

### **Your Prayer Life**

- When crisis hits, is your first response to pray or do you first react to the crisis?
- Are your prayers different when others are present versus when you're alone?
- How often do you pray alone and with no distraction?

### **Two Assumptions in Prayer (Matt 7:7-11)**

1. God is good
2. God is able to grant our requests

### **Two Conditions of Prayer**

1. Faith
2. Submission

### **Jesus' Prayer Life**

Notice Jesus prayed ...

- During his inauguration into ministry (Lk 3:21)
- Before he made an important decision (Lk. 6:12-13)
- When God's sovereign plan is about to be revealed (Jn. 17:1)
- When others are listening (Jn. 11:41-43; recall also Mt. 6:5)
- During his greatest need (Mt. 26:36-44; Heb. 5:7)
- Knowing his life was about to end he turned to prayer, alone with the Father (Mt 26:39). Note his deep anguish drove him to prayer, not despair or anger
- In total submission to the Father (Mt 26:42)
- For victory of spirit over the flesh (Mt 26:40-41). Prayer is often the best weapon to defeat the evil one who uses the flesh as his battleground (see Eph. 6:18)
- Repeatedly (Mt 26:44)

Read the following and reflect on how often Jesus avoided human interaction when praying.

- Mk 1:35, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."
- Lk 5:16, "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."
- Lk 6:12, "Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God."
- Mt. 14:23, "After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone."

### **Why Solitude in Prayer?**

- Solitude is the temporary practice of spatial and relational distance that could potentially distract us from being open and transparent with God.

### **What is the Value of Solitude in Prayer?**

- In solitude we're not merely alone with ourselves; we're alone with God

- In solitude we learn that we do not need others as much as we think and solitude teaches others they do not need us as much as they think
- In solitude we practice reliance upon God for our deepest relational needs
- In solitude we have a chance to face our fears and uncertainties, which are often eclipsed when we're around others

Solitude is **1) liberating**, freeing us from all distraction so our prayers are focused, **2) engaging**, forcing us to withdraw from the frenetic activity of life and confront our self and God, and **2) renewing**, allowing us to confess the sin within and emerge forgiven.

**Now What?**

- Where is your place of solitude for prayer?
- Do you find it awkward to pray in solitude or around others?
- When you get angry or frustrated, do you immediately turn to prayer?
- Is an attitude of total submission built into your every prayer? Really?
- Do you craft your prayers carefully when praying publicly as Jesus did?

In sum, Jesus prayed privately, publicly, earnestly, repeatedly, submissively, carefully, and confidently. How does your prayer life match up?

*Next week: The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)*