



## LESSON 4 // THE BY-PRODUCTS OF PRAYER

Prayer was vital to Jesus. Throughout His earthly ministry we find examples of His times of prayer and how He prayed. Mark 1:35-39 gives us a unique window into one of these times:

**Mark 1:35-39 (NIV)** *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. <sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions went to look for him, <sup>37</sup> and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” <sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” <sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.*

From these verses, we learn about resources released through prayer. If we want resources from God, new things He wants to bring to our lives, we must learn to pray. Let’s look at eight by-products of prayer that give us vision and motivation to pray.

### 1. Prayer is a platform for worship.

Jesus prayed because He wanted and needed to worship on a regular basis. Prayer provides a platform for worship, encouraging us to spend time with God in praise and honor to His name. We need this because we were created for worship, worship makes us whole and we attract God’s attention when we worship. Worship cultivates spiritual soil in our hearts where the Lord can plant new seed and something new can grow!

### 2. Prayer builds friendship with God.

While God is your Sovereign King and Lord, He also wants to be your friend. Like a good friend, He will listen to you, provide guidance and encouragement, grant you His favor and walk with you in good times and hard times. This friendship is nurtured through prayer as you talk with God and He talks to you about everything in your life.

### 3. Prayer infuses us with God’s power.

Jesus depended on God’s power for His ministry. He realized that His regular time with God connected Him to the power of God. He knew that the demands of His life and ministry required this power.

In prayer we demonstrate that we also need and depend on God’s power for personal transformation, changes in our circumstances, the transformation of others and preparation for our future. God answers when we pray, infusing us with power and strength for the life and ministry He has called us to.

#### **4. Prayer protects us.**

Jesus realized the protection that prayer brings. As we pray we are sheltered from storms (or detoured around them), empowered to resist temptation, protected from evil attacks and providing spiritual covering for others. This is one of the reasons the Apostle Paul constantly sought the prayers of God's people—he knew how much he needed the shield of prayer in his life and ministry!

#### **5. Prayer releases God's wisdom.**

Jesus knew that He needed the Father's wisdom, guidance and direction. How much more do we desperately need this because of our foolishness, limited perspective and close-mindedness. We need to pray against worldly influences and the deception of the adversary, and believe that God will grant us His perspective, fresh revelation, understanding, direction and discernment (Jeremiah 33:3; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Matthew 7:7, 8; 1 John 5:14, 15).

#### **6. Prayer nurtures faith.**

Our faith is built up as we spend time in God's Word and prayer. This puts us in a place where we are sensitized to God's voice and vision. In prayer we understand and believe "the victory that overcomes the world is our faith" (1 John 5:4) and that "we are completely victorious through God who showed his love for us" (Romans 8:37, NCV).

#### **7. Prayer energizes endurance.**

Many people lose in life, lose in the spiritual battles and stop short of success, all because they run out of endurance. They quit or they quit too soon. Endurance enables us to keep on keeping on—doing what is right—fighting the right battles through to victory. And prayer energizes our level of endurance by connecting us with the One who endured and is the Source of our endurance. Prayer also reminds us of God's promises to those who endure and the consequences when we don't endure (Romans 5:3-5; Galatians 6:9; Hebrews 10:36; 12:1-3; James 1:2-4, 12)

#### **8. Prayer keeps us clean.**

Prayer positions us to be cleansed from "dirt" we pick up that soil our thoughts, attitudes and perspectives. In prayer the Lord enables us to recognize the dirt, repent of the contamination, receive forgiveness and release forgiveness to others. Prayer is like a daily shower. Without it, our spiritual aroma is unpleasant and we repel people from Christ rather than attracting them to Him.

Jesus understood the by-products of prayer. He prayed consistently, regularly, habitually. Since prayer was a priority in His life, it certainly should be a priority in our lives.

#### **Discussion questions**

1. How does prayer build friendship with God? Why is this so important for your life?
2. In what ways does prayer nurture your faith? How does this motivate you to pray?
3. How can prayer help you endure through the hardships you face?