



## NEHEMIAH: A PARAGON OF PRAYER

# PRAYER

FEB 2, 2020

## THE WONDER OF PRAISE PRAYER

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1) On Sunday, we focussed on praising God through prayer. Worshipping God in prayer is to bless Him, ascribe to Him glory & power, lift Him up, extol Him, glorify and honour God. Read Nehemiah 1:5-6a, 9:5b-7a, 9:17b, 9:31-33. Nehemiah is a paragon of praise in prayer. Nehemiah's first response is prayer and his prayers are rich with praise. How often do you praise God like Nehemiah when you pray? Is worship an integrated rhythm in your prayer life?

2) The nature of praise-prayer is *declaring & distancing*. Outwardly, we make statements of declaration of God & inwardly, we realize He is God, we are not. This helps us to recognize the "distance" between us, that is, the distinction between our holy God and mankind. It is in humility we can recognize God for who He is, we honour Him. He comes closer, we come closer by worship.

*Nehemiah 1:5-6a - "O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments, let your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, to hear the prayer of Your servant..."*

*Nehemiah 9:5b-7a, 17b - "Blessed be Your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. You are the Lord, You alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships You. You are the Lord...But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them."*

Which of these attributes of God listed above have you seen evidence of in January during our month of prayer and fasting?

3) Read Psalm 63:4-8. The nature of praise prayer is that they are *discipline & diet*. They bring health to our bodies, our hearts, our faith, etc. Neglect & laziness will bring low morale & weakened faith, as well as a cranky critical disposition and the like. It is essential food for developing our souls. Have you ever noticed this in your life? Share times of poor health & times of strength.



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4) The nature of praise prayer is that they are duty & delight. We are called to bring praise to God, for who He is, what He has done, is doing and will do. CS Lewis said, "In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him."

Lewis continues with "...delight is incomplete until it is expressed". Currently, do you feel the "duty" of prayer or do you feel the "delight"? Explain.

5) How do we increase effective praise praying? Firstly, *we seek to know God*. We see Him in nature, we learn about Him in scripture, we experience Him through His Holy Spirit. As we cultivate experiences & understandings of God, it is fuel for our expressions of worship. In what new ways do you sense God calling you to grow in knowing Him?

6) Secondly, *we desire to love God*. Our affection must be behind our worship. As our relationship with God deepens so will our response be to Him. In our walk with God, we first see Him as our Creator, then Saviour, Father, Companion and Friend. Share where you are in your walk with God. How can you increase your desire to love God more fully & completely? How can your group pray specifically for you as you seek a deeper relationship with God?

7) Lastly, *we resolve to glorify God*. Read 1 Corinthians 10:31. We resolve to lift Him up. We can add practical steps to help us develop deep resolution. We could incorporate, ACTS (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication) or we can journal prayers. We can change our posture when we are praying (eg: kneeling, face down, etc), or get outside & notice God in nature. We can meditate on lyrics of a worship song or pray the prayers we discover in the Bible. In what new way(s) will you glorify God this week?