

25.1 TEN DIRECTIONS FOR HOLY PRAYER: Psalm 25:1-7

INTRODUCTION.

Q. How can we learn to pray?

I) The Lord's Prayer.

II) The prayers of the apostles written in the Scriptures.

III) The prayers of saints in church history who have gone before us (the valley of vision, biographies, etc.).

But one of the best ways to learn to pray is to...

IV) Learn from and actually pray the Psalms.

DOCTRINE. Christians should lift up their souls to God in prayer, seeking His divine aid in all things.

OUTLINE. Ten instructions for the Christian concerning holy prayer.

CON(TEXT). As for the context and content of this Psalm, there are five things to note:

I) Psalm 25 is a song of David, inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore God's very words.

– *"Of David."*

II) We are not certain as to the occasion of David writing Psalm 25.

– **PLUMER:** "[None] of these opinions [as to the occasion of the writing] can be proven or disproven. We gain nothing by assigning a given occasion to each Psalm." — **Plumer, William Swan. Studies in the Book of Psalms (p. 580). Counted Faithful. Kindle Edition.**

The bottom line is this: Psalm 25 is God's Word. We should therefore learn it, apply it, pray it, and sing it for His glory!

III) Psalm 25 is a song of artistic genius.

– **SPURGEON:** "The twenty-two verses of this Psalm begin in the original with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in their proper order. It is the first instance we have of an inspired acrostic or alphabetical song. This method may have been adopted by the writer to assist the memory; and the Holy Spirit may have employed it to show us that the graces of style and the arts of poetry may lawfully be used in his service. Why should not all the wit and ingenuity of man be sanctified to noblest ends by being

laid upon the altar of God?" — Spurgeon, Charles. *The Treasury of David: The Complete Seven Volumes* (p. 773). Kindle Edition.

IV) Psalm 25 is a song of Prayer, therefore Christians should learn these holy things to pray for.

- **Psalm 25:1** "To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul."
 - **Psalm 25:11** "For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great."
 - **Psalm 25:16** "Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted."

V) Psalm 25 is a song of Meditation, therefore Christians should learn these holy things to meditate upon.

- **Psalm 25:8** "Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way."
 - **Psalm 25:12** "Who is the man who fears the LORD? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose."

DOCTRINE. Christians should lift up their souls to God in prayer, seeking His divine aid in all things.

I. PRAY, LIFTING UP YOUR SOUL TO GOD (Psalm 25:1).

Psalm 25:1

"To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul."

- **HENRY:** "Prayer is the ascent of the soul to God; God must be eyed and the soul employed. Up with your hearts was anciently used as a call to devotion."

BOYS AND GIRLS... Prayer is not just saying words, but a lifting up of our souls to God!

Like when they offered an animal sacrifice in the Old Testament and the smoke rose up to God, so we offer up our prayers and our souls and words rise up to God!

II. PRAY, CONFESSING YOUR FAITH IN GOD (Psalm 25:2a).

Psalm 25:2a

"O my God, in you I trust;"

BOYS AND GIRLS...

I) Confess your Trust in God's CREATED ORDER.

(i) God has created everyone and everything that exists.

(ii) God has created mankind male and female, with different natures, different roles, different strengths, and different duties.

(iii) God has created lower creation in order that the pinnacle of His creation, man, would have dominion over it and use it for God's glory.

(iv) God has created and ordered the world to be a patriarchal hierarchy, with men ruling in the home, the work force, and the civil government, and the God-man—the Lord Jesus Christ—rules from His sovereign throne.

(v) God has created man to work six days and rest one.

(vi) God has created man to enjoy Him and glorify Him.

Confess your trust in God's created order!

II) Confess your Trust in God's REDEEMED PURCHASE.

(i) God chose before the foundation of the world, because of His mere good pleasure, to save a people for Himself by grace alone.

(ii) God became man, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to dwell among us and be our representative.

(iii) The God-man lived without sin, perfectly upholding the Law of God like we have not, in order to gift each of us who believe a righteousness that is undefiled and unfading.

(iv) The God-man, Christ Jesus, willingly gave Himself up on a cross, suffering under the tyranny of men and the just wrath of God, so that all who believe in Him alone for salvation would be given complete forgiveness of every sin.

(v) The God-man was then, three days later, raised from the dead, defeating death, putting His foot on the neck of the grave, slitting the Devil's throat, and lifting up the severed head of sin in triumph.

(vi) The God-man then ascended back to heaven where He sovereignly sits on His throne and providentially rules and reigns over the entire universe until all His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.

(vi) The God-man will one day return bodily to this earth in order to judge sinners, deliver the righteous, renew this cosmos, and consummate His Kingdom so that believers will live and reign with Him in perfection for all eternity.

III) Confess your Trust in God's PROVIDENTIAL PROVISION.

(i) The Lord has providentially brought you this far.

(ii) The Lord will providentially bring you all the way to glory.

IV) Confess your Trust in God's SOVEREIGN PLAN.

(i) The Lord created all things for His name's sake, and is working in all things to reveal His glory!

(ii) The Lord redeems and passes over sinners for His name's sake, and is doing all of that to reveal His glory!

(iii) The Lord providentially protects His saints and will ruin Satan's sinners for His name's sake, and is doing all of that to reveal His glory!

(iv) "Then comes the end, when [Christ] delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet" (1 Corinthians 15:24)..!

Pray, confessing your faith in God! In His created order, redeemed purchase, providential provision, and in His sovereign plan!

III. PRAY, PETITIONING GOD TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING (Psalm 25:2b).

Psalm 25:2b

"let me not be put to shame;"

- **PLUMER:** "The principle of shame in our nature is not without its use. Sinners would often be more wicked, saints would often be less holy, but that a keen sense of shame restrains the former or arouses the latter. Nothing has more power to torment us (verse 2). — **Plumer, William Swan. Studies in the Book of Psalms (p. 596). Counted Faithful. Kindle Edition.**

I) Pray that the Lord would keep you from falling because of the great shame that would be produced by your fall!

II) Pray also that the Lord would keep you from living a fallen life because of the great shame that would be produced by your living in opposition to God's creation and command!

- I) When Christians fall or live fallen, shame is brought to themselves, and the wicked love it.
- II) When Christians fall or live fallen, shame is brought to their family, and sinners rejoice.
- III) When Christians fall or live fallen, shame is brought to one of Christ's local churches, and the ungodly celebrate.
- IV) When Christians fall or live fallen, shame is brought to Christ's universal church, and the unrighteous gloat.
- V) When Christians fall or live fallen, shame is brought to Christ, and the devil laughs.

Fear of shame is not the primary motive for walking a straight line and living above reproach in the Christian life. The ultimate motive is love for Christ. Yet shame is absolutely to be used as a secondary motive which actually flows out of the primary motive of love. "Let me not be put to shame" (Psalm 25:2).

There is forgiveness in Christ for falling, and no true Christian will fall so great that their eternal destiny will be shame.

Yet watch out lest you bring shame upon yourself, your family, your church, and your Christ because you cared too little about strict righteousness and and presumed on the grace of God.

IV. PRAY, PETITIONING GOD TO ENABLE YOU TO TRIUMPH OVER THE WICKED (Psalm 25:2c).

Psalm 25:2c

"let not my enemies exult over me."

- **PLUMER:** "It is both a privilege and a duty to pray that the wicked may not triumph over the righteous, verse 2. Such a state of things would argue a total subversion of the divine government. The hope of the wicked shall surely perish. The throne of God's grace is against them. The universe is against them. All nature has groaned under the weight of them; and all nature shall fight against them." — **Plumer, William Swan. Studies in the Book of Psalms (p. 596). Counted Faithful. Kindle Edition.**

Note, Christians have enemies. The truth is that the more faithful you are to Christ, the more enemies you will have. You need to be aware that those who hate Christ will hate you, and do not be surprised when they persecute you for righteousness sake.

Let me give you two warnings:

WARNING 1: Do not aim to make enemies. Aim to obey Christ and the enemies will come.

This is commonly said by those effeminate professed Christians and armchair theologians, but I do not think this is a very big temptation in our day.

WARNING 2: Do not aim to please men. Aim to please Christ and the enemies will come.

BOYS AND GIRLS...

USES FOR EXHORTATION

- I) Pray that God would enable you to triumph over your enemies.
- II) Labor to Out-*work* them.
- III) Labor to Out-*trust* them.
- IV) Labor to Out-*pray* them.
- V) Labor to Out-*study* them.
- VI) Labor to Out-*serve* them.
- VII) Labor to Out-*worship* them.

V. PRAY, REMEMBERING THE PROMISES OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS (Psalm 25:3a).

Psalm 25:3a

"Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;"

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- I) You need to remember the PROMISES.

Isaiah 45:17

"But Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity."

- 1 Peter 2:6

"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

- II) You need to patiently and hopefully WAIT ON THE LORD to fulfill His promises.

Isaiah 40:30-31

"30 Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint."

VI. PRAY, REMEMBERING THAT THE RIGHTEOUS WILL INDEED TRIUMPH OVER THE WICKED (Psalm 25:3b).

Psalm 25:3b

"they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous."

VII. PRAY, PETITIONING GOD FOR GUIDANCE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS (Psalm 25:4).

Psalm 25:4

"Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths."

- **PLUMER:** "One of the greatest trials is perplexity. Commonly Satan has a great advantage over us when he can make us seriously doubt respecting truth or duty. Clearness of mind is a great blessing. God alone can give it, verse 12." — **Plumer, William Swan. Studies in the Book of Psalms (p. 596). Counted Faithful. Kindle Edition.**
BOYS AND GIRLS... The Bible is important.

VIII. PRAY, PETITIONING GOD TO LEAD YOU IN PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Psalm 25:5).

Psalm 25:5

"Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long."

- **Verse 4** is "Help me know your ways!"
 - **Verse 5** "Help me actually walk in your ways!"

Listen to Isaiah 42:16, and mark this down both in your notes and in your heart:

- **Isaiah 42:16**
 "And I will lead the blind
 in a way that they do not know,
 in paths that they have not known
 I will guide them.
 I will turn the darkness before them into light,
 the rough places into level ground.
 These are the things I do,
 and I do not forsake them."

BOYS AND GIRLS... We need God the Holy Spirit to give us the willingness and strength to actually WALK according in God's ways for His glory.

IX. PRAY, PETITIONING GOD TO TREAT YOUR ACCORDING TO HIS LOVINGKINDNESS (Psalm 25:6).

Psalm 25:6

"Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,
 for they have been from of old."

- **PLUMER:** "Arguments drawn from God's character in favour of our cause are far more likely to prevail than those drawn from our own character, verse 6. [As] Calvin [said]: "He who derives everything from the fountain of the divine mercy alone finds nothing in himself entitled to recompense in the sight of God." — **Plumer, William Swan. Studies in the Book of Psalms (p. 597). Counted Faithful. Kindle Edition.**

X. PRAY, PETITIONING GOD FOR FORGIVENESS AND GRACE (Psalm 25:7).

Psalm 25:7

"Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
 according to your steadfast love remember me,
 for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!"

CONCLUSION.

USE FOR WARNING AND AWAKENING

God will either remember you according to His justice or His steadfast love.

- i) If you remain on your own in your sin, God will remember you according to His justice, and you will get the just punishment you deserve for your sin for all eternity.

ii) If you turn from your sin and trust in Christ alone for salvation, God will remember you according to His steadfast love, and you will get the righteous rewards of Christ that He deserves for all eternity.

Praise the Lord with me if that is true for you!

WILLIAM S. PLUMER DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL REMARKS

concerning Psalm 25:1-7

- 1. The teaching of Scripture respecting prayer is uniform. It must be to Jehovah; it must be sincere, verse 1. Slade: "In vain will our voices be lifted up in prayer, unless our souls be lifted up to God." Henry: "Prayer is the ascent of the soul to God; God must be eyed and the soul employed. Up with your hearts was anciently used as a call to devotion." Times of great peril should be times of great prayer. Nor can the mind of any be too steadfastly set on God alone.
- 2. The greater our trouble, the greater should be our trust, verse 2. Dangers should drive us to seek divine aid. Henry: "If we make confidence in God our stay, it shall not be our shame; and if we triumph in him, our enemies shall not triumph over us, as they would, if we should now sink under our fears."
- 3. The principle of shame in our nature is not without its use. Sinners would often be more wicked, saints would often be less holy, but that a keen sense of shame restrains the former or arouses the latter. Nothing has more power to torment us, verse 2. In the wicked it will last for ever, Daniel 12:2. Nor is there in all Scripture any negative promise of more precious import than that God's people shall never come into contempt or be ashamed.
- 4. It is both a privilege and a duty to pray that the wicked may not triumph over the righteous, verse 2. Such a state of things would argue a total subversion of the divine government. The hope of the wicked shall surely perish. The throne of God's grace is against them. The universe is against them. All nature has groaned under the weight of them; and all nature shall fight against them.
- 5. To wait on God is a duty often insisted on in Scripture, verses 3, 5. The frequency with which it is mentioned, shows the high value set on it by God. Yet it is an unfashionable duty, mentioned far less frequently in

private conversation and in pulpit discourses than in the Word of God.

Great promises are made to this duty; and great rewards shall follow it.

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint," Isaiah 40:30, 31.

- 6. It heightened the wickedness of David's foes that he had never wronged them, verse 3. So it is a fearful aggravation attending all sin against God that it is wanton, without cause, and therefore without excuse.
- 7. It is a great mercy to be allowed to understand God's will, both as revealed in Scripture, and as made known in providence. No less than four times does David beg to be enlightened on this subject, verses 4, 5. One of the greatest trials is perplexity. Commonly Satan has a great advantage over us when he can make us seriously doubt respecting truth or duty. Clearness of mind is a great blessing. God alone can give it, verse 12.
- 8. A clear discovery of any of God's attributes, especially of his veracity, goodness, righteousness and mercy, is a high attainment, verses 5, 6, 8, 10. He who studies not and loves not the divine perfections, cannot plead with God, or be joyful in him, as does he who delights himself in the Almighty. God's attributes are fountains of joy to pious souls. To love and embrace all revealed truth, and especially that which relates to the divine nature and will is of the essence of true piety.
- 9. If God should do for us all else, and not teach us his will and his ways, he would not be the God of our salvation, verse 5. We are blind and cannot see afar off. We know nothing as we ought to know it until we are taught from heaven. Blessed be the Lord, he is continually making good the promise: "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them," Isaiah 42:16.
- 10. It is not enough to begin a right course. We must continue in well-doing, verse 5. Perseverance in duty is the only infallible mark to ourselves and the world that we are born of God. Nothing can be a substitute for this.
- 11. From what God by his acts has shown himself to be we may well argue what he will do hereafter, verse 6. Nor should any appearances to the contrary make us waver respecting either the wisdom or the constancy of the divine compassion. Dickson: "Though the course of kindness and mercy seem to be interrupted by affliction and temporal desertion, and to

be forgotten on God's part; yet faith must make use of experiences, and read them over unto God out of the register of a sanctified memory."

- 12. Arguments drawn from God's character in favour of our cause are far more likely to prevail than those drawn from our own character, verse 6. Calvin: "He who derives everything from the fountain of the divine mercy alone finds nothing in himself entitled to recompense in the sight of God."
- 13. Afflictions often possess remarkable power to remind us of our sins, verses 7, 18. When Joseph's brethren were in the greatest straits then they cried, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother." When the son of the widow of Zarephath died she said to Elijah, "Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance?" Dickson: "Sore troubles will waken up the conscience of sin afresh, and call to mind forgiven and buried sin." Nothing can meet these terrible memories of wickedness but a new application of the blood of Jesus and a sweet sense of God's mercy in Christ. A religious experience that has all joys and no pangs in it is good for nothing. We should rather seek to reprove ourselves for our old sins, yea, for all our sins, than to forget them. Anything is good for us, if it humbles us and leads us to the mercy-seat. In these respects nothing has a happier effect than a solemn review of our past deficiencies. Henry: "Our youthful faults and follies should be [a] matter of our repentance and humiliation long after, because time does not wear out the guilt of sin. Old people should mourn for the sinful mirth, and be in pain for the sinful pleasures of their youth." Blessed is the old man who has grace penitently to weep at the sins of his early days.
- 14. Sweet is the doctrine of forgiveness! In mercy God has clearly and abundantly revealed his forgiving love to all who have his word, verses 7, 18. The doctrine of forgiveness is as weighty as it is clear. Calvin: "It is true, in general, that men pray in a wrong way and in vain, unless they begin by seeking the forgiveness of their sins. There is no hope of obtaining any favour from God unless he is reconciled to us." Let us plead with God for his name's sake, not for our own. We are sinners, and the tears and even the blood of a sinner can never wash away guilt.
- 15. David's youth seems to have been spent in more freedom from open transgression than is common, yet his view of his early life was just. No man can answer for one of a thousand of his offences during any year of his rational just accountability. One may soon become a monster, if God's grace be wanting.
- 16. It is an unspeakable mercy to be brought in our early years to love and serve God, and to keep his commandments. Many harrowing recollections and tormenting reflections are thus avoided, verse 7. Temptation is thus deprived of many of its most envenomed shafts.

Surely as the latter day glory approaches, the young, even little children, will be found turning to the Lord, and imbued with his Holy Spirit.

- 17. But for these and all other blessings we are wholly dependent on the divine mercy, verse 7. This has always been the doctrine of God's real people. They know that they are sinners saved by grace. To deny that would be monstrous.

— **Plumer, William Swan. Studies in the Book of Psalms (pp. 595-599). Counted Faithful. Kindle Edition.**

HELPS

- 25:1, Psalm - Matthew Henry - A Method for Prayer, with Scripture expressions proper to be used under each head - The Complete Works of Matthew Henry, 2 Volumes (HB), vol. 2 pg. 1
 - 25:5, Psalm - Matthew Henry - How to spend the day with God - The Complete Works of Matthew Henry, 2 Volumes (HB), vol. 1 pg. 123
 - 25:9, Psalm - Thomas Brooks - The Works of Thomas Brooks (Banner of Truth), Vol 1, pg. 61
 - 25:10, Psalm - Thomas Brooks - The Works of Thomas Brooks (Banner of Truth), Vol 1, pg. 328
 - 25:11, Psalm - Edwards, Jonathan, "Pardon for the Greatest Sinners," Works (BT; Tegg), ii.110-113.
 - **Baggett, Brett. A Scripture Index of Puritan Sermons: Along with some Scottish Covenanters, American Puritans, and a few of their Spiritual Descendants (1558-1770) (pp. 108-109). Kindle Edition.**
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SPURGEON'S RECOMMENDED WORKS ON PSALM 25

- WORKS UPON THE TWENTY-FIFTH PSALM A Godly and Fruitful Exposition on the Twenty-fifth Psalme, the second of the Penitentials; (in "A Sacred Septenarie.") By ARCHIBALD SYMSON. 1638. (See page 74.)
 - The Preacher's Tripartie, in Three Books. The First, to raise Devotion in Divine Meditations upon Psalm XXV. By R. MOSSOM, Preacher of God's Word, late at St. Peter's, Paul's Wharf, London, 1657. Folio.
 - Six Sermons in "Expository Discourses," by the late Rev. WILLIAM RICHARDSON, Subchanter of York Cathedral. 1825.
 - **Spurgeon, Charles. The Treasury of David: The Complete Seven Volumes (p. 818). Kindle Edition.**

SPURGEON'S DIVISIONS CONCERNING TOPICS

PRAYER

Psalm 25:1-7

- 1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
- 2 O my God, in you I trust;
let me not be put to shame;
let not my enemies exult over me.
- 3 Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;
they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
- 4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
- 5 Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.
- 6 Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
- 7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!"

MEDITATION

Psalm 25:8-10

- 8 Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
- 9 He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
- 10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

PRAYER

Psalm 25:11

- 11 For your name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.

MEDITATION

Psalm 25:12-15

- 12 Who is the man who fears the LORD?
Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.
- 13 His soul shall abide in well-being,

and his offspring shall inherit the land.
14 The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he makes known to them his covenant.
15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

PRAYER

Psalm 25:16-24

16 Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.
17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged;
bring me out of my distresses.
18 Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.
19 Consider how many are my foes,
and with what violent hatred they hate me.
20 Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me!
Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me,
for I wait for you.
22 Redeem Israel, O God,
out of all his troubles.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The sermon gives several practical ways to learn to pray (Lord's Prayer, apostolic prayers in Ephesians, church history, and especially the Psalms). Which one resonates most with you right now, and how could you apply it this week?
2. Psalm 25 is an acrostic psalm (each line begins with the next Hebrew letter). Why does the preacher call it "a song of artistic genius," and what does this teach us about offering our best to God in prayer and worship?
3. The first direction for holy prayer is "lifting up your soul to God" rather than merely directing words toward Him (v. 1). What is the difference in your own prayer life? How can we cultivate soul-lifting prayer in private, family, and public settings?
4. In verse 2 David says, "O my God, in you I trust." Why is confessing our faith and trust in God at the beginning of prayer important? What specific areas (created order, redemption, providence, sovereign plan) does the sermon urge us to confess trust in?

5. David prays, "Let me not be put to shame" (v. 2). What does this petition mean, and why is fear of shame a helpful (though secondary) motive for holy living? How does this connect to the sermon's warning against antinomianism?
 6. The sermon emphasizes praying for triumph over the wicked and enemies (v. 2). Why do faithful Christians inevitably have enemies? What practical actions does the preacher encourage alongside prayer (outwork, out-trust, out-pray, etc.)?
 7. In verses 3–4 David remembers God's promises and asks God to teach him His ways and paths. Why is remembering God's promises and patiently waiting on Him essential in prayer? Share a personal example of waiting on the Lord.
 8. Verses 4–5 shift from "teach me" (knowledge) to "lead me" (obedience). Why do we need both the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit's help? How can we pray more effectively for guidance in everyday decisions?
 9. In verse 7 David asks God to remember His mercy and steadfast love rather than his sins. How does this petition point us to Christ? For believers, how should this shape our confidence in prayer? For unbelievers, what is the urgent invitation?
 10. Overall, the sermon's main doctrine is that Christians should lift up their souls to God in prayer, seeking His divine aid in all things. Which of the 10 directions for holy prayer do you most need to grow in right now? What is one practical step you will take this week, and how can this group encourage you?
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SERMON TRANSCRIPT

How can we learn to pray? This is probably a question that you have had or those around you have had and maybe asked you. How can I learn how to pray? And there are multiple answers to that.

The first and probably simplest answer is the Lord's prayer. What we call the Lord's prayer because the disciples of Christ during his earthly ministry came to him and just said, "Lord, teach us to pray," and Christ said, "Well, when you pray, pray like this," and then he prays what we call the Lord's prayer, which can be used as an outline to move through prayer. First of all, focusing on we are offering our souls up to God the Father through faith in Jesus Christ. "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name," which means may your name be glorified. May you be glorified above all. Then he moves through six different petitions in the Lord's prayer. That is where I would direct you. First of all, how do I pray? Well, Christ's

disciples asked him that and he gave a very simple clear answer that can be used as an outline for your private and your public prayer. So, the Lord's prayer.

But ***another way we can learn to pray is by looking at the prayers recorded in Scripture by God's prophets and Christ's apostles.*** So you can look through specifically the book of Ephesians if you want to see how did the apostles of Christ pray. There are at least three long prayers that Paul writes to the church at Ephesus and says this is what I am praying for you. And so you can learn how to pray by looking at the example given in the Scriptures of how the prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New Testament wrote out their prayers.

You can also learn to pray by looking through church history at the saints who have recorded and written down their prayers. Those people who have gone before us. And we live in a day that is really easy to access those through Christian biographies, just through some writings that have been restored or recovered that we have different reformers and Puritans and early church fathers that even in their books, in their writings, in their sermons you can see how they prayed. For instance, if you read John Calvin's sermons, at the end of every sermon there is a long lengthy prayer and you just see how did other saints pray in times before us. And that can be tremendously helpful.

But one of the best ways to learn to pray is to learn from and actually pray the psalms. We have 150 songs, psalms recorded in our Bible. These are songs first of all, but songs that also are prayers. It is an offering up to God. And so you can learn how to pray by just learning the Psalms. And even sometimes when you do not know what to pray, pray the Psalms. John Calvin said, "The Psalms are a complete anatomy of the human soul." And what he meant by that is how I put it. I say there is a psalm for everything. Are you on a mountaintop experience? There is a psalm for that. Are you in the valley of the shadow of death, suffering? Are you depressed? Are you riddled with anxiety and worries? There is a psalm for that. Are God's enemies attacking you? There is a psalm for that. Are you really needing to bank on the promises of God and all the promises of Christ being your shepherd? Well, just as we looked at last week, Psalm 23 is a great psalm for that, reminding yourself of all the blessings and benefits that belong to us who belong to Christ Jesus. So, we can learn from and actually pray the psalms. And some of the psalms are even more helpful than others when it comes to prayer because they are in fact just prayers themselves. And they are not just meditating on or saying truths, but they are actually petitioning God, asking specific things from God that we need. And Psalm 25 is one of those psalms. It is a psalm of prayer and meditation. It keeps transitioning back and forth. The first seven verses of this psalm that we are focusing on today is a psalm and these verses are just petitions. They are prayers offered up to God. And then in verse eight, it is a meditation. Then we go back to prayer and then back to meditation and then it ends with prayer. So Lord willing, we are going to take this psalm in multiple weeks and focus on these things we should pray for and these things that we should meditate upon, these truths that we should dwell upon and beat into our souls to help us in the Christian life. But this psalm is specifically a psalm of prayer. And as we look

through the first seven verses, I want to present to you these 10 directions for holy prayer. 10 directions for holy prayer in Psalm 25:1-7. But before we get there, let me help us understand the context and the content of this psalm.

There are at least five things to note before we dig into the specific words of this psalm. But let us understand the content and the context. ***Psalm 25, first of all, is a psalm of David.*** You can notice that at the very beginning it says of David. That is not put there by the translators. That was actually written as a part of the psalm. So as David was about to write this, he wrote of David. So it is a psalm of David and it is inspired by God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, these are not just David's words. These are God's very words.

Secondly, as for the context and content, we are not certain as to the occasion of David writing Psalm 25. We do not know what was going on specifically. We do not know if it was when Absalom, his son, is rising up against him. We do not know if it is when he is running from King Saul. We do not know. There are many speculations as to when he wrote it, but there is nothing in the psalm that is a real big clue. Okay, this was the period in David's life that he wrote this psalm. Some of the psalms we have that some of the psalms, even in the title, it is written, I wrote this psalm when I was hiding in the cave from King Saul. And so we very clearly know the occasion and it helps us make the application and our it helps our understanding in it. But most of the psalms, we do not know the occasion. We do not know what was going on in the life of the psalmist as they were writing. And as William S. Plumer points out, none of the opinions as to the occasion of the writing of this psalm can be proven or disproven. And he says, Plumer is, by the way, one of the greatest commentators on the Psalms ever. He said, "We gain nothing by assigning a given occasion to each psalm." So, we do not have to know the specific occasion of the writer in each of these psalms. All we know is David wrote it. We know enough about his life and we know that it is God's word ultimately and not David's. So, the bottom line for that is this. Psalm 25 is God's word. We should therefore learn it, apply it, pray it, and we should sing it.

But Psalm 25, not only is it a Psalm of David, we are not sure of the occasion, but it does not really matter the occasion. ***You need to know going into this that Psalm 25 is a song of artistic genius.*** Psalm 25 is a song of artistic genius. Boys and girls, look up here at me. Suppose I asked you to go home today and write me a poem, a song, a prayer that flowed and made sense and it was consistent with all of God's word. But every beginning line, you got to write a bunch of different lines of this poem or song. And everyone has to begin with the next letter in the English alphabet. So the first sentence has to begin with the letter A. The next line has to begin with the letter B. And you just keep going through the entire alphabet. And it is all got to make sense. Well, boys and girls, that is what David did with Psalm 25. There are 22 verses. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. And every line David is writing in the Hebrew language. And every line begins with the first, then the next, then the next, and goes through every letter of the Hebrew alphabet. There are multiple psalms that David writes in this way. And if you have not ever

tried to write poetry or a song or something like that, you might not realize how difficult that is. But those of you who have, go, dang, that really handcuffs you. You got to be wise in the scriptures. You got to be smart. And David was. And so it is not just a song that makes sense. It is a song with artistry. It is a song of artistic genius. And we should actually learn from that. As an aside, we should learn from that for our Christian life that whatever we do, we should strive to do it excellently. And it is never wasted to try to make something grand and glorious and beautiful just like David does the psalm. He did not need to write an alphabetical acrostic psalm. The truth is still there. And if I did not tell you that and you did not look at the footnote in your Bible, you would never know because we are reading it in English and it is not written in the same way. But David intentionally did it. And it shows us, this is what Spurgeon even said about this psalm. Spurgeon has a great commentary on the psalms called the Treasury of David. Very helpful. He said the 22 verses of this psalm begin in the original with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in their proper order. It is the first instance we have of an inspired acrostic or alphabetical song. This method may have been adopted by the writer to assist the memory and the Holy Spirit may have employed it to show us that the graces of style and the arts of poetry may lawfully be used in his service. Now listen to this. Spurgeon said, "Why should not all the wit and ingenuity of man be sanctified to the noblest ends by being laid upon the altar of God?" Why not use all of our wit and ingenuity, our creative prowess in a sanctified way to be used for the noblest ends of glorifying and serving the Lord. I encourage you to learn from David that he labored to have an artistic focus and make things not just true but beautiful. And you should learn how to apply that in all of your life. Not just good enough or it is true, but in order to glorify the Lord, we should make things excellent and beautiful. So it is a song of artistic genius.

It is a song of prayer. That is the fourth thing you need to make note of. And I have already told you that. You can see in verse one, "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul." Prayer. Then verse 11 again, it transitions back to prayer from meditation. "For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great." Then it transitions back to meditation after that, but then back to prayer in verse 16. "Turn to me and be gracious to me for I am lonely and afflicted." So it is a song of prayer. There is prayer, meditation, prayer, meditation, prayer. You can see in verse eight, verse eight is where the first part of meditation comes in. "Good and upright is the Lord. Therefore, he instructs sinners in the way." So, it is not petitioning God for something in prayer. It is just proclaiming things to meditate upon as he is praying or singing to God. It is not a petition, but it is a meditation musing upon the goodness of the Lord. And then in verse 12, you could see it in your own Bible. He turns back not to petitioning God, but to meditating on truths. "Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way that he should choose." So ***it is a psalm of prayer and of meditation***. But today in the first seven verses, it is a psalm of prayer, things to pray for. So the doctrine that we should learn from these first seven verses I think is simply this. Christians should lift up their souls to God in prayer seeking his divine aid in all things. That is what you should learn from

verses 1-7. Christians should lift up their souls to God in prayer, seeking his divine aid in all things. Now, as we get to the specifics of verses 1-7, let me point out to you these 10 directions for holy prayer.

First, look at verse one. "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul." To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. He does not say to you, O Lord, I direct my words. No, it is the metaphor he uses is a lifting up of the soul, an offering up of your soul unto God in prayer. So pray. Here is the first direction for prayer. **Pray, lifting up your soul to God.** Pray lifting up your soul to God. Adults or you who have been Christians for a while, you know the difference between lifting up your soul to God in prayer and just directing some words toward God in prayer. I do not think I have to explain that. You know the difference. You have done both. And you know the times when it is just like, you know what? I was not lifting up my soul to God, going before him in Christ's name to praise him, to petition him, but it was like I am just directing some words toward him. But David teaches us by his example that prayer is not simply a directing of words unto a distant father, but it is a lifting up of the soul in the name of Christ Jesus to come before the throne of grace and in this instance petition the creator, the savior, the sovereign of the entire universe. Matthew Henry said, "Prayer is the ascent of the soul to God. God must be eyed and the soul employed. Up with your hearts was anciently used as a call to devotion. Up with your hearts, not simply address your words." Boys and girls, look up here at me. When we pray, it is not simply that we are saying words to God like you and I would talk to one another. When you are praying to God through faith in Jesus Christ, it should be vastly different than when you are talking to your earthly father or when you are talking to me or you are talking to your mother. You are not offering up your soul as you speak to your earthly father, are you? Like, no. But out of reverence for God, for God's glory, for our own good, we do not simply direct our words, but we, as David says, I am offering up my entire being, who I am. I am going before God's throne of grace through faith in Christ Jesus. I have an audience with the thrice holy God and I am going to offer myself up to him, direct all my attention to him and address my words in a way that is becoming of addressing the king. Adults, examine yourself in your private worship, in your family worship, in your public worship, even when you are participating in prayer. As one of the pastors prays from the pulpit, are you joining with them? And not only making it so that your amen says, I also addressed those words they prayed to God. But we are lifting up our souls who we are and going before the throne of grace. Or are you simply just directing your words? Learn the seriousness and the solemnity of prayer, lifting up your soul to God. It is like when they offered an animal sacrifice in the Old Testament and the smoke rose up to God. And as they offered this sacrifice, it said that the aroma was pleasing to the Lord. That is what our prayers should be like. We are offering up a spiritual sacrifice and going before the Lord. We are offering up our very souls. Every bit of who we are is offered up as we go before the throne of grace. Pray, beloved, lifting up your soul to God.

Notice next in the first part of verse two, here is the second direction we can learn about holy prayer. He says, "O my God, in you I trust." O my God, in you I trust. So he addresses the Lord. I am lifting up my soul. And then he claims him as his. You are my God. O my God. And you can only say that if you have faith in Christ Jesus and belong to him. O my God. And then he confesses his faith, his trust in God. O my God. In you I trust. I do not trust in man. I do not trust in myself. I do not trust in means. I trust ultimately in you my God. So he is confessing his faith. This is not a profession of faith like he is not becoming a Christian right here. He is a believer but it is him David in prayer modeling for us that even at the beginning of our prayers reminding ourselves and petitioning God first of all by saying my faith my trust my reliance my dependence is on you period.

So beloved I exhort you to ***Pray, confessing your faith in God***. Let me give you some things to think about concerning confessing your faith, your trust in God. Confess your trust in God's created order. If you trust in the Lord alone, if your faith is in him alone, then confess your trust in God's created order. God has created everyone and everything that exists. God has created mankind, male and female, with different natures, different roles, different strengths, and different duties. God has created what we call lower creation in order that the pinnacle of his creation, man, would have dominion over lower creation and use it for God's glory. God has created and ordered the world to be a patriarchal hierarchy with men ruling in the home, the workforce, and the civil government, and the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, ruling from his sovereign throne. This is how God has created the world. God has created man to work six days and rest one. God has created man to enjoy him and to glorify him forever. So confess your trust in the way God has created and designed the world. In you, Lord, do I trust. I trust you in what you have revealed about how you have created me, how you have created everyone, why, how we are to function. Confess your trust in God's created order.

But confess your trust also as you pray, confess your trust in God's redeemed purchase and God's redemption. God chose before the foundation of the world because of his mere good pleasure to save a particular people for himself by grace alone. With that in mind, can you say in you, my God, do I trust. God became man in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ in order to dwell among us and be our representative. The God-man lived without sin, perfectly upholding the law of God like we have not, like you have not, in order to gift each of us who believe a righteousness that is undefiled and unfading. The God-man, Christ Jesus, then willingly gave himself up on a cross, suffering under the tyranny of men and the just wrath of God, so that all who believe in him alone for salvation would be completely forgiven of every one of their sins. The God-man was then three days later raised from the dead, defeating death, putting his foot on the neck of the grave, slitting the devil's throat, and lifting up the severed head of sin, and saying, "Is there no one else?" The God-man then ascended back to heaven where he sovereignly sits on his throne and providentially rules and reigns over the entire universe until all his enemies be made a footstool for his feet. The God-man will one day return bodily to this earth in order to judge sinners, deliver the righteous,

renew this cosmos, and consummate his kingdom so that believers like you and me will live and reign with him in perfection for all eternity. Confess in prayer. Confess your faith in God. God the redeemer in you, my God, do I trust.

Confess your trust not only in his created order and his redeemed purchase, but confess your trust in God's providential provision. Can you hear David saying that? O my God, in you I trust and neglect to think about God's providential provision and protection over his people. I imagine this could be in the forefront of David's mind, especially because in a couple of verses, he is going to deal with his enemies. Confess your trust in God's providential provision. The Lord has providentially brought you this far, Christian. He has brought you this far. The reason that you and I are not in hell right now is because of God's providential provision. Can you imagine that? Can you think about that? Can you reckon with that fact? The reason you are not in hell right now is because of God's providential provision and protection over you. He has brought you this far. And if you belong to Christ Jesus, the Lord will providentially bring you all the way to glory. Trust and confess also your trust in God's sovereign plan. He does have a plan and he works all things according to the counsel of his will. But as you pray, confess your trust not only in the created order, the redeemed purchase, the providential provision, but also your trust that God knows what he is doing and he is working in all things for his glory and for his people's good. The Lord created all things not for your glory, not for my glory, but for his own name. And he is working in all things to reveal that glory. The Lord redeems and passes over sinners for his name's sake and is doing all of that to reveal his glory. The Lord providentially protects his saints and will ruin sinners for his name's sake. And he is doing all of that in his own time to reveal his own glory. Then comes the end when Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all of his enemies under his feet. 1 Corinthians 15:24. Confess your trust in God's sovereign plan, in his providential provision, in his redeemed purchase, and in his created order. Pray like that. O my God, in you do I trust.

But look thirdly at the next part of verse two and learn this third direction for prayer when he says "let me not be put to shame." "Let me not be put to shame." This does not mean let me not be ashamed of you. It does not mean that. It means let not the enemies of God be able to point at me and accuse me in a way that would bring shame to me, shame to my family, shame to my church, shame to Christ's universal church, and ultimately shame to Christ himself. O Lord. Another way we could say it or the way that I will put it for your direction is: ***Pray, petitioning God to keep you from falling.*** Pray petitioning God to keep you from falling. His petition is Lord let me not be put to shame. Shame is good. Shame is a good thing. When you act shamefully, you should feel shame. When other people act shamefully, they should feel shame. In our day, people act like any kind of shame is totally evil. Like, no, no, no. The thing that brought the shame was evil. The shame is not evil. The shame is appropriate for the response. William Plumer

again said, "The principle of shame in our nature is not without its use. Sinners would often be more wicked and saints would often be less holy, but that a keen sense of shame restrains the former or arouses the latter. Nothing has more power to torment us than shame."

Beloved, this is a sobering petition. Let me not be put to shame. Pray petitioning God to keep you from falling. Pray that the Lord would keep you from falling because of the great shame that would be produced by your fall. Lord, let me not be put to shame. Keep me from falling. And that should be the motivation because of the great shame that would be produced by your fall. Also pray that the Lord would keep you from living a fallen life because of the great shame that is produced by your living in opposition to God's creation and command. There are some professed Christians who need to pray, "Lord, keep me from falling, from being put to shame." And there are some professed Christians who need to pray, "Lord, grant me repentance for still living a fallen life, not in accordance with your created order and your explicit command." Now, I want you to examine yourself. Do you fit either of those categories. Some professed Christians are walking and they need to pray, "Lord, keep me from falling off." And then there are some professed Christians who are not really walking the path. They are just like walking in the ditch and they need to pray, "Lord, keep me. Deliver me from living a fallen life that is not in accordance with your created order or your divine command." When Christians fall or live a fallen life, shame is brought to themselves individually. And the wicked love it. When Christians fall or live a fallen life, shame is brought to their family and sinners rejoice in that. When Christians fall or live a fallen life, shame is brought to one of Christ's local churches and the ungodly celebrate it. If you do not believe me about that, just look this past week that one of our candidates in the United States for the United States Senate for Oklahoma is a pastor of a church in Tulsa. And he had to drop out of the race because it was exposed that he had been having at least an emotional affair for the past four years. You and I look at that and say that is terrible. The wicked look at that and say, "I love it, hypocrites. Christ is not a great savior." But shame is brought upon us, our families, our local church that we are a part of when we fall. When Christians fall or live fallen, shame is not just brought upon the local church you are a part of. Shame is brought to Christ's universal church and the unrighteous gloat about it. Most importantly, when Christians fall or live fallen, shame is brought upon Christ and the devil laughs. Let me not be put to shame. Pray, beloved, petitioning God to keep you from falling. Not only to spare you of unnecessary shame, but to spare your family, to spare your church, to spare Christ's church, to spare Christ himself.

Fear of shame is a good motivation. I do not want to bring reproach upon the name of Christ. I do not want to bring reproach upon my family. Like thinking like that, that is good. Fear of shame is not the primary motive for walking a straight line and living above reproach in the Christian life. The ultimate motive for living righteously and living above reproach, the ultimate motive is for the love of God because I love God and I want to glorify him. Yet shame is absolutely to be used as

a secondary motive and it actually flows out of the primary motive of love for God because I love Christ and I do not want to bring shame upon him or his church. Lord, enable me. Keep me from being put to shame. Let me not be put to shame. Keep me from falling. Not just for self-preservation, but for the glory of the Lord Jesus. There is forgiveness, beloved, in Christ for falling. And no true Christian will fall so great that their eternal destiny will be shame. Yet watch out lest you bring shame upon yourself, your family, your church, your Christ, because you cared too little about strict righteousness and presumed on the grace of God.

I do not think it is a danger for faithful, for healthy Christians who get a healthy diet of expository preaching, sound doctrine. I do not think it is a danger for you to hear what I am saying and think I mean I am going to lose my salvation. I think the big danger in our day is not what we would call legalism which it would be that like if you do not the big danger in our day is what is called antinomianism which is a rejection of the law of God and it presumes on the grace of God and acts like well because I can never lose my salvation I can live however I want that is the danger in our day that is the danger that permeates the western church even and especially reformed churches antinomianism. That is why I say there is forgiveness. You are not going to lose your salvation. But watch out lest you presume on the grace of God so that it leads you to be lax and not strict in your righteousness and living above reproach. And then before you know it, you have brought shame upon yourself, your family, your church, and your Christ in a way that I know you deep down do not want to do. So make it a part of your prayer. Lord, keep me from falling for your sake, for my sake, for my family, for my church. Let me not be put to shame. That is what David prayed.

Now look fourthly at the next part of verse two and see that he transitions now to his enemies. This is one of the reasons you need to read the Psalms, study the Psalms, pray the Psalms, sing the Psalms because you have enemies. You need to think about them. You need to pray about them. You need to sing about them. And this is something that if we only sing hymns, man-made, man-written hymns. This what one man has pointed out. It is like one reason we should sing the psalms is because there is actually enemies in the psalms. And you look at hymns and there is like hardly ever an enemy mentioned. Hymns written by men are almost totally absent from any kind of enemy talk. And it is totally inconsistent with the songs God has written and delivered to us in the psalter. One example is "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" that we sang this morning. It is like that is one of the only hymns, man-made songs that we sing that actually sort of talks about enemies, but it is just about mostly about Satan. He does get to the end, let goods and kindred go. This mortal life also. So there is some enemy kind of thinking in there. Those who hate Christ and hate his people. But one of the reasons you need to sing the Psalms, pray the Psalms, learn the Psalms, because you actually do have enemies. And the Psalms teach you how you should sing, think, and pray about them. He says in the next part of verse two, "Let not my enemies exult over me." Let not my enemies exult over me.

So ***Pray, petitioning God to enable you to triumph over the wicked.*** Pray petitioning God to enable you to triumph over the wicked. Let not my enemies win and be able to gloat over me, exalt over me. William Plumer, you can just tell when you do not read modern commentaries that you read guys from church history like Plumer in the 19th century. He is not even that long ago, but they spoke radically different than our modern-day effeminate commentators do in most modern commentaries.

But Plumer even just in the 19th century says it is both a privilege and a duty to pray that the wicked may not triumph over the righteous. Such a state of things would argue a total subversion of the divine government. The hope of the wicked shall surely perish. The throne of God's grace is against them. The universe is against them. All nature has groaned under the weight of them. And all nature shall fight against them.

We do not have many modern commentators who will even speak like that. So you need to go for the old paths and learn that you should petition God to enable you to triumph over the wicked. Just note by this Christians have enemies. If you are a Christian, you have enemies. The truth is that the more faithful you are to Christ, the more enemies you will have. You need to be aware that those who hate Christ will hate you. And do not be surprised when they persecute you for righteousness' sake. The real problem in our day is not Christians wondering what to do about their enemies. I think the problem in our day is how many professed Christians have no enemies because they do not speak up and stand up for Christ.

Let me give you two warnings here. First warning, do not aim to make enemies. Do not try to make enemies by being a jerk. Your aim should be to obey Christ Jesus at all cost. And I assure you, the enemies will come. Aim to obey Christ and please Christ at any cost and the enemies will come. This kind of warning is commonly said by those effeminate professed Christians and armchair theologians, but I really do not think it is a very big problem or temptation in our day that Christians are out there like trying to get everyone mad at them. Now, if you get on X and the people who like go viral, like the Christian guys who go viral on X, you may think like, whoa, this is a big problem. It is like, yeah, it is like five people. The problem is not that we have Christians who are being like rude or jerks or something and trying to make everyone mad at them. That is not the problem in our day. I think the problem in our day is that people aim to please men. So there is my second warning to you. Do not aim to please men. Aim to please Christ. And if your aim is to please the Lord Jesus Christ, the enemies will come. So do not aim to make enemies. If you are faithful to Jesus, it will happen. Boys and girls, look up here at me. The wicked hate the righteous. Those who hate Christ do not want to submit to Christ. They are going to hate those who love Christ and want to obey Christ and tell other people that they should trust and obey Christ. That is just how it works. That is what Christ promised us. Christ said, "Do not be surprised when the world hates you. They hated me first. And a servant is not greater than his master." If you are one of the servants of Christ, you are not greater than Christ. The world hated Christ. The world is going to hate you. And it is not because you

are trying to make everyone mad at you, boys and girls. It is just as you go through life. If you are trying to speak the truth and act in accordance with God's law and tell other people they should repent of sin and trust in and obey Christ, that is all it takes. And those who hate Christ are going to hate you. So you need to aim, try, labor to trust in and obey Jesus and tell other people they should trust in and obey Jesus. And that is all it will take. You do not have to try to make enemies. The enemies will come if you are faithful to the Lord Jesus.

Pray, petitioning God to enable you to triumph over the wicked. Let not my enemies exalt over me. So we pray and we act. And not only pray, but we also act. And we never use prayer as an excuse not to work. Labor and we never labor or work as an excuse not to pray. It is always both. We pray and we act. So pray that God would enable you to triumph over your enemies. And when praying afterward, labor to outwork them. Be a better worker, a harder worker than your enemies. Labor to out-trust them. Trust in your God and Savior more than they trust in their silver and gold and schemes. Labor to out-pray them. As they look in devotion to their false gods, you look in devotion and pray to your true God. Labor to out-study them. Out-study your enemies. Be more well read than them. Put them to shame when they speak against the Lord because you can speak the truth. Labor to out-serve them. Lastly, labor to out-worship them. Everyone worships someone or something and we should exhibit so much devoted worship to the Lord that even the pagans would go, they take this seriously. So labor to out-work them, out-trust them, out-pray them, out-study them, out-serve them, and out-worship them. Pray that God would enable you to triumph over the wicked.

Look fifthly at the first part of verse three and see that he says, "Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame." So he is not petitioning now. He is reminding himself. He is remembering. And what I think we should learn from the first part of verse three is this. ***Pray, remembering the promises of God in Christ Jesus.*** He takes a specific situation. Let me not be put to shame. Let not my enemies exalt over me. And then he reminds himself of two things. The promise that we will not be put to shame and the promise that the wicked will be put to shame and we will as those who belong to Christ triumph over the wicked. The next part of verse three says they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

The righteous will not be ashamed, will not be put to shame. The wicked will be. The wantonly treacherous, they shall be ashamed. They shall be put to shame. The righteous will in the end triumph over the wicked. So remember that if you belong to Christ Jesus, you win. You win. So we pray the wicked may look like they are prospering in this life. No, no, no, no. They will all be ashamed. They will all be put to shame. The righteous may look like they are suffering and they are downtrodden in this life. But we will not be put to shame. We will triumph with Christ because of Christ. So pray remembering the righteous will indeed triumph over the wicked.

Next, the seventh direction is found in verse four. He says, "Make me to know your

ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths. Make me to know to comprehend your ways. Teach me your paths." This has to do simply with our knowledge, our understanding of what is right, what is wrong according to God's law.

David said, "On your law, I meditate day and night." And he is still praying, "Lord, make me to know your ways. Teach me your paths." So, what do we learn? Well, ***Pray, petitioning God for guidance in righteousness***. Pray, petitioning God for guidance in righteousness. Make me to know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths.

Boys and girls, if you have a Bible, if you have a Bible open, look at verse 4 in Psalm 25. This is a prayer that David offers up and he says, "Make me to know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths." God's ways means how we live, how we walk, how we speak, how we think, how we act, how we treat others. All of that according to God's law. That is what God's ways are. That is what his path is, how we live our life. And the way we learn how to do that is not by just saying praying, Lord, teach me your ways, teach me your path. And then we just go about our life and think like God is going to put in my head what is right and what is wrong and I am just going to be able to do that and it is just going to be I am going to see things illuminated. That is what I should do. It is not like that. We know God's ways and his path by what he has revealed in the scriptures. That is how you and I can labor to learn God's ways and his path is to know what the Bible says, what God has revealed to us in his perfect and sufficient word. So, boys and girls, you need to know the Bible. You need to know the Ten Commandments and all of its vast implications and applications. This is one of the reasons in our catechism we spend so long there are so many questions dealing with the ten commandments because we need to learn how to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord and the moral law of God is summarized in those ten commandments. But we do not boys and girls we do not just need to study God's law God's commands we need to ask him for help. Help me to know this. Teach me how to walk in your paths, Lord. Help me to know the Ten Commandments and all of its applications. Help me to learn how to live in obedience to the Ten Commandments and all the various aspects of life. So, we need to know the Bible and we need to ask God to enable us to understand and apply it. Petitioning God for guidance in righteousness. Boys and girls, the Bible is the most important book that exists. It must be the supreme book that you read, that you learn from.

Now, eight, look at verse five. There is a difference in verse four and verse 5. Verse four has to deal with our knowledge, our understanding. Verse five has to do with really actually living it out. Lead me in your truth and teach me for you are the God of my salvation. For you I wait all the day long. So verse four is teach me. Verse five is lead me. So ***Pray, petitioning God to lead you in paths of righteousness*** to lead you that the Holy Spirit would illuminate you your mind and strengthen you so that when you are actually walking you not only remember what God has said but you do recall that and how to obey Christ as you are living it out. That is the Lord leading you. It is not in opposition to the scriptures and the law of God. It is

the application of it. It is God, help me in those moments when I am figuring out how to react or respond to something. Lead me. Help me to act according to what I know is true and what you have helped me understand is true. Lead me in your truth and teach me. So, we need to not only know the scriptures, but we need the Spirit to enable us to obey them. And you know what that is like? You know the truth and then you go about life and something happens and you go I knew better than that. I knew you do something you go, I totally knew better than that. Why did I do that? That is part of the prayer. Lord, not only teach me, but lead me, enable me in those moments. Verse four is help me know your ways. Verse five is essentially, help me actually walk in those ways. Lead me. So, just like Psalm 23 says, "You lead me in paths of righteousness for your name's sake." Well, turn that into the prayer. Lead me in your truth and teach me. Lead me in paths of righteousness.

Boys and girls, we need God, the Holy Spirit to give us the willingness and the strength to actually walk according to God's ways for his glory. Because the spirit is willing but what? But the flesh is weak. So we need to not only know but we need to have the strength of God the Holy Spirit in our everyday life and steps so that our weak flesh is overcome by God's powerful grace. Pray petitioning God to lead you in paths of righteousness.

Ninth, ***Pray, petitioning God to treat you according to his loving kindness***. This is the plea. Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love or your loving kindness. Your the Hebrew word is the covenant love of God for those who are in his covenant. Remember David does not say remember my righteousness here. He does not say remember my obedience. He does not say remember my innocence. He does not say remember my intentions. He says Lord please remember your mercy. Remember your steadfast love for they have been from of old. So Pray, petitioning God to treat you according not to what you deserve here, but he is saying according to your grace and mercy, according to your loving kindness. Treat me according to your steadfast love. And we know that steadfast love is given to us only by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. So another way you could say it is, Lord, treat me as Jesus deserves and not as I deserve. Lord, please treat me as Jesus deserves, not as I deserve. Forgive me.

So, I will close just with a warning [for sinners] and with an encouragement for Christians. Look at verses six and seven again and see. He says, "Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been of old, from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions. According to your steadfast love, remember me for the sake of your goodness, O Lord." David can pray that and have the Lord answer yes. Because David is a Christian who is forgiven in Christ, counted righteous in Christ, reconciled to God. The Lord will remember believers according to his steadfast love. But you need to know unbelievers, God will not remember you or treat you as an unbeliever according to his steadfast love. He will remember you and treat you according to your sins. This

is the terrifying truth that God is just. God is holy. If you are outside of Christ and you refuse to trust in Christ for salvation, the fact that God is holy is the most terrifying truth you could hear. That means he is not going to wink at your sin. He is not going to sweep your sin under the rug of the universe. He will treat you according to his justice. So turn to Christ Jesus in faith. Turn from your sins. Embrace Jesus Christ in faith. Trust in his righteous life that will count you righteous. Trust in his death in place of sinners by which all of your sins will be forgiven. Submit to him as the resurrected king. And he promises, you come to me, I will not refuse you. I will receive you and accept you. And then you can know God will then treat me not according to my sins, but according to his steadfast love. If that is you, if you have turned from your sins and trusted Christ alone for salvation, remember he does not treat us according to our iniquities. But because of his grace in Christ, he treats us according to his loving kindness. Praise the Lord. And let us sing for his glory now.

Pray with me. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for your word and we ask you to sanctify us believers in the truth. Your word is truth. Help us to offer our souls up to you in prayer, not merely direct our words. Help us to learn from Psalm 25 what we should. We ask that you would keep us from falling. You would enable us to triumph over our enemies and over the wicked for your glory. We ask that you remember us not according to the sins of our youth or our transgressions, but according to your loving kindness for the sake of your goodness, we ask you to save those who are not yet united to Christ by faith. Open their eyes. Give them new hearts. Give them wills that desire to trust Christ alone for salvation as he is offered to them in the gospel. Cause the new birth. We cannot. We ask you to do it. Amen.