



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

December 1, 2019

The Satisfied Life

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. —James 4:1-4

God is renewing Northpoint as a church. He's getting rid of the old to make room for the new. This housecleaning is not without pain or difficulty. It's the working out of death that brings new life. It's following in the way of Christ. God is working a miracle in our church. There is so much for us to look forward to, but there's also much we need to let go of as a body and as individuals.

And our passions are the first things that need to go. In order to embrace one another in love, we need to let go of the things that matter more to us than Christ. The trappings of church that are exactly to our liking and activities that perfectly suit our taste compete with our Savior for our love.

Our passions, as James calls them, create an insatiable desire for more. They turn our focus from God's fullness to what we want but don't have and create demands that conflict with the desires of others. So we contend with each other so to get what we want at their expense. This is how our desires displace Christ's love in our lives and relationships.

This process also blunts the power of our prayers. When what we want but don't have becomes the focus of our prayers, the God we have but no longer desire begins to say "No." When we let our emptiness define us, His fullness will never satisfy us. Prayerlessness and unanswered prayer are symptoms of a compromised love for Christ. So are the interpersonal conflicts they produce.

As humans, we are made from the stuff of earth, so naturally we desire things that are in the world. But our world is under the curse of sin, and it's passing away. As Christians, we are not of this world. We're free from this dying planet and everything in it that draws us away from the God who made us and His Son who saves us. Prayer brings heaven down to earth to make us ready for heaven and to do heaven's work here on earth. Freedom in Christ is freedom from the power this world has over our lives.

And so, drawing close to Christ brings conviction more than comfort. But that conviction is healthy, and avoiding it is exactly the wrong thing to do. Drawing near to God means letting Him examine our lives for things that separate us from Him. It means praying with David, *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting* (Psalm 139:23-24). Here are some self-examination questions that go along with that prayer.

- What passions are leading me to *ask wrongly*?
- What do I get mad at God about when I don't have it?
- What makes me angry with others when things go their way and not mine?
- What are some things God gave me to use in His service that I'm clinging to as my own?
- What things at Northpoint do I value for my sake instead of God's?
- What do I need to let go of, because it comes between me and my Lord—or me and my brother?

Our passions are things we love more than Christ. When we want the gift more than the Giver and the creation more than the Creator, we commit spiritual adultery. Letting God search our hearts sets us free to live the satisfied life and empties our hands so they can receive His abundant riches.

Riches we enjoy, not just for ourselves, but together as a body—to the praise of God's glory.

Living the Examined Life

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. –1st John 2:15-17

This passage gives us a filter for our affections and helps us separate the good from the bad in our lives. Living an examined life means evaluating everything we do, think, and value in terms of good and bad, darkness and light, of God and of this world, so we can live free in Christ.

- **Do not love the world or the things in the world:** Lust is anything we love more than Christ.
- **If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him:** This world is God's primary rival in our hearts.
- **For all that is in the world:** Everything in this world has the potential to pull us away from loving God first.
 - **the desires of the flesh:** Things that please us physically
 - **the desires of the eyes:** Things we see and want to have
 - **pride of life:** Things that gratify our need to feel important
- **is not from the Father but is from the world:** Our choice in life is clear and stark. We can have the world and lose Christ, or we can have Christ and be free from this world.
- **And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever:** God is forever and He made in Christ to belong to Him forever. This world is an anchor that drags us away from Him and down to death.

Pray for ...

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Terilyn Brown, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Vinoj Zechariah, and new elders who will soon come onto the board.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Tamene Menna, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

Prayer at Christmas

Pray also that Christ will be exalted during this Christmas season and use everything that happens during this Holiday Season to bring people to Himself.

Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. –Psalm 32:1-2