

## Sermon Study Guide: “Investing in Our Prayer Toolbox”

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### Main Idea

Prayer is a muscle that grows stronger only through practice. This year we are shifting from a self-focused “microscope” view of prayer (obsessing over our own needs and anxieties) to a “telescope” view that first magnifies the greatness, sovereignty, and glory of God.

### Key Illustrations

- **Microscope vs. Telescope**
  - Microscope: Zooming in on personal concerns → prayer becomes cramped and self-obsessed.
  - Telescope: Looking at the big God who made the heavens → puts everything in proper perspective.
- **Worship & Adoration First** Prayer is not just presenting a shopping list of needs; it begins with giving God our attention, delight, trust, and hearts.

“Commanding us to glorify God, He is inviting us to enjoy Him.” — C.S. Lewis

### Biblical Examples

- **Acts 4:23-31** (The early church’s response to threats)
  - Only ~35 of 137 words address their problem.
  - They begin with adoration: “Sovereign Lord, you made the heavens and the earth...” (v.24)
  - They reframe their circumstances inside God’s sovereignty and mission before asking for boldness.
- **Matthew 17:1-9** (The Transfiguration)
  - Jesus is revealed in glory; the Father speaks: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”
  - Christian meditation: Place yourself in the scene and let the glory of Christ change you.

### Practical Homework

- **Pray through the Psalms** – Start with Psalm 1 and work forward.
  - Read or sing them out loud.
  - Let God’s Word “hijack” your day instead of letting your emotions dictate your prayers.
  - The Psalms contain every human emotion and keep us from making ourselves the center of the universe.

**Goal:** Grow in intimacy with the God who is sovereign over all, yet personally present with us in every concern.

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### **Questions for Further Thought & Discussion**

1. Where in your prayer life have you tended to use the “microscope” more than the “telescope”? What would change if you began every prayer with adoration of who God is?
2. Read Acts 4:23-31 slowly. How can you practice reframing your current challenges inside God’s sovereignty and story the way the early church did?
3. Try the Matthew 17 exercise this week. After imagining yourself on the mountain with Jesus, what shifted in your heart, perspective, or desire to listen to Him?

**Memory Verse:** “After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John... and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them.” (Matthew 17:1-2)

*“We are your people and we want to know the intimacy and confidence of your sure and abiding presence.” — Pastor Missy*