

## IS PRAYER A PRIORITY?

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Mark 1:35-39

1. This passage emphasizes the priority Jesus placed on prayer.
2. Jesus' ministry was now in full swing even though He had yet to appoint twelve of His followers as Apostles.
3. The previous day had been a long and exhausting one.
  - a. He had taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath Day.
  - b. While still in the synagogue Jesus cast a demon out of one of the attendees.
  - c. After He left the synagogue Jesus went to the home of Peter and Andrew, accompanied by James and John, and when they told Him about Peter's sick mother-in-law He healed her.
  - d. In the early evening the whole city gathered, and Jesus cast out demons and healed the sick until late in the evening.
4. From a human perspective He had every right and reason to "sleep in."
5. Instead, "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went to a secluded place, and was praying there."

NOTE: We might ask ourselves to what degree do we follow Jesus' example and place a priority on prayer?

### I. The priority Jesus placed on prayer.

A. As we continue our chronological study of the Gospels we will see many examples of the priority Jesus placed on being alone with the Father.

B. He would later teach that we should do the same. Matthew 6:5-6

"When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 6 "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you."

NOTE: Jesus assumed His followers would be men and women of prayer because used the phrase, "when you pray," and not, "if you pray."

C. Years ago I read the following, "The life for God is totally dependent upon our life with God." Dr. Liefblatt

NOTE: Many are trying to live a life for God while neglecting their time alone with Him.

D. Moses understood the importance of time alone with God. Exodus 33:7-11

1. "Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it **the tent of meeting**."

NOTE: The tent represented Moses' inner room, the place where he could be alone with God.

2. "And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. 8 And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent."

3. "**Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the Lord would speak with Moses.** 10 When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and

worship, each at the entrance of his tent. 11 **Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend.** When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.”

4. What did Moses pray for? Exodus 33:12-18

**Then Moses said to the Lord,** "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people!' But You Yourself have not let me know whom You will send with me. Moreover, You have said, 'I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.' 13 **"Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight.** Consider too, that this nation is Your people." 14 **And He said,** "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 Then he said to Him, **"If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here.** 16 "For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?" 17 The Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name." 18 Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!"

a. Notice that Moses prayed and God answered him.

b. Notice also that Moses wanted to know God intimately.

E. Putting this all together we see that prayer is a form of worship, worship involves intimate, personal communion with God, and personal, intimate communion with God produces an insatiable appetite to experience the glory of God.

F. Jesus prayed that the oneness and unity He had with God the Father would characterize our lives as well. John 17:20-23

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”

## II. Pressure.

A. How do you respond when people make demands on you and your time?

B. Jesus was certainly entitled to some time alone with God.

C. Yet His disciples searched for Him until they found Him and declared, “Everyone is looking for You.”

D. In spite of being interrupted, Jesus showed no hint of irritation.

E. Because of His unity with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit Jesus manifested a quiet and confident calmness in response to all the demands that were being placed on Him.

NOTE: Life is demanding, yet God has a work for us to do in the midst of life’s demands.

## III. Purpose and priorities.

A. Do we find ourselves pulled in different directions by the responsibilities and demands of life?

B. Jesus knew who He was, where He came from, why He was here, and what He was supposed to be doing?

C. It is time alone with God that will allow us to understand the same things.

D. Jesus made God’s priorities His priorities and moved on in spite of the people’s demands and desires. 38-39

#### **IV. Power.**

A. Going back to the truth I share earlier, “The life for God is totally dependent upon our life with God.”

B. The power to preach, teach, minister, live life, and overcome evil comes from God.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

C. May our times of prayer be motivated by a desire to know God, to commune with God, to enjoy God, and to be the person God wants us to be.

#### **APPLICATION**

1. Sermons on prayer often make us feel guilty.
2. My prayer is that instead of feeling guilty God will awaken in us a desire and hunger for a deeper, more personal and intimate relationship with Him.
3. I am also praying that God will begin to manifest His presence publicly and privately in our lives and in the life of our church.