

Habits

ANCIENT PRACTICES FOR TODAY'S WORLD

OPENING UP



It's probably pretty safe to assume everyone here is at least a little familiar with prayer. How comfortable or familiar are you with praying Scripture as a model of prayer?

TEXT



An example from David's life of Praying Scripture | Psalm 141

¹ O Lord, I call upon you; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to you!

² Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!

³ Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!

⁴ Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with men who work iniquity, and let me not eat of their delicacies!

⁵ Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it. Yet my prayer is continually against their evil deeds.

⁶ When their judges are thrown over the cliff, then they shall hear my words, for they are pleasant.

⁷ As when one plows and breaks up the earth, so shall our bones be scattered at the mouth of Sheol.

⁸ But my eyes are toward you, O God, my Lord; in you I seek refuge; leave me not defenseless!

⁹ Keep me from the trap that they have laid for me and from the snares of evildoers!

¹⁰ Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by safely.

MESSAGE OUTLINE



Big Idea: Praying Scripture will always direct us to God's heart.

1. Pray to God to hear you and be near to you. (vv. 1-2)
2. Pray to God to protect you from yourself. (vv. 3-5a)
3. Pray to God to deliver you from evildoers. (vv. 5b-7)
4. Pray to God to grant you peace and security on your path. (vv.8-10)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- Practicing spiritual disciplines are such important rhythms for us. Most of us would quickly acknowledge the benefit. Why do you think we neglect to pray?
- Most people's answer to the question "how is your prayer life," is "it could be better." Could you see how adopting the HABIT of Praying Scripture might help you to improve your own prayer life?
- David seems to pray hyper-specifically (with intention) about things going on in his life. We don't know exactly when Psalm 141 was written, but scholars would suggest it would correspond to 2 Samuel 27. Read 2 Sam.27:1 then compare Psalm 141 to see how David's prayers are influenced and directed. Do you pray with specificity for the very real matters of your life?
- There is almost a sense of confidence as David's prayer is recorded. Do you have confidence to approach the Father with expectation? Do you think He wants to hear you? Do you think He wants to answer you? How do your answers to those questions influence how are actually actively pray?

CHALLENGE



As we examined a Psalm of David, we learned how Praying Scripture is a well that will never run dry as it always leads us to God's heart. Tonight, in your Life Group, build your own personal model prayer to God. Below you will find an example but be encouraged to personalize your Life Group's as much as comfort would allow. Allow the truths you've affirmed about God this evening to drive the fervor of your expectant prayer!

PRAYER



Model Prayer to God:

- **To hear God and be near to God** – My Father, I want to love you like you love me, but I need your help today because I cannot do it by myself. I need you near me because I do not know how to do this by myself. I am scared and feel alone right now. I want to give my life and everything therein to you, that you might do more with it than I could (personal, family, church, community).
- **To protect me from myself** – When I try to do it alone, I fail. I struggle to say the "right" words, make the "right" choices, choose the "right" friends. By power of the Holy Spirit, would you fill my mouth, heart, life, and community with edifying power? Help me to choose you over and over and over again because your portion is better than anything the world might "offer" me. The world makes offers to me regularly. The media tries to show me "delicacies" that are tempting. Guard my eyes. The people around me offer me unwholesome talk, jokes, and plans; I do not want to appear rude. I do not want to be lonely. Consecrate me unto you.
- **To deliver me from evildoers** – Help me! I cannot seem to get away from people and things that want to hurt me. You called me to be "in the world, but not of the world" and I do not always know how to do that. Protect me from the wickedness around me. Protect me from the desires to make camp with people who do not want what is best for me. Give me words of life to speak to the death around me. By your grace, allow the words you have given me to be seen as a shining beacon in the distress of the storms of life.
- **To grant me peace and security on my path** – I know this road is not easy. I know we live in a fallen world. **Sometimes I focus too much on the brokenness surrounding me instead of the blessedness abounding in me through your Son.** Anoint my eyes to see the path you have laid out for me. Anoint my ears to hear your words! Even though I am sure to encounter difficulty, you have promised me victory! **In Jesus Name, Amen.**