

Lesson 2 - Follow the Footsteps of Jesus in Praying

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Introduction: What does it mean for God to become man?

- A. There are many questions we may never know but there are powerful lessons we can learn.
 - 1. Jesus was God in the flesh and never committed a single sin. (**Heb 4:15**)
 - 2. He had a special knowledge and a special communion with God. (**Jn 17:1-5**)
 - 3. He could be tempted and He suffered greatly.
 - 4. Jesus, the Son of God, needed to pray often and at length!
 - 5. If Jesus needed to pray then what lesson can be drawn concerning our needs?
- B. One of the greatest needs of God's people in a land of plenty is to learn the need of prayer.
 - 1. Jesus asked a chilling question after telling a parable on the need of persistent prayer. (**Lk 18:1,8**)
 - 2. Let us examine the footsteps of Jesus and see how important prayer was to Him.

I. The Birth of Jesus was surrounded by men of prayer

- A. God chose the parents of both John the Baptist and Jesus.
 - 1. Zacharias both led others in prayer and was a man of prayer himself. God chose this kind of man to raise John. (**Lk 1:10-13**)
 - 2. Do you suppose the parents of Jesus were any different?
 - 3. Anna, a woman of prayer, was rewarded by seeing the newly born Jesus. (**Lk 2:36-38**)
- B. Should you be praying as a parent?

Class Discussion:

- 1. Why did Jesus need to pray?
- 2. Why do some people stop praying?
- 3. What kind of parents did God choose for John the Baptist?
- 4. Why do we need to pray for our children? If God answered our prayers as we are now currently praying, would our children be blessed?

II. Jesus set a powerful example in prayer

- A. Jesus started His ministry with prayer at the time of His baptism. (**Lk 3:21**)
 - 1. Jesus whole life was focused on "doing the will of the Father who sent Me." (**Jn 5:19-21,30**)
 - 2. There was not a single thing Jesus did without the fellowship and guidance of the Father. (**Jn 8:28-29**)
 - 3. If someone really wishes to please God then they will walk in these same footsteps.
- B. Jesus selection of His apostles came after a complete night of prayer. (**Lk 6:12-16**)
 - 1. Why did Jesus need to pray before making this choice?

2. Why did He need to pray all night? Could He not have asked God to give Him a list and then be done in a few minutes?
 3. Do we need to pray fervently before some of the choices we make?
(Acts 13:2-3)
 4. Note that the previous “footsteps” we have studied all involved prayer. THINK!
- C. Jesus set aside time for prayer.
1. He arose very early so He could pray. (Mk 1:35-37)
 - a. What kind of place did He choose? Why?
 - b. Were there other things He could have done? Were they important?
 2. He was so regular in prayer that His disciples could see their need of additional teaching! (Lk 5:16, 11:1)
 - a. Do you see the power of the “footsteps” of Christ?
 - b. How many of us need additional teaching on prayer? Would you learn more from an occasion to meet with others just to pray?
 - c. Has anyone taught you how to pray?
 3. Jesus wanted others to come to Him for prayer. (Mt 19:13-15)
 - a. Was this a “waste of time?” should He not have preached on this occasion?
 - b. Was anyone to “insignificant” for prayer?
 - c. He told Peter that He was praying for him. Why was Peter able to return after his fall? (Lk 22:32-34)
 - d. Why did Jesus pray about this? Would God not have helped him anyway?
 4. Consider the great events that followed the occasions of Jesus’ prayer.
 - a. When Peter walked on the water. (Mt 14:23-30)
 - i. Did Jesus pray for opportunities to strengthen Peter’s faith?
 - ii. Jesus wanted to help these men!
 - b. Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Son of God. (Lk 9:18-21)
 - i. What prayers were answered here?
 - ii. Do you see your need?
 - c. The appearance of Elijah and Moses. (Lk 9:28-31,35)
 - d. Before the cross itself. (Lk 22:40-46)

Class Discussion:

1. How was prayer involved in the “footsteps” of Christ we are studying this week?
2. What things might we do differently in our lives that we are not doing now as a result of this study?
3. Did the disciples ever learn the importance of prayer? How do we know?
4. Did Jesus put a higher priority on prayer than on teaching? Consider the implications of Acts 6. (Acts 6:3-4)

III. Consider Jesus' teaching on prayer

- A. He taught about the kind of heart we must have in prayer. (Mt 6:5-8)
- B. He taught us the proper elements of prayer. (Mt 6:9-15; Lk 11:1-4)
- C. He taught us about the kind of God we are praying to. (Lk 11:5-13)
 - 1. Because of this we should freely go to Him in prayer.
 - 2. We should often go to Him in prayer
 - 3. We should persistently go to Him in prayer. (Lk 18:1-8)
- D. He taught us who we are to pray for. (Mt 5:44-45)
- E. He gave great emphasis on the power of prayer.
 - 1. Through prayer you would be able to stand in the judgement. (Lk 21:34-36)
 - a. Those who prayed were able to avoid the judgement on Jerusalem. (Mt 24:20-21)
 - b. We can stand in the final judgement too.
 - 2. Prayer was necessary for the exercise of some miracles. (Mt 17:19-21)
 - 3. God will answer every prayer if the prayer is heard. (Mt 17:21-22)
 - 4. Jesus could have used prayer to call legions of angels. (Mt 26:53)

Class Discussion:

- 1. What are the "vain repetitions" of Matthew 6?
- 2. What can we learn from the model prayers that Jesus taught His disciples?
- 3. How can our understanding of the nature of God encourage us in our praying?
- 4. How did Jesus teach about the power of prayer?

Conclusion: Do you know what provisions God has made for you? (Eph 3:20-21)

- A. Are we like this woman pasting the promises of God in our minds without claiming them? THINK!

Here is an interesting conversation between a Swedish peasant woman and her persistent visitor.

"Does your son in America never send you any money?" was asked of a poverty-stricken old Swedish woman. "Never!" was the bitter answer "He writes often and speaks of sending money, but never a bit have I seen from him. I am getting old and poor and soon I must die or go to the poorhouse. Yet he is rich and prosperous. Such is the ingratitude of children!"

"Is there never anything in the letters?" asked the persistent visitor.

Oh, yes, he always sends pictures; but I do not need pictures: I need money."

"Have you saved those pictures?"

"They are all pasted on the wall in my bedroom. Would you like to see them?"

"Certainly," answered the visitor. When she looked into the bare little room she saw pasted on the walls a small fortune in American paper money.

She had a room full of money but she failed to see its value. The very presence of this gift suggested that someone loved her and cared for her though that one lived in another land.

- B. What have you learned personally about prayer from the life of Christ?

God-Consciousness

Bill Hall

A truly godly man is one who lives with a constant realization of God's divine presence. He is God-conscious. When he awakes in the morning, there is God. As he dresses for work, there is God. As he goes in to breakfast with his family, as he drives to work, as he works through the day, as he drives home, as he spends the evening hours, as he lies down on his bed at the close of the day, there is God.

Enoch was a man who was God-conscious, for he *"walked with God"* (Genesis 5:24). He enjoyed constant companionship with God. Wherever Enoch went, God went with him, and Enoch was always aware that He was there. He could not flee from God's presence (Psalm 139:7), nor did he seek to do so. He was a godly man.

How fortunate is that man who has developed within himself this God-consciousness. It is easy for him to pray, for God is to him a close, ever near, companion whose *"ears are open to [his] prayers"* (\ Peter 3:12). His talking with God is as natural as his talking with any companion.

He does not fear, for he just places his hand in God's in his times of trouble. *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear..."* (Psalm 46:1-2). Even when walking *"through the valley of the shadow of death,"* he can *"fear no evil,"* for God is with him.

The power of temptation is greatly reduced, for he never forgets that *"all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account"* (Hebrews 4:13). His desire to please his ever-present God is greater than the power of temptation.

He is thankful, recognizing God, with whom he walks, to be the source of *"every good gift and every perfect gift"* (James 1:17).

He loves God. He talks to God. He walks with God. He is always conscious of God's presence. He is never without God. Yet, this relationship never degenerates into a "buddy-buddy" relationship, for he reverences God; he recognizes His awesomeness; he gratefully acknowledges his own personal unworthiness of such a relationship with Almighty God.

This is the very essence of godliness. Someone years ago, observing the similarity between "godliness" and "God-like-ness," assumed that the two -words meant the same. That false assumption was passed to others, and has now gained a strong foothold in the thinking of a great number of people. W.E. Vine says that godliness "denotes that piety which, characterized by a godward attitude, does that which is well pleasing to Him." A godly person, then, is one who has a godward attitude, and whose constant consciousness of God leads him to be obedient to Him.

While visiting in a hospital, recently, we observed this sign, "Have you said *Thank you, God* today?" A godly person probably would have done so. Have **you** said, "thank you, God" today?