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

**Takeaway:** Scriptural retention guards the way of man.

iii. Outward: Application of God's word and the utilization of its principles.

**READ:** James 1:22-25 (ESV)

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

**Takeaway:** Scriptural implementation guarantees the way of man.

**Video Description:**

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SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

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**Pastor's manuscript can be found here:**

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