

How to Have a Meaningful Time with the Lord

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying. –Mark 1:35 CSB

The most important relationship in our life is with the Lord. We must regularly set times to be in His presence. To do this, we need to carefully consider our heart posture (is Jesus our priority?), what habits we are developing (are they centered on the will and way of the Lord?), are we experiencing the presence of the Lord (hallowed ground), and what the purpose in our time with the Lord (holiness).

Heart Posture: Make your relationship with the Lord a priority

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark...”

Jesus decided to wake up early (notice the phrase *while it was still dark*) and begin the day with His Heavenly Father. Whether you are a morning person or not is irrelevant. This issue here is our priority. Whatever we are most passionate about, we will run the hardest after. If Jesus is not Lord of all, He is probably not Lord at all. We must come to a place where our whole heart’s desire is for the fame and glory of the Lord. In John 17, Jesus was praying with His Heavenly Father, saying, “I have glorified you on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do.” Jesus knew nothing was more important than His relationship with the Father.

Things to consider...

- What would your closest friends/spouse say mean the most to you? What does this reveal about who or what you worship?
- What 2-3 things almost always get done on a typical day? What does this reveal?
- Our heart posture changes our actions. What might you need to change in your heart posture to pursue the Lord more fully?

Habits: Develop daily practices centered on the way and will of the Lord

“...he got up, went out, and made his way...”

Jesus got up, went out, and made His way to a certain place. The words *got*, *went*, and *made*, are all action-oriented and done with intentionality. We must want to pursue practices that center on the will and way of the Lord. Unfortunately, many believers are content with Jesus being in their “top three.” The Gospel of Luke reminds us we must pick up our cross daily and follow Him. When we become complacent in our walk with Jesus, this quickly allows Satan to tempt us with things that don’t matter to take our eyes off Jesus.

Things to consider...

- Jesus got up, went out, and made His way. Do you get up and go after it, or do you allow complacency to kick in? Why do you think this is?
- What action-oriented steps need to be in your life that is currently not in your life (or not consistent in your life)?

- What do you believe Jesus meant by “daily pick up your cross and follow Me?”

Hallowed Ground: Experience the presence of the Lord

“...to a deserted place...”

Mark tells us Jesus went to a deserted place to meet with His Heavenly Father. From a distance, nothing was exceptional about the place Jesus found Himself. Yet, Jesus went to a solitary place—removed from distractions—where He could be alone with the Father. The place was not what made it hallowed ground—it was the presence of the Father. Jesus, being fully God and man, knew He needed these times to be renewed for the days ahead. In Scripture, Jesus would often go to a deserted place after ministering to large crowds.

Things to consider...

- What does it mean to experience the Lord?
- Where are some places and times that you feel help you draw into the presence of the Lord?
- What distractions need to be removed or reprioritized in your life so you can better sense the presence of the Lord in your life?

Holiness: Know the purpose of your time with the Lord

“...and there he was praying.”

1 Peter 1:16 gives us the instruction to “be holy, as He is holy.” The point of having dedicated time alone with the Lord is to grow in our relationship with Him and to look and live more like Jesus as a result. Your time with the Lord should bring conviction, confession, praise, and humility. The beautiful and simplistic aspect of Mark 1:35 is it tells us Jesus spent time with the Father—He prayed. This was why He got up early and went to a distraction-free space. Jesus knew time with the Heavenly Father was necessary to accomplish the mission the Father gave Him. When we spend time with the Lord, we should see a transformational change.

Things to consider...

- How would you define holiness? What is the difference between happiness and holiness?
- As a result of your times alone with the Lord, do you see a change in your walk with Him? Do others see this change?
- What is your main takeaway from Mark 1:35?