



MIRACLES IN MOTION

STUDY 3 - PRAYING WITH PATIENCE

Who loves practicing patience? Who really enjoys waiting in a long line at the supermarket, or being stuck in traffic on the motorway, just because waiting a bit longer to get to your destination sounds so fun? (If anyone in your group answers “yes” to these questions – someone should get them an extra serving of dessert!)

Practicing patience does not come naturally to most (if any) of us. But praying with patience is a powerful skill to learn.

Read Philippians 4:4-7 NIV: *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

Read those last sentences slowly... Don't be anxious. Pray about everything. And peace... peace that doesn't make sense will guard your hearts and minds... You might feel a sense of calm just by reading and meditating on each word!

These verses show us that, in prayer, a beautiful exchange takes place. In prayer we give to God our cares, concerns, worries, need for control, and our deepest desires. In prayer we receive His peace that is better than anything we could imagine. It's worth noting that praying with patience is not at odds with praying with persistence, which we discussed in our last study. The two go hand in hand. The vital ingredient that ties patience and persistence together is trust.

Often before the answers even come, praying with patience results in peace. Strahan Coleman wrote this about his experience of learning to pray. *“I was learning that the greatest power in prayer is to be together with God and that being is often as much the answer to the prayers we're praying as the answers we're seeking themselves.”*

DISCUSS

Praying with patience enables us to slow down enough to allow God to speak to us. Why not take a moment as a group now just to sit in silence and become aware of God's presence that is with you. Ask Him to speak to you. Don't rush this moment. When a couple minutes have passed, ask if anyone would like to share something that God spoke to them.



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(Leaders note: a connect group is the perfect place to practice hearing God's voice in a judgment-free setting. Remember that when the Holy Spirit speaks to us, what he He says is always true to God's character (e.g. He is always loving), it is always true within the confines of scripture (it never contradicts), and it should always be weighed up with wisdom from trusted voices (pastors, leaders, followers of Jesus that are a bit further along the journey).

DIGGING DEEPER

God exists outside of time. This means that sometimes praying God's way forces us to pause. Tyler Staton writes about waiting, "Many confuse stillness with waiting for revelation. Sometimes revelation does come, and it's marvellous. But that's not the purpose of stillness. The purpose is consent. It is the daily practice of consenting to the work of God's Spirit, which is deeper than understanding or words."

Imagine starting each day with consent towards God— saying yes to the Holy Spirit's work within you and through you. Could you make stillness before God part of your daily practice?

DISCUSS

What requests do you want to present to God right now? What might you offer Him and in exchange receive His peace? Share amongst your group. Take a moment to offer those cares to God and invite His peace to guard your hearts and minds. Remember 1 Thessalonians 5:17 – Pray. And don't stop praying! Prayer isn't reserved for a church service or connect group gathering.

DISCUSS

How might you be able to pray with patience this week? Is there a time and place? Or a particular attitude that you might adopt? Are there any prayers that you have prayed previously that seem to have gone unanswered that God might be inviting you to pray again right now? Share those and take a few minutes to pray with each other for these things.



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DIGGING DEEPER

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." Since the early 6th century these words have come to be known as "The Jesus Prayer" and have been prayed countless times as a powerful and centering reminder of what we so desperately need: mercy.

Have you ever prayed a prayer like this? Perhaps it's this exact one. Or something similar that because a repetitive prayer that you have leaned on in times of need, worry, distraction? If not, could that be a good thing for you to add in to your life of prayer?