

GROW: The Power of Prayer in Pressure

Dr. John Carmichael

[Mat 26:36-46 NASB95] 36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. 38 Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." 39 And He went a little beyond [them,] and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." 40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you [men] could not keep watch with Me for one hour? 41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." 43 Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44 And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more. 45 Then He came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

[Mar 14:32-42 NASB95] 32 They came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." 33 And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. 34 And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." 35 And He went a little beyond [them,] and fell to the ground and [began] to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. 36 And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will." 37 And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 "Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 39 Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. 41 And He came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

[Luk 22:39-46 NASB95] 39 And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. 40 When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and [began] to pray, 42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." 43 Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. 45 When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, 46 and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

- Gethsemane means "olive press." It is the place where olives are crushed so oil can flow.
- And in this moment: Jesus is under pressure. The weight of the cross is before Him.
- His soul is overwhelmed. But notice Jesus doesn't run. He doesn't distract Himself. He goes to pray.
- While the disciples slept through the pressure...Jesus prayed through it.
- Because what happens in Gethsemane determines what happens at Calvary.
- If you don't pray in your pressure... you will fail in your moment.

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Why is prayer so necessary that even Jesus would not face His greatest moment without it?

Gethsemane shows us that prayer is not optional, but essential for strength, alignment, and victory in the most critical moments of life.

I. PRAYER IS NECESSARY IN PRESSURE

- a. [Mat 26:38 NASB95] 38 Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."
- b. [Psa 34:17 NASB95] 17 [The righteous] cry, and the LORD hears And delivers them out of all their troubles.
- c. Jesus did not ignore pressure. He brought it to prayer.
- d. Gethsemane reveals: Pressure is unavoidable. Prayer is the response of the spiritual.
- e. Application: When overwhelmed: pray, don't withdraw. When stressed: seek God, not distraction. Build a reflex: pressure → prayer.
- f. The place of crushing can become the place of anointing.
- g. Pressure doesn't have to destroy you. **Prayer determines what pressure produces in you.**

II. PRAYER IS MEANT TO BE SHARED

- a. [Mat 26:40 NASB95] 40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you [men] could not keep watch with Me for one hour?"
- b. [Ecc 4:9-10 NASB95] 9 Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. 10 For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.
- c. Jesus desired companionship in prayer. He brought Peter, James, and John. He invited them into the moment.
- d. Prayer is personal, but it is also corporate. Apostle Paul many times urged people to pray with him and for him.
- e. Application: Don't isolate in spiritual battles. Engage preservice prayer and corporate prayer. Pray with your family and church.
- f. **Lone Christians are vulnerable Christians. Some battles are too big to fight alone.**

III. PRAYER REQUIRES WATCHFULNESS

- a. [Mat 26:41 NASB95] 41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
- b. [1Pe 5:8 NASB95] 8 Be of sober [spirit,] be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
- c. Jesus connects prayer with vigilance.
- d. The disciples slept because of sorrow (Luke 22:45 - sleeping from sorrow), but sorrow is not an excuse to disengage.
- e. Application: Guard your spiritual alertness. Don't let emotional fatigue shut down your prayer life. Stay spiritually awake.
- f. **The enemy doesn't wait until you're ready. If you fall asleep spiritually, you will wake up in defeat.**

IV. PERSISTENT PRAYER IS FAITH, NOT DOUBT

- a. [Mat 26:44 NASB95] 44 And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.
- b. [Luk 18:1 NASB95] 1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,

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- c. Jesus prayed the same prayer three times. Repetition is not unbelief. It is persistence.
- d. Application: Don't quit praying because nothing changed yet. Stay consistent in your requests. Trust God in the process.
- e. Faith doesn't stop praying. It keeps pressing.
- f. **Faith is not proven by one prayer. It is proven by persistent prayer.**

V. PRAYER IS SURRENDER TO GOD'S WILL

- a. [Luk 22:42 NASB95] 42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."
- b. [Pro 3:5-6 NASB95] 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.
- c. This is the highest form of prayer: Trust, Surrender, Alignment
- d. Jesus calls Him "Abba" (Mark 14:36); intimacy in the middle of agony.
- e. Application: Trust God even when the answer is not what you want. Pray with confidence and surrender. Believe God knows best.
- f. True faith says, "I trust You no matter what."
- g. **The greatest prayer is not getting your will done. It's trusting God's will.**

VI. PRAYER PRODUCES STRENGTH FOR THE MOMENT

- a. [Luk 22:43 NASB95] 43 Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.
- b. [Isa 40:31 NASB95] 31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up [with] wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.
- c. God did not remove the cup. He strengthened Jesus to drink it.
- d. Prayer may not change the situation immediately but it will change you.
- e. Application: Expect strength in prayer. Don't measure prayer only by outcomes. Trust God to sustain you.
- f. Prayer prepares you for what you must face.
- g. **Prayer may not remove the battle but it will give you strength to win it.**

VII. PRAYER KEEPS YOU FROM FALLING

- a. [Mat 26:41 NASB95] 41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
- b. [Luk 22:31-32 NASB95] 31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded [permission] to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."
- c. Jesus warned Peter: Pray or you will fall.
- d. Peter slept...and later denied Jesus.
- e. Application: Pray before the temptation comes. Build spiritual strength ahead of time. Don't wait until crisis hits.
- f. Failure often begins with a neglected prayer life.
- g. **Prayerlessness is the doorway to compromise.**

- **If you don't learn to pray in the place of pressure, you will not stand in the moment of testing.**
- In Gethsemane, we see two responses: The disciples slept through sorrow. Jesus prayed through it.
- One failed in the moment. One fulfilled the will of God.
- The difference was prayer.

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- If Jesus needed prayer...how much more do we?