

Proverbs 30 (7-9) – Profound Prayer Made Simple

Intro: the best learned lessons are the ones we can teach and live by example (cf. Ezra 7:9-10 – he moved in God’s grace because he studied, did, and taught the Word). It is a wonderful thing when we can take something that seems so complex, something that confuses us, but then we crystallize it, and then we can capture it and bring it into the context of our own situation. It is then that we can take simple truths and make them profound tools in our lives.

Worshipful Approach (vs.1-6) –

- He shows *humility* by using hyperbole. His outward posture reflects an inner attitude, a high view of God and a humbling opinion of self.
- His *reverence* demonstrates the fear of God. It is not so much terror as it is wonder and awe. Humility focuses inward on our finiteness and sinfulness in the light of His infinity and perfection. Reverence focuses outward upon the awesome majesty of God.
- He gives an experiential *proclamation*. We are not just spectators watching what God has done and what He is doing; we are participants in the divine drama. Vs.5-6 – He trusts the sincerity of God, the security of God, and the sufficiency of God.

Wise Appeal (vs.7-9) – He prays – although God already knows what we need (Matthew 6:8, 32-33) He does want us to ask Him for our needs (James 4:2). Two things I ask before I die; this is what I want for the rest of my life. This petition seems to be so simple, but so much is wrapped up in this, because the two main areas of all our needs are covered in this model prayer.

Spiritual needs (vs.8a) – Purify my passions. Falsehood, vanity, not real, a bursting bubble, idolatry (1 John 2:15-17); an empty lifestyle and an attitude that thinks we are wiser than God. Between now and when I die, remove from me this vanity, the things I put before God, the idols, the lies of the world, the flesh, and the devil. This would include the lies that come to us that we are tempted to believe, and the lies that come from us when we attempt to deceive. Don’t let me be deceived or deceive others. He is asking for grace – keep me true and keep my tongue.

Physical needs (vs.8b-9) – Portion my provisions. Maturity understands moderation. God knows better than we do. The wise man knows that overabundance can lead to overindulgence. We can’t handle it all at once (the prodigal son, lottery winners), that is why we have to ask for our daily bread. But we also have a hard time handling it when we are desperate. He knows that a lack of money can lead to a lack of morals. He is not trying to justify bad behavior or make excuses. He is asking for mercy – not so much stuff it spoils me, and not so little it starves me.

This is not a formula but a framework. We can apply this simple yet profound petition, for grace and mercy, with its two areas of spiritual and physical needs, with its worshipful approach and wise appeal, to any and every personal prayer request we ever utter. Even children can simply pray, “Father give me grace and mercy for my spiritual and physical needs” and then as you grow in the knowledge of God, and encounter new situations, you can still use this framework but build an increasingly and incredibly focused, fruitful, and faithful prayer life. You can get specific but still stay simple. God will answer this prayer because it is His will (1 John 5:14-15), and because every word of God proves true. That is the simple yet profound truth about prayer.