

Prayer – Highs and Lows

Series – Talking & Walking

- not a formula for getting what you desire
- lifestyle for understanding what God desires
- aligning ourselves with God
- changing our hearts to match His

Discover that

- intimacy with God changes our hearts
- understand and surrender to Him

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1. Moments of Triumph – Luke 9:28-36

“About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.) While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.”

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Observations:

a) Preparation and Withdrawal

- up to mountain to pray

b) Intimacy & Glory

- ‘as He was praying...’
- encouragement, pleasure, plan

c) Desire to Remain on Mountaintop

- put up a shelter, hang around

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2. Moments of Temptation – Matthew 4:1-11

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “ ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

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“Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.”

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Observations:

a) Led By the Spirit

- placed there, allowed to be hungry, tempted

b) Tempted to:

*Relieve Hunger – natural need, within ability

*Prove God – can the word of God be trusted

*Short Circuit the Plan – cut this corner

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c) Response of Jesus – Born in Prayer & Word

- God Provides – led me here, wait on Him
- God is Able – trusted not tested
- Gods Way is Best – no short cuts

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3. Moments of Trial – Matthew 26:36-39

“Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

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Observations

a) Sit Here While I Go

- life dark, needs to be alone with God
- takes three closest friends

b) Deeply Troubled – Devastated

- Luke – sweating blood
- lonely, betrayed, facing death, facing separation
- first prayer an hour long!

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* Give you permission to be devastated by life!

- bad theology says:

- just pray – it will be fine, you will not suffer

- look at the bright side – don't be negative

*essentially saying – if you have enough faith in Jesus, you don't have to be like Jesus!

*Jesus is sad, anxious, concerned, desiring relief

- not a sin to be there, what happens in those moments can be!

*Don't Pretend – Life is complicated, painful, hard

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c) Posture & Prayer

- falls on his face, speaks honestly
- take this cup from me.....
 - is there any way around this path?

*Not My will but Yours!

- rotten teaching says God will do what You want when:
 - right formula, repetition, conjured up faith
- true teaching says:
 - respectfully, honestly – I am devastated

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- Where are you, I can't bear this

BUT

- align my will with yours
- I surrender to your plan, pull me through

When Hard Times Come:

- doctor has bad news
- death and separation arrive
- kids choose to walk away
- spouse decides to abandon vows

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Two responses that we adopt

- a) God is Sovereign but I hurt so bad He cannot be kind, loving, good because look at my life!
- b) God is Kind, Loving, Good but must not be sovereign in this situation because I Hurt

Truth We Must Face

* God is Sovereign, Kind, Loving and Good – even when the road I travel is difficult and discouraging. Please help me see your will and be obedient, just like Jesus!

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d) Content of Jesus Prayer

- not my will but yours – whatever the cost

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So What

1. For Moments of Triumph

- Preparation and withdrawal
- Personal moments not public displays
- Cannot remain on the mountain top!

2. For Moments of Temptation

- God will allow temptation – even when we are weak
- Prayer and Truth are the foundation for resisting
- Allowing God to meet our needs & desires essential

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3. For Moments of Trial

- Not wrong to be devastated, lonely, betrayed, filled with sorrow or despair
- Must be honest, respectful, seeking, taking it to God
- recognize rotten teaching – embrace the truth
- Come to point of obedience – not what I would desire or choose but your will be done
- surround yourself with close friends to walk these moments with you