

Follow Me, Pt. 2

Prayer

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“Follow Me” definition: *To be on the same road with Jesus, to learn from Him, imitate Him, and multiply Him in others.*

Ancients/Church Fathers — “Imitatio Christi” — imitating the spiritual disciplines of Christ

- the reason for our being

Following and Imitating — is where adventure, affirmation, and abundance is

Cost of Discipleship —

- **Matthew 16:24-25**

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

Desire, Denial, Death, Follow — losing life is finding life!

“I don’t want so much of your time, and so much of your money, and so much of your work: I want YOU! I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don’t want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want the whole tree down. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked—the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: my own will shall become yours.”¹

~ C. S. Lewis

**The church has made the cost of discipleship so cheap,
we have produced inferior disciples.**

The cost of Nondiscipleship is more than we recognize.

“Nondiscipleship costs abiding peace, (it costs) a life penetrated throughout by love, (it costs) faith that sees everything in the light of God’s overriding governance for good, (it costs) hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, (it costs) power to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil. In short, it costs exactly the abundance of life Jesus said He came to bring.”²

~ Dallas Willard, Professor of Philosophy USC

¹ C. S. Lewis, *The Complete C. S. Lewis Signature Classics* (Zondervan, Oct 22, 2002) 104

² Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (Harper Collins, Oct 13, 2009)

It's time for us to stop forfeiting the abundant life, it's time for us to start paying the cost of discipleship!

Clarity — discipleship isn't just for the super-committed Christian

"The disciple of Jesus is not the deluxe or heavy-duty model of the Christian... he stands on the pages of the New Testament as the first level of basic transportation in the kingdom of God."³

~ Dallas Willard

- In other words- *Discipleship is entry level following of Jesus!*

Following Jesus into the Place of Prayer

- starting here because prayer is the most important spiritual discipline in Jesus' life!
- prayer, **communing with God, not just asking for stuff**, is the life-giving root of all spiritual life. Jesus understood that, so must we — it's the same for us!

Notice the importance Jesus places on His communion with the Father —

- **John 5:19,30**

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner" ... "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."

- nothing of self, not about His own will — lost His life
- only does and speaks what He sees and hears from the Father in prayer

What Jesus said and did was empowered with the supernatural grace of God!

Jesus went from one place of prayer to the next — *and everything in between was supernatural.*

Seen in scripture repeatedly —

- **Luke 5:16**

So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

- **Mark 1:35**

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

- *after healing and deliverance — before preaching and healing leper*

³ ibid

- **Matthew 14:13**

When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself.

- *after beheading of John the Baptist — before miraculously feeding 5000*

- **Matthew 14:23**

And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

- *after feeding 5000 — before walking on water*

KEY — Jesus went from one solitary, undistracted place of prayer to the next — and everything in between was supernatural. **WE MUST FOLLOW HIM IN THE PLACE OF PRAYER!**

Jesus' instructions to us

- **Matthew 6:6**

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Application — *solitary, undistracted, secret, communing prayer is what Jesus calls us to follow Him into. It is a non-negotiable for the Follower of Jesus! Life-giving root of every spiritual discipline!*

The secret of praying is praying in secret.⁴

~ Leonard Ravenhill

Look at Jesus' public prayer life in Luke —

- **Luke 3:21-22**

When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

- *when Jesus prayed, heaven opened, Spirit descended, Father spoke — that's prayer!*

- **Luke 9:28-31, 35**

Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray as He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem... And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"

- *when Jesus prayed, face altered, robe white glistening, Moses and Elijah showed up, upcoming death discussed, Father spoke — that's prayer!*

No wonder one of the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray —

⁴ Leonard Ravenhill, *Revival Praying: An Urgent and Powerful Message for the Family of Christ* (Baker Publishing Group 2005)

- **Luke 11:1**

Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray...”

Jesus’ prayer life was both private and public — but it always produced power. His disciples recognized that and said — “teach us to pray.” They wanted to follow Him into the place of prayer. They did — and it was powerful.

- a) prayed — Pentecost, Spirit falls, preaching, salvation...
- b) prayed after threats — place shaken, Spirit falls, spoke boldly...
- c) prayed in Samaria — Spirit falls, miracles, salvation...
- d) prayed for Saul — healed, converted...
- e) prayed for Peter — miraculously freed from prison...

Jesus taught them to pray —

Our Father/Abba — Intimate, Daddy

In Heaven — Upward, more, beyond, massive, otherly

Hallowed — Worshipful, honored, Names of God

Kingdom Come — Longing, Submitted, on Earth, in this situation, Your ways

Give Us Daily Bread — Dependent, food from heaven

Forgive Us — Humble

Lead Us — Aware, temptation is out there, distraction

Deliver Us — Trusting, power, ability, willingness

Yours is the Kingdom — Declaring

Beloved — let’s want more of Him, experience more of Him, display more of Him. Let’s go from one place of prayer to the next, and see the supernatural in between...

- **Jeremiah 33:3**

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

Let’s follow Jesus into the Place of Prayer

Discussion Questions

1. What is the cost of Nondiscipleship?
2. Why did Jesus find it *necessary* for Himself to withdraw frequently to pray?
3. What is the current status of your Prayer Life?
4. Identify a specific place and time where you can be alone with God on a regular basis.
5. What is God’s promise in Jeremiah 33:3?
What is required of the Doer of the Word in that same verse?