

Why Jesus' Disciples Were Desperate to Learn This Skill

If there were one subject that you would want Jesus Christ to teach, what would that class be? What subject did His disciples, who walked with Him and were given a day-by-day, night-by-night, meal-by-meal front-row seat for three-and-a-half years, ask to be taught?

What would it be like to have an up-close-and-personal touch point daily with God in the flesh and see every minute, every hour of every day—to experience everything from the heights of glory to the most minute, mundane details of life with Him? They got to hear the messages. They watched Jesus open His mouth and drop the Sermon on the Mount on the planet. Oh! To hear this man talk of God, talk of the kingdom, talk of such profound deep truths with simplicity, and yet complexity, all at the same time! They witnessed every miracle. They watched every blind eye pop open, every deaf ear open, every lame person walk and every dead person rise. What would those late-night talks around the campfire have been like after a day of healings? They got to see every deliverance, where Jesus would cast out spirits with a word, setting the demonized free and in their right mind.

Every one of these aspects of Jesus' life and ministry are worthy of hours of discussion, yet it wasn't His preaching, His miracles or His deliverances that the disciples asked to be taught. We don't see one recorded time in the Gospels where they asked Him, "Teach us to preach, or teach us to heal or teach us to deliver." After spending years with the Son of God, witnessing His daily/nightly life, they asked Him, "Teach us to pray."

They wanted His prayer life. They connected the dots and knew that Jesus' public life of ministry was the result of His

private life of prayer. From His first public message to His last, He emphasized prayer. Luke states, "He often withdrew and prayed." It wasn't a side part of His life but was the very bone, marrow and DNA of His life. It wasn't salt on the meal; it was the meal itself. Not only did He teach on prayer—He prayed.

They watched Him pray, watched God, the Son, talk to God, the Father, through God, the Spirit. They saw the intimacy, the vulnerability, the intensity that came from Him as He prayed—God, the Son, emptying Himself of all of His divine privileges, throwing Himself fully on the Father. They watched Him pray. One of my favorite verses is John 17:1, "When Jesus spoke these words, He lifted His eyes toward heaven and said ..." Jesus went effortlessly from preaching to prayer, and with His eyes opened towards heaven, He spoke.

I'm grateful for all of the training of the body that is happening via seminars, conferences, books and other materials, but I'm fearful that there is much lack concerning the life of prayer in the believer, both private and corporate. The reason I'm fearful is because prayer is a great expositor of reality. The great revivalist Leonard Ravenhill stated that "a man is no greater than his prayer life." We can fool people; we can wow people; but what happens when we close our eyes and open our mouths is the litmus test of reality that cannot be manipulated. As a matter of fact, I've begun to ask myself as a leader, is my life provoking this question or is it provoking others to say, "Teach me to preach like you, or write like you, or have wisdom like you, or plant churches like you or deliver like you"? The list could go on and on.

If this is what Jesus produced in those who saw Him the most, what am I producing in those who see me the most? If "the greatest leader ever" produced this, why shouldn't all leaders seek to embody this and to produce it in those who are in their spheres of influence, whether they be a mother or father at home with two children or a pastor of 1,000? This is what

John produced in his disciples, and I believe it's time for leaders to not become just a jack of all trades but to seek to become the master of one: interaction with heaven. This next generation desperately needs mothers and fathers to take them by the hand and introduce them to the most beautiful and glorious person, training them in this glorious school that we never graduate from: the school of prayer.

If you're seeking to grow in prayer, consider ministry training in the context of day-and-night prayer. At International House of Prayer University, we equip men and women to prophesy, preach and lead worship from the place of intimacy with Jesus. Registration for fall classes is now open. [Learn more »](#)

Question: How are you seeking to grow in prayer? {eoa}

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