

### **Week #3 – What’s the point? Hint – it’s not what you want.**

It’s 7:30 pm, and there’s still no decision. Pizza or Chinese? Take out or go out? Even ordinary decisive people seem to have trouble picking a restaurant amongst a group of friends. No one wants to force their will on anyone else. However, as we grow older, we realize that time spent with good friends is far more valuable than whether you get your way in the dinner selection. Put simply, what we want isn’t the point—it’s all about the relationship.

By now, you might be wondering what in the world this has to do with prayer—we’re getting there, don’t worry. Whether or not we realize it, this principle shows up in more places than just our dinner destination; it is a fundamental law of healthy relationships. You can often use this as a benchmark to see where a relationship stands. If you are more interested in what you can get from a person or what they can do for you than you are in your connection with them, the relationship probably isn’t in a very healthy condition. The opposite is also true. If you are more concerned about the person than what you can gain from them, then your relationship with them is probably healthy and thriving.

The same is true in our relationship with God. In fact, if God is who he claims to be, then what we want isn’t really the point of prayer at all. So, how do we go about praying without focusing on what we want?

#### **Thought to Ponder:**

- *How do we make prayer about the relationship?*

Throughout history, followers of God have isolated many different kinds of prayers pertaining to our relationship with God. These include telling God the things we’ve done wrong (confession), expressing our desire to change (repentance), and asking for his help to become more of the person he made us to be (transformation). While this is by no means a complete list, the common theme for all of them is how they connect us more deeply to the heart of God. This stands in direct contrast to the “me-first” demanding of the selfish prayer.

#### **Prayer Activator:**

Read Psalm 27:4—this was written by King David, who was described elsewhere as “a man after God’s own heart.” David’s focus in prayer throughout his life was never “give me this, thanks for this,” or anything like that. The consistent cry of his heart was for a more intense, intimate relationship with God. This is the idea behind prayer—it is not just to tell God what we want or are thinking, and it is ultimately not even about the conversation at all. Prayer is the means to an end—that end being a deeper connection with God that goes beyond our human understanding.

Spend at least three minutes every day this week going through the progression that was briefly mentioned earlier—to tell God what you’ve done wrong, to express a desire to change, and to ask for his help to become more like who he made you to be. This will be a simple, but not easy, exercise.