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FIVE GREAT PRAYERS FOR LENT

WHAT TO EXPECT

St. Augustine wrote, "true, whole prayer is nothing but love." Why then do so many people neglect to pray? Have we misunderstood the purpose of prayer? Are we unsure what to do when we pray? (I think of Ricky Bobby saying "I'm not sure what to do with my hands.") If only we entered into prayer in the way God desires, we might find our own experience in agreement with St. Augustine.

Throughout the season of Lent (March 2-April 14), we are called to deepen our prayer life. For some, this may mean beginning a habit of daily prayer, setting aside time each day to share our hopes, joys, fears, and frustrations with God. For others, this may mean exploring new prayer practices or devoting yourself to a particular subject that the Lord leads you to pray for.

Join us on Sunday mornings and in Life Group for a series of studies on biblical prayers that are faithful for us to follow in our own prayer lives.



WHAT IS COMING UP?

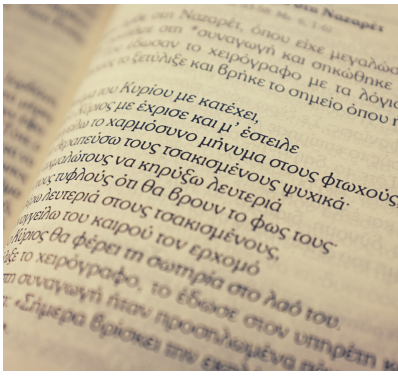
Women's Ministry:

- Play Dates for Moms with Preschoolers
- Women's Mid-Week Bible Study - Encountering God

Men's Ministry:

- Thursday Night Study - The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

ANSWER AS A GROUP



SCRIPTURE

For this week's curriculum, read Mark 9:14-29. As you read and discuss this prayer, consult available study material such as Blue Letter Bible for any needed assistance.



CONTEXT

According to Chuck Swindoll, "Because Mark offered no further comment on Jesus's prophecy regarding the destruction of the temple—an event that occurred in AD 70—we can safely assume that Mark composed the gospel sometime before that tragic event. Also, the gospel has a distinctly Roman feel to it, particularly when compared with the Jewish emphasis of the book of Matthew. Mark chose to leave aside most comments on fulfilled prophecy, and when he felt compelled to use an Aramaic term, he interpreted it. This suggests that Mark was in Rome, writing from Peter's recollections sometime before that apostle's death (ca. AD 64–68), possibly composing the gospel between AD 57 and AD 59."

After Reading Mark 9:14-29

1) What happened right before the events we just read? Is there a connection or contrast between the two events? What brought you to that conclusion? *(As a way to think or link the two events, consider the lack of glory the disciples received as contrasted with Jesus' glory in the Transfiguration.)*

2) What brought about the argument? What was the issue that caused trouble for the disciples? How did Jesus remedy the situation?

3) In verse 19, Jesus says "You unbelieving generation. How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me." What did Jesus mean by this? *(Thomas Constable states "The 'unbelieving generation' included the father and the crowd, and possibly the disciples. The nine disciples could not exorcize the demon because of their weak faith. Jesus' first rhetorical question expressed frustration that His presence with them had not resulted in greater faith. His second question reveals the heavy emotional load that their unbelief placed on Him.")* Does Jesus' reaction surprise you? Why or Why Not? Do you think that Jesus ever responds to your own life and lack of faith in this way? Why is Jesus' reaction different for the disciples compared to His reaction towards you? *(Think in terms of Matthew 28:20, Jesus is with us ALWAYS. The expression of Jesus in Mark 9 deals with specific context, whereas through faith and in Christ, we do not exhaust or exasperate Jesus.)*

4) The father of this boy cries out in verse 24 "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" What is this father communicating to Jesus? Why is this important not only for the son but for the father to communicate to Jesus? Have you ever prayed this type of prayer? Did God ever answer your prayer and help give/strengthen your faith?

5) In Pastor Kevin's sermon, he highlighted three lessons we can learn from this story. They are:

- **Face Reality** - We need to face the reality that life is full of situations that are greater than we can handle.
- **Confess** - We need to confess we have a tendency to be self-reliant instead of God-reliant.
- **Remember** - We need to remember that Jesus gives grace to those who acknowledge their need.

In what ways are those three lessons presented by this hurting father? In what ways are those three lessons presented by the disciples? Of those three lessons, what do you struggle with most? Why is that? How can we specifically help you in remembering and acting upon those lessons?

Challenge

6) Take an inventory this week of where you need strength in your faith. Then pray that God would help you, even if there is a moment of weak faith.