

AN HOUR WITH GOD

The first time I was asked to do this I panicked. I was the kid who struggled to focus in school for short periods of time... much less an hour. (I am still the kid who keeps asking Nick for a 12-minute message... maybe this week?) Back in the day, they didn't have a diagnosis like ADHD, they just said we were "busy."

Being wired a little "busy," I would get so distracted while praying and forget what I read as soon as the cover of my Bible closed. In my advanced years, I have found that walking helps me focus and memorizing scripture helps me remember what I learned.. As I walk, I worship. I thank God for who He is and what He has created. I recite passages that I am learning and pray.... for my coworkers, my church and my family.

As we spend this hour today, take as much time as you'd like on each paragraph. Some of them may connect more than others. The rhythm might drive you absolutely crazy... or it might help you focus better and not yell, "squirrel!" as often.

With that being said, let's go!

Pastor Randy

Take a few minutes in spoken worship.

- Speak to God the truths you know about Him. (In case you need a few ideas- love, grace, mercy, all-knowing, ever-present, unchanging, holy, truth.)

Read Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
3 He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
4 The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Ponder how you are doing with verse 1.

- Who do you allow to counsel you? Yep, social media counts.
- Does your life reflect God's way or the way of sinners?
- What does your thought life reflect?
- Confess areas of your life that need to be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Begin memorizing verse 1. Phrase by phrase... thought by thought. (Use all the visuals you can dream up to help you remember, ie: blessed, walk, stand, sit.)

Read verse 2.

- What does your time in the word look like? Would you say you meditate on it day and night?
- "We are not all Berean searchers of the Scriptures. How few among us can lay claim to the benediction of the text! Perhaps some of you can claim a sort of negative purity, because you do not walk in the way of the ungodly; but let me ask you - Is your delight in the law of God? Do you study God's Word? Do you make it the man of your right hand - your best companion and hourly guide? If not, this blessing belongeth not to you." - Charles H Spurgeon (the theologian, not Ben Framstad's dog).
- Wow - so now how would you answer the question of your time in the word? What are some next steps you can take to immerse yourself in the Word?

Review verse 1. (If you can't remember it... that's ok. Refer back to it... you will get it!)

Begin to memorize verse 2. When you think you have it, say 1 and 2 together.

Ephesians 1:15,16 says, *"For this reason, since the day I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people. I have not stopped giving thanks for you and remembering you in my prayers."*

Pray for 6 people that you are connected with at Grace. (If you can't think of 6, ponder getting connected with a Grace Group.)

- Give thanks for something they have done or a way God has wired them.
- Pray for specific needs you know about them (hopefully you know a few things).
- Ask God to empower them for even greater ministry.
- Send a short text to a couple of them. Be specific about why you are thankful for them and how you prayed for them.

Recite verses 1 and 2.

Verse 3 speaks to the result of consistent time in the Word. Pray through that verse - ask God to help your roots grow stronger and the fruit your life produces to be a blessing to those around you.

- While you have verse 3 in your mind... take a couple minutes and commit it to memory...

Recite verses 1-3. (Be encouraged - you won't be asked to memorize any more of this chapter today...whew!)

Read verses 4 and 5. You may not think of your "5" as being wicked, they may be really nice people. Unfortunately, as you know, people without Jesus are in bad shape when they stand before a holy God. The Psalmist refers to them like chaff.

- Spending countless hours in a John Deere combine during wheat harvest, let me assure you, chaff is unpleasant and totally useless! That tiny lemma and palea that protect the wheat grain as it matures becomes destructive, annoying and finds its way into everything. It irritates your skin and makes you long for a shower at the end of the day. It can even cause combines to catch on fire when it collects in the engine compartment and ignites because of the heat. That is a pretty strong reference to someone without Jesus.

Friends don't let their friends be chaff - Pray for your 5. Ask God to do something beyond your imagination in their lives today.

Squirrel moment - after pondering chaff, its unpleasant qualities, and how God compares the wicked to chaff... isn't it amazing that God loves those people whose hearts are far from him?

Recite verses 1-3.

Read verse 6.

- I love the fact that the Lord knows the way of the righteous. Pray for some of the volunteers here at Grace... maybe your Grace Group or ABF leader, someone in the band, tech team or choir, or a person who encourages you. Drop a text to a couple of them letting them know how you are praying for them (or let them know next Sunday).

Final assignment: Keep memorizing!

- Hopefully verses 1-3 are stuck in your head for now. Don't miss the opportunity to keep them there (and maybe finish the chapter). I have learned a system from my son Tyler who has memorized hundreds of verses. He learns a verse then reviews it every day for several weeks. He then reviews it just a few times a week. Next, he puts it on a list to review once a week. He has a list of about 45 verses for each day. By doing this, you can learn a couple verses a week and keep them fresh to meditate day and night.

Hopefully this time has been helpful. If your time in the Word or prayer feels a bit stagnate, try to change it up. Ask some godly friends what they are doing, challenge a friend to memorize a favorite passage or chapter with you, pray with a friend, walk around your neighborhood while you pray for your 5... you get the idea!