

## **Bible Study: Let Jesus teach you how to pray**

*You will get more out of this study if you read the verses and ponder the questions several times a day. You'll also get more out of the study if you discuss it with others. Jesus says where two or three are gathered together in his name, he is there with them.*

### **Monday** Luke 5:15-16 (NRSV)

Now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.

*This passage in Luke illustrates a great principle. You are called by God to do great things – to bring the kingdom of heaven to earth. But the power and inspiration to do that come from God. In the middle of the work, you need to take time to rest with God who will restore your vision, equip, console, guide, and counsel you.*

*Besides this verse 5:16, Luke also lets us know of specific instances where Jesus withdrew to pray. Some examples: at his baptism (3:21), when choosing the twelve disciples (6:12), alone with the disciples thinking about his identity (9:18), at the transfiguration on the way to the cross (9:28), in the garden of Gethsemane (22:41).*

*How often do you have your version of withdrawing to deserted places to pray?*

*What does it look like for you?*

*Is it sufficient?*

### **Tuesday** Matthew 5:43-48 (NRSV)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

*Jesus told the crowds they should pray for people who persecuted them. Since this is in the context of talking about loving your enemies, it is safe to assume he meant we should pray for the blessing of people who persecute us (not their destruction)!*

*Who bothers you from time to time? How will you pray for them?*

*Who is in opposition to you? How will you pray for them?*

### **Wednesday** Matthew 6:1, 5-6 (NRSV)

"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. . . . Whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

*Jesus prayed in public (see, for example, John 17), so we know his point was not that you should only pray in secret. The point is that, whether praying in public or private, your prayers should not be for show, with one eye on the people around you. When you pray, pray to God.*

**Thursday**            Matthew 5:7-8 (NRSV)

"When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

*If God knows what you need before you ask, what is the point of praying?*

**Friday**            Matthew 5:9-13 (NRSV)

"Pray then in this way:  
Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial,  
but rescue us from the evil one.

*What do each of the phrases mean for you?*

*Which one do you get the most comfort from?*

*Which one do you need the most help with?*

*How often do you want to pray this prayer?*

*How can you make praying it part of your routine?*

**Saturday**            Matthew 5:14-15 (NRSV)

If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

*Who do you need to forgive?*

*How will you pray for them? (See Monday)*

*What are have you done this week because of Jesus?*

*What do you want to do next week because of Jesus?*

*What do you need help with?*

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