



WEEK 5 – PRAISE

CHECK-IN

How are you? Where have you seen God working in your life in the last week? And... last week was the start of Spring! What are you looking forward to most about the change of the seasons? The start of the baseball season? Walks in the park? Mosquitos? To each their own.

OPENING PRAYER

**Almighty God, remind us of your place in our lives,
for yours is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, Forever.**

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to week 5 of The SCRIPT, where we have been focusing on how to utilize various types of prayer in order to draw us closer to

God and prepare our hearts for Easter. We've covered a lot of ground in the last month, so let's do a quick recap of why this series is important. It is a tradition of the Church to use the season of Lent as a way to prepare our hearts for the coming celebration of the resurrection of Christ. There are a lot of ways we do that, but one is to focus on prayer. Now, most of what you do in prayer should be listening... but, what you say can be truly powerful in deepening your relationship with God, and getting the barriers that stand in the way, out of the way. And so, this year, we're focusing on what *you* say to God. We've looked at 4 tools in the SCRIPT toolbox, and today, we'll move to the next one... a simple style of prayer that has a truly deep impact on deepening our relationship with God.

Setup Question: What's your favorite worship song of all time? Are you a Daigle Dog, anything by Lauren will do? Maybe you go more Indie with some Rend Collective or Crowder? Or are you old school, nothing beats Michael W. Smith or Amy Grant? Maybe this is a foreign concept and your worship is Garth Brooks. It's okay, God listens to country, too.

THE SCRIPT SETUP

Easter is less than two weeks away! That means we're on the back stretch of this series and the acronym that is our toolbox of prayers. Quick recap... the first 2 letters were about us, the middle 2 were about others, and today, we move to the final 2 letters that are directly about God. Let's look at where we've been...

SUPPLICATION

CONFESSION

RESTORATION

INTERCESSION

P

T

We started with *Supplication*, which was simply asking God for what we want. We learned that it's okay to ask God for what we want, but if we take the time to align our desires with what God wants for our lives, and then we are way more likely to receive what we need. Then we looked at the 'C,' *Confession*. And a prayer from King David, written in the Psalms, showed us that confession gives us a clean heart and lightens the weight of the load we're carrying. Then we looked at the first letter about praying for others, the 'R,' which stood for *Restoration*. A prayer by Jesus himself taught us that one of the most important things we can pray for is the restoration of broken relationships in our lives, but also that it's important to pray for the restoration of others' relationship with God, as well. Then last week, we looked at praying for the needs of others, called *Intercession*, and the story of a Roman who came to Jesus with a request. This taught us that we can go to God on behalf others with hope, while trusting him with the outcome. Today, we'll look at the 'P'. But first...

Question 1: Last week, we were challenged to go to God with our Prayers of Intercession. If you were at worship, you even took a few

prayer requests to pray for. How did that go? Were you able to pray for the needs of others this week? Why or why not? If you were, how do you feel about it?

SCRIPTURE

To get at the next letter in our SCRIPT, we're going to go back to the story of David. Three weeks ago, we look at a prayer of Confession David made because he had seriously screwed up and was laying his soul bare before God, asking for forgiveness. Today, we're going to fast forward a bit and take a look at how far David has come. David has given his son Solomon the task of collecting money and material from all over the nation of Israel to build a permanent temple for God. Why is this a big deal? Remember, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, and even after they escaped, they wandered the desert for decades. Then, after they finally make it to their Promised Land, there has been no peace for the Israelites. It's been a rough go... but David has put in the work. And after centuries of struggle, they finally have a permanent home. The land is theirs, and they are building a capital in Jerusalem, and a Temple for God. This is cause for celebration. With so much to be happy about, we get this prayer of David.

Read 1 Chronicles, Chapter 29, verses 10 through 11.

That's quite a change from 3 weeks ago. (For him, years... for us, 3 weeks.) But, from the prayer of confession, where he was begging for God's forgiveness, to this prayer is a long road to have traveled. He's

come long way. He has a reason to celebrate with the coming building of the temple... and he takes that celebration directly to God.

Question 2: Knowing the story of where David has come from, how do you feel about this passage? What does David prayer say to you about how to pray to God? Have you ever prayed a prayer like this?

REFLECTION

David is actually showing another type of prayer that is the 'P' in our SCRIPT, which stands for...

PRAISE

Notice what David is NOT doing here. David is not asking for anything, so it's not supplication. He's not confessing, he done did that already. He's not praying for anyone, so it's not Restoration or Intercession. He's simply telling God how amazing God is. That's it. There's no agenda, no contract, no expectations or anxiety. There's no pressure or rote words. David simply prays praise.

This type of prayer is worth a week of our series because this isn't one we do often. When we pray, it's usually one of the first four, right? We pray because we need something, (or think we need something,) or we screwed up and need forgiveness, or we have someone we love who needs our prayers. But how often do we simply praise God in our prayers? Not often... if ever.

But if we're talking about deepening our relationship with God through prayer, Prayers of Praise can be invaluable. They allow us to go deeper and do something the other types of prayer don't. Here's what we mean... God doesn't need your praise. Some people say, "God put us on this Earth to worship Him." But God doesn't *need* worshippers, as if His ego is so fragile that God had to create humans so that we would tell him how great He is. If that's true, we've got a pretty insecure God who needs some self-esteem therapy. God doesn't need your praise.

So, what's the point of what David is doing here? Why praise? Well, this is what Prayers of Praise do for us that the others don't: Praising God is not for God... praising God is for us. Look at what David says...

¹¹ Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours,

David isn't telling God anything God doesn't already know. So why does David do this? David is reminding *himself*, remembering who God is to *him*. This is what praising God does for us. *Prayers of Praise remind US who God is in OUR lives.* (Read that again, it's important.) David is reminding himself of God's greatness and power, of God's glory, that God has the victory over every enemy, that God's majesty will be proclaimed in all the Earth. This prayer of praise is David's way of reminding himself of all these things God does for him...

We have to incorporate prayers of praise, because life can get tough. Things don't go how we planned. Sometimes, life falls apart. And in the midst of the difficulty, we can either run from God, or, if we regularly incorporate Prayers of Praise into our routine, we can be reminded of a God who holds the heavens and the Earth in His hands. Prayers of Praise are vital for reminding us who God is in our lives... for celebrating the good times, and for getting us through the bad ones.

Question 3: Consider prayers of praise. Do you think this would help you when life gets tough? Would a reminder of who God is in your life help you get through the struggle? Or is your tendency to only pray for God's help? Maybe, when life gets tough, you stop praying altogether? Discuss.

CLOSING

Let's tackle one more question... how do we do it? Well, it's a little awkward just to start telling God how great He is. And so, maybe the best way to start, until you can just praise God with your words... is to praise God through song. Now, they won't be your words, they're somebody else's, (usually Chris Tomlin's,) but when you find a song that says what you feel, those sung words can have the desired effect, to remind us of who God is in our lives. Until you get good at praising God in your own words, feel free to use a song. And while you're worshipping, do what David does... pay attention to the words. Don't just mindlessly sing, actually focus on the word. Let them be a reminder for you of who God is in your life. Let them be encouraging

to you, if you need encouragement. Let them be empowering to you, if you need support. Let them be comforting to you, if you need told it's going to be okay. Because you praise a God who, as David said, has the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Let this praise be a reminder for you of who God is in your life.

**Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations
and close in prayer.**