

10 P's to Ponder

1. **Proverbs 8** gives us an amazing view of Jesus Christ hundreds of years before He came to the earth. Christ, who has always existed, speaks to us throughout nearly the entire chapter (verses 4-36). He is called by the name “Wisdom” as this took place long before His name Jesus was known. This is just one of many appearances of Christ that we find throughout the Old Testament, demonstrating that the entire Bible is one continuous story of the Savior.
2. **Preaching** must focus on proclaiming the truth of God’s Word, not on stories or entertainment, and preaching should also be the centerpiece of a worship service. When Jesus spoke at length in what we know as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), everything He said was filled with solid truths. Some of those truths were hard for people to hear, but Jesus didn’t shy away from speaking the truth, and neither should we. Later, we find similar boldness from Peter and Stephen as they proclaim God’s truth (Acts 2 and 7). Stephen was killed for what he preached, but he boldly spoke the truth nonetheless.
3. **Prayer** should not be focused on asking for things. In Jesus’ model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), only one line of the prayer is asking for something, and even there, He is asking for something essential (daily bread). The rest of the prayer is focused on praising God, asking for forgiveness, and praying that God will keep us from temptation. Occasionally asking for something is not necessarily wrong, but these are some of the things that we ought to focus on when praying. Prayer is ultimately not about asking for things but about conforming us more and more to the image of Jesus Christ. God molds our minds as we spend time with Him.
4. **Pride** is something God hates. When a group of people displays pride over their lifestyle, make no mistake—God is not pleased, and He is not ignoring their sin. Pride is what God breaks when He brings salvation to someone. “God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble” (see James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5). Those who are proud of their sinful lifestyle are doing exactly what Paul warned about in 2 Timothy 3:2, and sadly, they do not truly know God, even if they claim to. They only love their version of “god” that lets them live the way they want. The one true God, however, demands that we acknowledge and repent from our sin.
5. **Psychology** and **philosophy** are vain unless they are based on the truth of God’s Word. Colossians 2:8 says, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.” If you are relying merely on the ideas of other people, you may be helped somewhat, but you will never realize your sinfulness and need of a Savior unless you turn to the Word of God—the ultimate truth that we find only in the Bible.

6. **Philemon** is a little-known letter in the New Testament that gives us an amazing picture of God, Jesus, and salvation. As you read this short, single-chapter book of the Bible, picture Philemon as representing God the Father, Paul (who wrote the letter) as representing Jesus the Mediator, and Onesimus as representing anyone who receives the gift of salvation from God. Paul intercedes to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, pleading with Philemon to accept Onesimus and to forgive him for what he had done against Philemon before he was saved.
7. **Profane** fire was offered to God by Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron the priest. This fire was called profane, strange, or unauthorized, because God had not commanded them to do so, and because they were violating guidelines that God had established for priests entering His holy place in the temple. It may be hard for us to understand why God instantly killed these two men, but that is because we fail to understand the holiness of God. Like Nadab and Abihu, we tend to be too laid back with regard to God, not taking the worship of God as seriously as we should. God is holy and powerful and must be treated with reverence.
8. **Purity** is commanded by God for those who belong to Him, who have been saved in Jesus Christ. Purity in our minds and in our actions is important, not because anything that we can do earns salvation or favor with God, but because conducting ourselves in a godly manner brings God glory. When Christians act as God has commanded, the world sees a difference, and God receives the praise and glory that He deserves. God gave laws to Israel in the Old Testament for similar reasons, in order to set them apart from the other nations of the world.
9. **Potter** and clay (from Romans 9) gives us a very good picture of our relationship to God. When a potter is making something out of clay, the potter is in complete control. The clay doesn't have any say in what it is being made into. It is the same with us and God. Salvation is entirely a work of God and has absolutely nothing to do with us. We cannot earn it in any way, and we do not deserve it. We are all part of God's creation, though, and so God is fully right to do with each of us as He wants, to accomplish His purpose and to show us His attributes (like love, mercy, grace, judgment, and wrath). And everything God does is perfect.
10. **Persecution**, not **Prosperity**, is promised to Christians. So-called preachers who tell people that God will give them earthly riches do not correctly understand God, based on what He tells us in the Bible. This is what Jesus promises to those who follow Him: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. ... Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me" (John 15:18-21).

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