

Penny wise and pound-foolish

Moving from minimizing to maximizing our prayer life.

***Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood,
who pray to gods that cannot save.*** Is 45:20

NUGGET – A shift in how we *think* about prayer is what we are talking about today. And this shift is huge. We so often we tend to think in terms of minimums. What's the least I need to do? Like this lady:

A woman goes into the local newspaper office to see that the obituary for her recently deceased husband is written. The obituary editor informs her that the fee for the obituary is 50 cents per word. She pauses, reflects, and then says, "Well then, let it read '*Fred Brown died.*'" Amused at the woman's thrift, the editor tells her that there is a seven word minimum for all obituaries. Only a little flustered, she thinks things over and in a few seconds says, "In that case, let it read, '*Fred Brown died: 1983 pickup for sale.*'"

This lady humorously illustrates for us that we think in terms of – what must I do to accomplish this or that with the least effort. What we're talking about today is the complete other side of that. This is about doing more when it comes to praying, not '*what's the least I need to do*'.

When I looked on-line about this expression, "Penny wise and pound foolish" I came across the following as a way of understanding it.

◆ *Everyone loves saving money, cutting back, and reducing expenses. However, sometimes there is a tendency to focus on the wrong things. While you're busy feeling good about reducing little costs here and there, every once in a while you neglect the larger picture.*

That part about 'neglect the larger picture' struck a chord with me as regards prayer. It seems that we often put prayer into that category. We try to do the least we can without regard for the larger picture. And the larger picture is what comes from our nugget verse today. Only the living God of heaven can save. Only *He* can hear when His people pray.

Prayer is the one thing that allows us to be heard by God, why would we seek to minimize that? It is better to pray more and to trust that He hears, forgives and saves. *That* is the bigger picture in all this.

APPLICATION –

1. Take whatever time you now pray and, for one week, increase it by half.
2. Pick a person in your life that it hasn't occurred to you before to pray for and add them to that time increase.

PRAY – Pray for them, and for yourself, to grow in trust of the living God of heaven.

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom Rhodes

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*Going Deeper together. We meet in the **Fellowship Hall** during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.*

GOING DEEPER

Penny wise and pound-foolish

Moving from minimizing to maximizing our prayer life.

Maximizing prayer is about both time and quality. You get better *at* praying *by* praying. There is no shortcut or substitute for doing it.

I read a news article that talked about the picketers for a carpenters union in Washington DC. They were picketing at some headquarters and when this reporter stopped to investigate, found out that these picketers were 'temporary' union members. They came from homeless shelters and halfway houses. None of them had ever swung a carpenter's hammer. They were hired *just* to be picketers and just for that location. They were hired so that the regular union members wouldn't have to carry their own placards.

The point is that we can't ask anyone else to do *our* praying for us. We can't have someone else learn to improve our prayer life in our place. We are the card-carrying Christians whose gift it is to be able to go *to* God in prayer. To minimize that, to reduce it to as little as possible, is not worthy of us. And it is dishonoring to the God who loves us and longs for communication from us.

How does [1 Kings 9:1-3](#); [1 Chronicles 16: 1, 4-13](#) and [1 Peter 3:12](#) speak to the idea of communicating with God?

Like we said in the nugget, this is about thinking differently about prayer. It's thinking, not in terms of minimizing that access but to maximize it. Prayer is given to us as a gift, to use to have the living God of heaven hear from us. God wants to hear from you and that should give us pause when we start to think in terms of prayer as an 'interruption' to our day. The benefits of prayer, of speaking to God, go beyond what we can imagine. Look at [Isaiah 26:3](#); [Ps 71:1-18](#); [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) and see what stands out for you regarding the benefits of prayer.

In order to move from thinking in terms of minimums, to move from being penny-wise and pound-foolish, to thinking in terms of maximizing time spent in prayer requires a decision. In a recent discussion I had with a colleague he talked about living 'as if'. When we want to make a change in life, he said, we need to live *as if* that change is in place. The idea is that change won't happen without *doing* it. The same is true of our prayer life. Wishing it were better doesn't accomplish it.

Read through, [Jeremiah 42:1-9](#); [Luke 5:33-39](#); [Ephesians 6:18-20](#); [Philippians 4:6-7](#) and [James 5:16](#) what in these passages speaks to you of changing or improving prayer life?

In the peace of Christ, PR