

SWISS ARMY KNIFE

Week 4

SHARE

Do you think it is easier to pray alone or with a group? Why?

SEEK

Prayer

In the previous section, Jesus emphasized giving for the sake of the other, and not for show. Now Jesus continues with an emphasis on prayer in secret, and not for show. Once again, the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart. Pride is a sneaky thing, and must constantly be put in its place, before it puts you in a situation in which you don't want to be!

If Matthew 6.5-15 demonstrates that prayer is not done for show, and should be done in secret with the Father, what does this tell us about prayer? Ultimately, it points to relationship. Firstly, the type of prayer suggested here is in solitude. Granted there are times for communal prayer, but equal to relationships, prayer in solitude is built on face-to-face, one-on-one interaction. Jesus is saying, "Let's spend time together. Get to know me. Let's be alone."

Secondly, being alone sheds any masks. There is no longer reason to put on a show; there is no one to impress, especially if you are praying to the God who knows all things! Prayer in solitude can develop a life of humility, a life of confession.

Thirdly, praying alone can lead to authentic praise. Of course praising God in a group setting can be an encouraging experience; however, in the presence of God alone praise can be unleashed without any thought of what others are thinking or doing.

There is much more to glean concerning a life of prayer, but the most famous of reformers demonstrated a similar style of prayer: praise, confession, and petition. Try it sometime! Begin with praising God and thanking Him for the privilege of prayer. Move into a time of confessing personal sins and sins against others. Lastly, ask God for the needs on your heart.

SEE

PRAYER

C.S. LEWIS ONCE SUGGESTED THAT THE ROOT OF ALL MISERY AND SIN IS PRIDE. DO YOU AGREE? DO YOU THINK THAT JESUS IS ADDRESSING PRIDE IN MATTHEW 6.5-15?

CAN YOU NAME SOME PROS AND CONS OF PRAYING IN SOLITUDE VS. PRAYING WITH A COMMUNITY?

PRAYER IN SOLITUDE PROMOTES AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, SHEDS MASKS AND PRIDE, AND LEADS TO AUTHENTIC PRAISE. DO YOU AGREE WITH THESE? DISAGREE? IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD ADD OR TAKE AWAY?

THE REFORMERS ALWAYS SUGGESTED PRAYING BASED ON SCRIPTURE. I ENCOURAGE YOU THIS WEEK TO LAY THE SCRIPTURES BEFORE YOU IN PRAYER. BEGIN BY THANKING GOD FOR THE PRIVILEGE/OPPORTUNITY TO PRAY. ASK HIM FOR HELP IN THIS TIME OF PRAYER. NOW READ YOUR SCRIPTURE PASSAGE A FEW TIMES. WRITE DOWN THREE THINGS: (1) HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE LEAD ME TO PRAISE GOD? (2) WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE REVEAL TO ME THAT I NEED TO CONFESS TO GOD? AND (3) BASED ON THE TEXT, WHAT DO I NEED TO ASK GOD FOR (HELP, STRENGTH, BLESSING, ETC)?

Please take a few moments to pray with and for one another