

Cultivating a Life of Simplicity
CFG Study Guide
Week One
The Simplicity of Prayer
Mark 9:14-32

1. Take a few minutes and try to visualize the scene that Jesus came upon after He came down the mountain. According to the gospel account, what would have stood out most in your mind if you were at the scene? Imagine the crowds, the desperate condition of the father, the painful state of the son, etc. What would have stood out about the disciples?
2. Since the disciples had previously experienced spiritual power in their preaching and healing ministry, why do you suppose that it might have been so frustrating in this particular situation?
3. "This kind of spiritual stronghold;" Jesus implies that there are different degrees of spiritual strongholds in this world. Of course the disciples were men of prayer, so it seems that there was a different level of prayer that perhaps they had not experienced or they were not accessing at this time. Have you considered this concept before: that certain spiritual attacks in life require more concentrated prayer?

Please discuss:

"Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth. The greater the volume of power to be transmitted from above, the stronger must be the prayer cable which unites the soul with God."- O. Hallesby

What role does desperation play in our prayer life?

4. The demonic confrontation; "When the spirit saw Him (Jesus), he immediately convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth." Notice that oftentimes in spiritual battle, things appear to get worse before they get better. In other words, expect greater degrees of resistance when you begin relying on Christ in new ways. How can we encourage one another in such times?
5. Satan thrives on getting us to focus on our pain and misery. Discuss how you have or tend to rationalize or spiritualize the problems in your life rather than taking them to God in prayer. Sometimes we simply surrender to despair. When we do, this can lead to isolation, cutting ourselves off from God's truth and God's people. How do we resist this temptation?
6. Can you speak to a time in your life, either present or past, when you were tempted to simply accept things as they were, killing any hope for deliverance from God? How does this affect our worship of God?

7. "This kind of prayer"; Discuss the prayer of faith ("all things are possible for one who believes"); the prayer of repenting faith ("I believe; help my unbelief"); and the prayer of persevering faith- notice that the father had not given up; this problem had plagued his son since childhood. The father, out of desperation continued to cry out for help. He did not settle! The father and the son received what their hearts longed for.