

Food for Thought

For the week of March 24, 2013

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. In Genesis 26, we saw Abimelech pursue a treaty with Isaac not because of what Isaac had done, but because of what God had done through Isaac. This is an important reminder that God deserves all the glory for what he did in Isaac's life and what he does in our lives. What are some of the pitfalls in the following verses that could cause us to fall into the trap of seeking our own glory?

[John 7:18](#)

[John 8:54](#)

Matthew 6:1-4

How does Matthew 6:5-8 further help us avoid pursuing our own glory, while also giving us important guidelines for prayer?

2. This weekend we took a quick look back at Isaac's prayer for Rebecca's childlessness. We'd all like to see God answer our prayers like he did for Isaac. What helpful insights in the following Scriptures could help us make sure our prayer is "powerful and effective"?

Philippians 4:6-7

Romans 8:26-27

Psalm 145:18-19

Matthew 6:7-8

How could you incorporate these passages into your own prayer life?

3. Equally important to what we pray for is how we pray. What insights do the following Scriptures give to ensure our prayers are heard by God and aren't blocked by our own behavior?

Proverbs 28:9

1 John 5:14-15

James 4:3

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John 7:18

18 Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. [NIV]

John 8:54

54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. [NIV]

Matthew 6:1-4

Giving to the Needy

1 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2 "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. [NIV]

How does Matthew 6:5-8 further help us avoid pursuing our own glory, while also giving us important guidelines for prayer?

Matthew 6:5-8

Prayer

5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. [NIV]

2. This weekend we took a quick look back at Isaac's prayer for Rebecca's childlessness. We'd all like to see God answer our prayers like he did for Isaac. What helpful insights in the following Scriptures could help us make sure our prayer is "powerful and effective"?

Philippians 4:6-7

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [NIV]

Romans 8:26-27

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. [NIV]

Psalm 145:18-19

18 The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them. [NIV]

Matthew 6:7-8

7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. [NIV]

How could you incorporate these passages into your own prayer life?

3. Equally important to what we pray for is how we pray. What insights do the following Scriptures give to ensure our prayers are heard by God and aren't blocked by our own behavior?

Proverbs 28:9

9 If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction,
even their prayers are detestable. [NIV]

1 John 5:14-15

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. [NIV]

James 4:3

3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. [NIV]