

Solitude in Prayer. Ch. 1:35–39

35 And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.

By rising early in the morning, while it was still dark, and seeking a solitary place, Jesus set an example for us regarding the significance of prayer and the approach we should take toward God. Jesus prioritized getting away from it all to communicate with His Father. We too should start our morning with the Lord. It's in these moments of solitude that we can seek guidance, strength, and clarity for the day ahead. If it was important to Jesus, then it's certainly important to us

Unbroken Fellowship—Jesus was in constant communication with the Father, unbroken by sin. The primary delight in His life was being One with the Father. We see this in His high-priestly prayer in John 17:22-24 **22 The glory which You have given Me I also have given to them, so that they may be one, just as We are one;** Jesus knew that He was One with the Father, that He was from the Father, and was here to bring others into a relationship with God, and that He was going back to the Father. Jesus got away in solitude, because this removed the noise of Capernaum's crowds who thronged Him, so that He could give undivided attention to the Father. Since Jesus prayed for us the Church, as well as the disciples, saying in John 17:20 **20 "I am not asking on behalf of these [apostles, disciples] alone, but also for those who believe in Me through their word, 21 that they may all be one; just 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.** And God has answered His prayer, by sending the Holy Spirit to empower us to be able to be more and more like Him. This oneness with God has been made possible through Jesus. The fullness of God is the totality of everything God is—His attributes, His character, His perfection, His holiness, His power, His love. The fullness of God is His complete nature; it is who He is. In Colossians 1:19, Paul writes **that "it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in [Christ]"**. In Colossians 2:9, we see **that "For in [Christ] all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."** Both passages powerfully affirm the fact that Jesus is God. The fullness, or totality, of God is found in Christ. Everything that can be said of God can be said of Jesus Christ Jesus bore witness to this Himself. John 14:7 **7 If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."** Paul continues with another incredible fact: that, in Christ, we ourselves have been "brought to fullness" (Colossians 2:10-12 **0 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over every ruler and authority; 11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision performed without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.** So, all the work that was needed to attain the Oneness with God was accomplished by Jesus on the cross. The only question is, are we going to walk as a New Creation in Christ, or walk in our old, dead lives. The Bible's instructions are clear. Rom 6:4-7 **4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for the one who has died is freed from sin.... 11 So you too, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.** This is what Paul prays for the Ephesians in 3:16-19. **16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be**

filled to all the fullness of God. Paul is praying that we “**may be filled to all the fullness of God**” just as Jesus prayed that we would be “One with God”. This means that God has answered Jesus’ prayer, and that we, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can have unity with the Father, through submitting to the will of God in our lives completely in all things, as Jesus did. And, to the extent that we do this, we will have Oneness with the Father, just as He did. It’s a pretty amazing promise and aspiration for us to live for.

Moment by Moment Direction--Jesus looked to God to give Him direction at all times, and so the more time that He could spend in uninterrupted communication with the Father, the more direction He could receive, and the more of God’s Will He could do. John 5:19 **19 Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in the same way. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.** So, getting away from the crowds and demands of leading the apostles provided clarity regarding Kingdom priorities. God had allowed the previous evening to be packed with healing and deliverances from evil spirits (Mark 1:29-34). This was the priority that God had put in front of Him that day, so this is what He did. But this didn’t mean that this was what every day was supposed to be like. In fact, quiet prayer safeguarded Jesus from letting urgent human needs override the Father’s mission timetable. Speaking about this same event, Luke 4:42-44 adds. **42 Now when day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and they came to Him and tried to keep Him from leaving them. 43 But He said to them, “I must also preach the kingdom of God to the other cities, because I was sent for this purpose.”** To the crowds, the healing and deliverance ministry were the priority, but to God, the preaching of the Kingdom of God, how a personal relationship with God was possible through Jesus was the more important mission, from His eternal perspective.

Spiritual Strength for Human Weariness--And, it was by aligning His life with God, His source that allowed Jesus to have the strength to accomplish all He did in such a short 3 and ½ years of ministry. He was a human, just like us, who got tired, just like us, and subject to temptation, just like us Heb 2:17 **Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brothers so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.** Even though He was fully God, Jesus in a human body was subject to human limitations. Jesus chose to withdraw and pray precisely because it helped Him gain spiritual strength. Isaiah 40:29-31 **29 He gives strength to the weary, And to the one who lacks might He increases power. 30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, 31 Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.** When we pray, **give us this day, our daily bread,** we’re often thinking about how God provides for our physical needs of hunger, etc. But Jesus makes it clear when He says that “**Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God**”, that our primary needs are spiritual, not physical.

Dependence Modeled for Disciples--By example Jesus taught that ministry flows from private intimacy, not public activity. Jesus taught the apostles this directly in Mark 6:30-32 **30 The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught. 31 And He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a little while.” (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) 32 And they went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.** Jesus depended on the Father, because He trusted that God the Father would provide. Our relationship with God is

one of trust in Him. We understand that God is a loving and providential Father who cares for His children and provides for our needs. Philippians 4:19, Paul writes, "**And my God will supply all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.**" This assurance of God's provision is a call to trust in His sufficiency and care. And, we need to acknowledge that God gives us the best provision anyway. James 1:17 "**Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, with whom there is no change or shifting shadow.**" This verse reminds believers that all blessings and provisions come from the Father, who is unchanging and faithful. Dependence on the Father involves a life of faith and trust.

Resistance to Popular Applause--Jesus would often withdraw after he had done many miracles, to avoid public accolades, or especially to avoid any desire by the people to bring Him into a position of political authority. We see this clearly in John 6:14-15, after the feeding of the 5,000. **14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 So Jesus, aware that they intended to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself, alone.** The people were always asking Him for more miracles, more signs, **36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; 37 and they found him and say unto him, All are seeking thee.**

And, as is often the case, the desire to be alone with God and pray is interrupted, often by well-meaning people. In this case, it's Jesus' disciples who interrupt his prayer. Simon-Peter and the other disciples come to let Jesus know that many from Capernaum, where he'd just accomplished so many miracles were seeking him—presumably, so that he could heal more of their sick.

38 He said to them, "Let's go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may also preach there; for this is why I came." 39 And He went into their synagogues preaching throughout Galilee, and casting out the demons. The crowds that gathered in Capernaum had made their decision, but it could not be the appropriate one because it involved not repentance but attraction to Jesus as a performer of miracles. That is why Jesus interrupts the miracles to go elsewhere to proclaim the gospel of God.