

Discipleship Questions

How did Jesus prioritize prayer?

How did Jesus express gratitude in prayer?

What confidence did Jesus have concerning His prayers to the Father, and why?

What did Jesus pray about in John 17?

What can you learn from Jesus's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane?

How did Jesus pray concerning the Father while on the cross, and how did the Father respond?

How did Jesus pray concerning others while on the cross, and how did the Father respond?

What does Jesus's example teach you about how to pray?



Those who desire to be Jesus's disciples must endeavor to learn Jesus's teachings and ways and imitate Him by walking as He walked (1 John 2:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:1). One aspect of Jesus's life that must be imitated is the way Jesus prayed. Therefore, we must consider the Scriptures that give us insight into the way Jesus prayed so we can learn how to walk in His footsteps in the way that we pray.

Luke 5:15-16; 6:12-13

The Scriptures record many instances of Jesus prioritizing prayer, despite being busy and limited in time. Despite Jesus's fame and the activity around Him increasing in Luke 5, Jesus knew the importance of opportunities to talk with His Heavenly Father in prayer. He would intentionally seek out places of solitude to pray (even getting up early in the morning to pray, Mark 1:35). For Jesus, prayer was a priority rather than an afterthought. Furthermore, Luke 6 shows Jesus spending all night in prayer to God before He named His twelve apostles. This demonstrates Jesus's commitment to prayer before significant events and decisions.

John 6:10-11

This passage is in the context of Jesus miraculously feeding the 5,000. Notice that Jesus, before giving the food to the people to eat, made it a priority to give thanks for it! It was common for Jews to thank God and bless what they were about to eat and drink by saying, "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe." This would then often be followed by the specific mention of God's connection with whatever they were about to partake of (e.g. "who brings forth/creates" bread from the earth, the fruit of the vine, the fruit of the trees, the fruit of the earth, etc.). Whether Jesus

prayed this traditional prayer or not is unknown, but His attitude of gratitude toward God is clearly seen (Matthew 26:26-29).

John 11:41-42

Jesus stood at the tomb of His friend (Lazarus), with Lazarus's sisters and others who had accompanied them. Jesus knew the miracle He was about to work in raising Lazarus from the dead. Yet, He first prayed to His Father. In particular, Jesus thanked the Father for the assurance that the Father always heard Him. Jesus always knew His relationship with the Father was such that the Father would always hear Him (James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:12)!

John 17:1-26

This is the longest of Jesus's prayers recorded in Scripture by far and was very conversational in tone. It took place after Jesus had spent time with His disciples in the Passover meal, shortly before His arrest. In this prayer, Jesus prayed numerous times concerning the work of God and God being glorified (vv. 3-4, 6, 25-26). Additionally, Jesus prayed concerning Himself, having completed the work the Father had given Him and the glory that was coming to Him (vv. 1-5). He then prayed for His disciples at that time, as He would no longer be in the world, to protect and sanctify them (vv. 6-19). Finally, He prayed for all who would believe in Him through the word of His disciples, namely that they would be united and know the Father's love (vv. 20-26). Therefore, shortly before His death, Jesus took the opportunity to pray for each of these!

Luke 22:39-46

Immediately preceding Jesus's arrest (Luke 22:47-53), Jesus urged His apostles to pray. Prayer was especially needed for the occasion that was about to transpire. Jesus had already been praying for them (particularly mentioned concerning Peter), that their faith would not fail (Luke 22:31-32; John 17:6-19). Now, they were urged to pray concerning the same things (v. 40). Knowing what was about to happen, Jesus prayed that the cup of suffering about to be poured out on Him would be taken away from Him. Thus, Jesus prayed to His Father (knowing His Father heard Him), asking for another way to accomplish His plan without the suffering that awaited Him. However, He was willing to endure it to complete the Father's plan if there was no other way. In fact, despite His great anguish and praying fervently through great emotional pain, His prayer ultimately yielded to the Father's will! Also, notice that even Jesus (whose prayers were always heard) did not always receive the answer He asked for (1 John 5:14-15).

Matthew 27:45-46

As Jesus was hanging on the cross, He cried out to His Father in despair, expressing a sense of abandonment in that moment. Yet, it should also be pointed out that Jesus had previously stated the Father would not leave Him alone (John 8:28-29; 16:32). The reference in this passage is Psalm 22:1, concerning when David cried out to God for deliverance but received no immediate deliverance (Psalm 22:1-5). Instead, he was scorned, despised, mocked, suffered greatly, pierced through his hands and feet, had his clothing divided, etc. (Psalm 22:6-18). Like the psalmist, it appears that Jesus was in a moment when the Father did not give immediate deliverance and may have felt a sense of being abandoned. However, the Father would rescue and would be praised at the end of the psalm (Psalm 22:19-31). Similarly, despite the Father temporarily not rescuing Jesus, Jesus would emerge victorious and be glorified as King!

Luke 23:33-34, 44-46

Even while Jesus was dying, His prayers demonstrated concern for others and faithfulness to His Father. First, Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those who mocked, mistreated, and killed Him. Through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross and the gospel being preached, God would grant this forgiveness to those who would turn in faith and obedience to Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36-41)! Second, Jesus entrusted His Spirit to the Father (echoing Psalm 31:5). No matter how many sorrows Jesus experienced and no other way for Jesus's deliverance being provided, Jesus remained faithful to the Father through the point of His death and trusted the Father would be faithful to Him (going to Paradise in Hades, Luke 23:43; Acts 2:31).

Conclusion

Imitating Jesus requires that you pray like Jesus prayed. Although there is much more that could be discussed, we have seen Jesus's devotion to prayer throughout His earthly life. Ultimately, Jesus valued and prioritized His time to communicate with His Heavenly Father in prayer. Therefore, disciples of Jesus must learn to prioritize and commit themselves to prayer, recognizing the power and value in it!

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Written by Eric Krieg

Watch video @ WWW.GODSAIDSO.COM/DGW585