
[SERMON NOTES]

Acts – Week 12 (*Acts 12:1-19; Romans 8:28*)

Following Jesus often means swimming _____
against _____.

Our job is to _____, God's job is to _____.

Our job is to pray _____, God's job is to _____.

Prayer is how we _____ into the _____ and
_____ of God.

[QUICK REVIEW]

Looking at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

[MY STORY]

We all have moments in our lives and days where we “zone out.” You know, those times when you're in the middle of talking to someone and their eyes glaze over and you have to pause and say their name to get them to snap back out of it? Or the time when you're in the middle of listening intently to a meaningful discussion and the next thing you know the conversation has moved on, or even worse, someone asks, “[insert your name here], what do you think about that?” Yeah, *those* times. We all have them! **Think back to a time when you or someone you know “zoned out” and caused a serious or humorous situation and share that with your group.**

[DIGGING DEEPER]

Most of us *want* to be present and attentive to others around us, but sometimes it can be very difficult. In a similar way, being attentive to God is also difficult. This week, we will be learning how to be attentive to God from Paul, from Jesus, and from a 17th century cook named Brother Lawrence.

Read the passages below. What are some of the common themes of prayer?

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Psalms 86:3

Ephesians 6:18

Philippians 4:6

Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 encourages the Thessalonian Church to: *“Pray continually.”* Other translations render this phrase as, *“Pray without ceasing”* or *“Never stop praying”* or *“Pray constantly.”* The main idea: Prayer is vital and you should learn to do it all the time. But this seems impossible! **What are some of the primary frustrations, distractions, doubts, etc. that you personally have experienced in growing toward a life of prayer with God?**

Brother Lawrence was a Catholic man who was the primary cook for a monastery in Paris in the 1600s. He wrote a book called *The Practice of the Presence of God* that focuses on becoming a person of prayer in the mundane and ordinariness of life. He is famous for saying: *“The time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were on my knees.”* Wouldn't it be awesome to be able to pray in any circumstance, even whilst cooking in the kitchen day after day? Brother Lawrence also prayed: *“Lord of all pots and pans and things make me a saint by getting meals and washing up the plates!”* and *“I turn my little omelette in the pan for the love of God.”* **What are the areas in your life where you would most like to be in constant communication with God?**

Jesus was also a man of prayer. **Choose 3-5 (or more) of the following verses to read about Jesus' prayer life:**

Matthew 14:23

Mark 6:46

Luke 3:21

Hebrews 5:7

Mark 1:35

Luke 6:12

Luke 5:16

Luke 9:18

Matthew 26:39, 42, 44

Luke 22:32

Romans 8:34

Jesus lived in constant communion and communication with the Father, and has made a way for us to have the same kind of relationship. He desires for us all to know the Father as he knows Him and clearly modeled it with his life. Paul also in numerous places encourages us to make prayer our main priority, such as Ephesians 6:18, where we are told to: *“Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”* Here's the beauty of it. It's not about technique, it's all about relationship. Brother Lawrence says, *“I have abandoned all particular forms of devotion, all prayer techniques. My only prayer practice is attention. I carry on a habitual, silent, and secret conversation with God that fills me with overwhelming joy.”*

In a world of distraction, it is hard to carry on a constant conversation with God. **Read Colossians 3:1-14. What would it look like for you to set your heart and mind on Christ throughout your day? What is one practice you could do daily to focus your attention on God in your life?**

[WEEKLY READINGS]

Studies say that someone who reads their Bible 4 times or more a week improves their joy, happiness, contentment, and overall approval of their life. (*1 Tim. 4:8-10, 16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17*). As a church, we believe that! Below are 4 passages of Scripture this week to dive into to pull deeper on our weekend's message. We encourage you to take notes in your Bible, and ask yourself: *What does this teach me about God? Myself and others? And how do I follow Jesus better?*

Acts 12

1 Samuel 1

Matthew 6:5-15

Daniel 6