

Luke 22: 39-71

Seeking God in Stress

Study Summary & Objective(s): The goal of this study is to observe and apply Jesus' response to the extreme stress of his coming arrest and crucifixion.

- Observe the power and necessity of prayer
- Consider our responses to stress and how they might glorify God

Steps To Prepare (For Leaders)

- Be prepared to set aside at least five minutes during discussion time for individual prayer. Feel free to have instrumental background music playing, if you feel your group would benefit from this
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Pray for your time together as a group.



What's the most stressful situation you experienced this week?

Possible answers: car broke down, disagreement with co-worker or family member, difficult school assignment, etc.

Read Out Loud: Luke 22:39-53 (NIV)

39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

45 When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. 46 "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

47 While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, 48 but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

49 When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.

51 But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? 53 Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns."

? What observations can you make about Jesus' prayer to the Father? What examples does He give us for the way we should pray?

Possible Answer: Jesus shows honesty and vulnerability in admitting that He is nervous. His prayer also shows a willingness to obey God's plans regardless of the amount of pain it will cause. We shouldn't try to hide our thoughts in our communication with God. Instead, we should be honest, but ultimately ask for a heart of obedience through anything we may be called to do.

? What do verses 40 and 46 say about the relationship between prayer and temptation?

Possible Answer: We have the ability to overcome temptation when we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is the means of receiving strength to overcome temptation and the relationship we build with God through prayer helps us to identify temptation more easily.

? What does our culture say we should do when we're experiencing stress? Based on Jesus' response in this passage, where should we turn first instead?

Possible Answer: Culture says to self-medicate with Netflix, food, alcohol, etc. and says our actions are justified by our stress. Jesus turns to God in prayer.

? Jesus spent time in prayer immediately prior to His arrest and we see that His disciples fell asleep instead. When Jesus is arrested, what is the difference between their two responses?

? (Optional) Have you ever experienced a time when your response to a difficult situation changed as a result of prayer?

Possible Answer: *Jesus responds peacefully (tells His disciples not to fight, heals the man's ear) because He accepts God's plan for Him and received strength. The disciples wanted to respond violently out of a lack of understanding God's plan.*

Sweat Like Drops of Blood

Jesus' sweat could've been in large drops similar to drops of blood. It's also possible that he was experiencing "hematidrosis", the actual mingling of blood and sweat, which shows the extreme amount of stress he was under. Isn't it amazing that the Son of God suffered that type of stress for us and can therefore identify with the stress that we experience in life?

Read Out Loud: Let's take the next 5 minutes to take a break and turn to God in individual prayer about a current stressor in our lives. You may choose to re-read Luke 22:39-53 first as a reminder of how to model your prayers after the example Jesus sets.

Read Out Loud: Luke 22:54-71 (NIV)

54 Then seizing him, they led him away and

took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. 55 And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. 56 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him."

57 But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.

58 A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them."

"Man, I am not!" Peter replied.

59 About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean."

60 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." 62 And he went outside and wept bitterly.

63 The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. 64 They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" 65 And they said many other insulting things to him.

66 At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. 67 “If you are the Messiah,” they said, “tell us.”

Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me, 68 and if I asked you, you would not answer. 69 But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”

70 They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?”

He replied, “You say that I am.”

71 Then they said, “Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.”

? We live in a privileged time and place in which we will probably not be threatened with death for identifying with Christ. But in what ways are we likely to deny Christ in our daily lives?

Possible answers: *We can deny Christ in lack of prayer, pride, ignoring the Spirit’s prompting to have a conversation or take a specific action.*

? Read Luke 22:32 again. Looking back at this verse, Jesus had told Peter that once he turns back from his denial, he should strengthen his brothers. After repenting from our past sin, how can we strengthen others experiencing similar struggles?

Possible answer: *Lift them up in prayer, share your story with others and tell them what gave you the strength to overcome it, sign up to become a mentor at Hope.*

Discussion & Accountability

? Can you describe a time when you asked God to ‘take a cup’ (or burden) from you and instead been given the strength to get through it? How did this change the way you approach current stressors in your life?

? Is there a specific situation or relationship you have not been bringing to God in prayer?