

Living the Lessons

Main Point: Following Jesus is about the striving not the arriving.

Point #1: Following Jesus means we strive to make prayer our first work.

Ann Lamott quote on prayer: She said her prayers boil down to three basic ones:

- *Help me, help me, help me*
- *I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry*
- *Thank you, thank you, thank you*

Richard Trench, archbishop of Dublin in the mid 1800's:

"Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of His willingness."

Warren Wiersbe: "God's delays are not always His denials."

Ephesians 6:18 (NIV)

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Jesus uses this expression "watch and pray" a number of times in scripture. What does it mean? Jesus used it:

1. In the context of a prophesy about the end times.

Luke 21:34-36 (NIV)

"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. 35

For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

Matthew 26:40-41 (NIV)

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. 41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Hebrews 12:2-3 (NIV)

fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Point #2: Following Jesus requires that we travel with a thankful heart.

If thankfulness was a road, it would lead to joy.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV)

Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,**

Point #3: Following Jesus means that our words match our deeds and reflect our devotion.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 (NIV)

and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.