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# Desperate Prayers

## THREE CATEGORIES

### JESUS' DESPERATE PRAYER

Mark 14:32-42/ Matthew 26:36-46/ Luke 22:39-46

### OUR DESPERATE PRAYERS

How to pray when the path God calls you to take is the path you don't want to take

- Don't try to tackle it **ALONE**  
Mark 14:32-33 & Matthew 26:37-38/ Galatians 6:2/ James 5:16
- **PRAY** about it, don't **STEW** on it  
Mark 14:39-41/ Philippians 4:6
- Be **HONEST** and **CLEAR**  
Mark 14:36/ 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
- Be **PERSISTENT**  
Mark 14:39-41/ James 5:16/ Luke 11:1-10/ Luke 18:1-8  
2 Corinthians 12:7-10/ Daniel 10:12-14/ Philippians 4:6-7
- Be **OBEDIENT**  
Mark 14:41-42/ Hebrews 12:2/ 2 Corinthians 12:8-9

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# Life Group Study Questions

*For the week of November 17, 2019*

## QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time, or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

## MY STORY

1. Jesus had some bold words to say to God about having to die to save others. Do you agree or disagree with the statement that most people are afraid to be as honest with God as Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane?

How much of our honesty with God has to do with our personality or life experience?

Using the options below, how would you say your prayer life is similar to or different from the way you communicate with those you're closest to?

- More or less detailed
- More or less real / vulnerable
- More or less time
- More or less focused
- More or less emotion
- More or less frequent
- More or less connection
- Other

2. Prayer is important just like communication is in any relationship. In what circumstances is it easiest for you to pray? When is it the hardest? What are some of your challenges and frustrations when it comes to regularly praying to our God?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Larry talked about how it's okay to be honest and clear with God when we're struggling with His will for our lives. The Psalms are full of examples of David voicing his honest "complaints" to God over what was happening in his life. What can you learn from the following passages about what being honest with God looks like?

### **Psalm 13:1-6 New International Version (NIV)**

*For the director of music. A psalm of David.*

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?  
<sup>2</sup> How long must I wrestle with my thoughts  
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?  
How long will my enemy triumph over me?  
<sup>3</sup> Look on me and answer, Lord my God.  
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,  
<sup>4</sup> and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"  
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.  
<sup>5</sup> But I trust in your unfailing love;  
my heart rejoices in your salvation.  
<sup>6</sup> I will sing the Lord's praise,  
for he has been good to me.

### **Psalm 142:1-7 New International Version (NIV)**

*A maskil<sup>l</sup> of David. When he was in the cave. A prayer.*

<sup>1</sup> I cry aloud to the Lord;  
I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.  
<sup>2</sup> I pour out before him my complaint;  
before him I tell my trouble.  
<sup>3</sup> When my spirit grows faint within me,  
it is you who watch over my way.  
In the path where I walk  
people have hidden a snare for me.  
<sup>4</sup> Look and see, there is no one at my right hand;  
no one is concerned for me.  
I have no refuge;  
no one cares for my life.  
<sup>5</sup> I cry to you, Lord;  
I say, "You are my refuge,  
my portion in the land of the living."  
<sup>6</sup> Listen to my cry,  
for I am in desperate need;  
rescue me from those who pursue me,  
for they are too strong for me.  
<sup>7</sup> Set me free from my prison,  
that I may praise your name.  
Then the righteous will gather about me  
because of your goodness to me.

Do you think there is a difference between being honest and complaining?

How can we honestly complain to God without it becoming a lack of trust?

Has your willingness to be honest with God changed over the years? If so, what do you think has caused that change?

2. We heard this weekend about the importance of being persistent in prayer. In 2 Samuel 12:15-23, King David is praying this kind of prayer as he seeks God's intervention on a critical issue. As you read this story, answer the questions below:

**2 Samuel 12:15-23 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>15</sup>After Nathan had gone home, the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. <sup>16</sup>David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. <sup>17</sup>The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

<sup>18</sup>On the seventh day the child died. David's attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, he wouldn't listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."

<sup>19</sup>David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves, and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

<sup>20</sup>Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.

<sup>21</sup>His attendants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!"

<sup>22</sup>He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.' <sup>23</sup>But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

Have you ever set aside extra time to dedicate yourself to prayer concerning a specific issue or concern? If so, explain.

In light of the challenges we face and our belief that prayer works, what are some obstacles to setting aside extra periods of time to repeatedly pray over an issue?

After repeatedly seeking God on an issue, have you ever experienced a response similar to David's? If so, explain.

Based on what we've learned about the importance of persistence in our prayers, is there anything you might be giving up on a bit too early? Need to focus on more? Anything you need to let go of?

## TAKING IT HOME

We all have different aptitudes and abilities when it comes to where, when and how much we pray. Yet we know ongoing communication and connection is vital to any healthy relationship, including with God. One reason we may find it difficult to pray with extra persistence is that we haven't created places and habits that help us pray and connect with God on an ongoing basis. Here are a few practical suggestions on how to develop your prayer life:

- Schedule it
- Get away on occasion
- Pray aloud to help you focus
- Listen as well as talk
- Use Scripture as your guide

Which if any of these do you already tend to do? Are there other ideas or suggestions you've found to be helpful when it comes to prayer and persistence?

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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