REFLEXIVE
PART 1: BORROWED WORDS

The beginning of a new year is often a time of reflection as we think about the past year and how we might live differently in the new one. In this series, we want to focus instead on the God who is worth living for through the book of Psalms. When we truly encounter God for who He is, our reflexive reaction will be to worship Him.

Central to the life of worship is prayer. In the Bible, worship and prayer are synonymous, and central to the life of prayer is the Psalms. The Psalms were used by Jews for prayers in the synagogue and Jesus continued their use in His own life.

QUESTION: What are your greatest hindrances in prayer?


From this passage we find three tools that will help us as we seek to worship the living God through prayer.

1. PRAY QUIETLY.

› Read Psalm 46.10 and James 1.19.

It would serve us well to train our hearts to be quiet as we come to God in prayer. Mary is a key example of this in the passage. We find her sitting at the feet of Jesus, reveling in who He is and listening to His every word. This posture of inside quietness is the appropriate way to pray. Our words need to diminish and God’s word needs to increase as we develop the capacity to revel in the presence of God.

2. PRAY PERSISTENTLY.

In Jesus’ parable He gives us permission to be persistent when we pray. If something is on our heart that we long for but God is not giving it yet and hasn’t given us a clear ‘no,’ we shouldn’t give up. We should keep asking, keep seeking and keep knocking. God is more willing to give than we’re willing to ask.

OUR WORDS NEED TO DIMINISH AND GOD’S WORD NEEDS TO INCREASE AS WE DEVELOP THE CAPACITY TO REVEL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

This isn’t to say that our prayers aren’t good enough or that God doesn’t listen to them. Yet praying from scripture is an important addition to our prayer lives. When Jesus’ disciples came to Him asking for a new way to pray, He gave them the Lord’s Prayer. When they heard it, they were probably confused. What we know as the Lord’s Prayer was by no means new to them. In the synagogues, part of the order of worship was a section of blessings to offer back to God in the context of the worship. They were drawn from the Psalms and came in a certain order:

- Blessing for God’s name (from Psalm 145)
- Blessing for the coming kingdom (from Psalm 22)
- Blessing for daily bread (from Psalm 136)
- Blessing for deliverance from evil (Psalm 51)
- Blessing for forgiveness of sins (Psalm 104)

Jesus’ example of prayer for His disciples was the very same thing they had been learning to pray since they were children. These prayers were not their own but were prayers God had given in the Psalms to pray back to Him.

Prayers of the human heart, while welcomed and blessed by God, are themselves an insufficient precondition for a life of praying. The human heart is necessary to our ability to love and find wonder in the world around us, but it is insufficient on its own to carry us in our love of God forever. We need something stronger and more secure for a life of prayer. God has given us prayers to offer back to Him so that we don’t have to rely upon ourselves or our verbal skills when we pray.

We don’t have it in us to pray as long and as deeply as we need to. That’s why God has given us the gift of the psalms to carry us in our prayers. Through His book we will be drawn to the heart of God and given the words to pray rightly for the rest of our lives. When our words give out in prayer and pray we must, God’s words pick us up and carry us home. We should certainly pray our own words—our Father God wants to hear His children speak—but beyond that if we pray the words God has given us we will pray strong for a lifetime.

**QUESTION:** Has praying the words of scripture been a regular part of your life? If so, what prayers do you use most frequently? If not, how can you make it a habit?