

A STUDY ON “INTERRUPTED” PRAYER

Request: During one of our recent studies on prayer, you gave the acrostic F.A.C.T.S on prayer. This caused me to wonder about the mechanics of unceasing prayer. Suppose you were at work in middle of unceasing prayer when the phone rang and interrupted it. Do you pick-up at the beginning or where you were interrupted or what?

<u>F</u> ather	Matt.6:9
<u>A</u> sk	1 John 5:14-15
<u>C</u> onfess	1 John 1:9
<u>T</u> hanks	Eph.5:20
<u>S</u> pirit	Eph.6:18

Since it is the week prior to Easter, I thought I would bring you a lesson on Interrupted Prayer from life of Jesus. It occurred during the Jewish Passover in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Let us begin by examining the lesson text by the following five points.

- Prayer request Matt.26.36-39
- First interruption Matt.26:40-41
- Second interruption Matt.26:42-43
- Third interruption Matt.26:44
- Prayer response Matt.26:45-46

This lesson will study five aspects of the Interrupted Prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.
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1. Paul commanded the spiritually advancing believer to pray unceasingly. in.

“Pray (proseuchomai / p.m.impv.2pl) [command] without ceasing (adverb / adialeptos) [willing to reconnect if interrupted].” 1 Thess.5:17

Developing this spiritual exercise in prayer will help you become a praying warrior. It will develop your capability to become a public prayer partner with people who interrupt your private unceasing prayer life.

It will remind you how important prayer is to their problem. They need the Heavenly Father’s ear as well as ours – “He who planted the ear, does He not hear?” (Ps.94:9)

“Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplication! Answer me in Thy faithfulness, in Thy righteousness!” (Ps.143:1)

2. We get a view into the subject of mechanics to interrupted unceasing prayer with Jesus at Gethsemane.

Prayer of the first interruption	(Matt.26:39-41)	My Father, the cup, will of God
Prayer of the second interruption	(Matt.26:42)	My Father, the cup, will of God
Prayer of the third interruption	(Matt.26:43-44)	ditto.

3. The Gethsemane prayer of Jesus also shows problems with believer's difficulty in developing a private prayer life, let alone an unceasing prayer life.

Jesus interrupted his private unceasing prayer 3 times to minister to His disciples. We learn some things from the disciple's difficulty in development of a prayer life. Jesus had earlier addressed their problem when they were unable to cast out a demon from a child (Mark 9:14-29) – "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer." (Mark 9:29)

In the first interruption, Jesus taught us that **temptation** is a major battle when "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt.26:41)

In the second interruption, Jesus taught us that **natural causes** could be a hindrance – "sleeping, for their eyes were heavy." (Matt.26:43)

In the third interruption, Jesus taught us that in spite of our lack of prayer **the plan of God continues**. "Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners." (Matt.26:45) This resulted in them not being connected with the moment of conflict or prepared by the will of God for the initial assault. Jesus said: "arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand." (Matt.26:46)

This is reflected by Peter drawing his sword and cutting off the right ear (Luke 22:50) of the servant of the high priest (Matt.26:47-56) – "**Then all the disciples left Him and fled.**"

4. The unceasing prayer life of a Spiritually Advancing Believer is his confidence that His Heavenly Father cares about every aspects of his daily life and that he wants to be ready for every opportunity in the plan of God (Matt.6:6-13).

"Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." (Heb.4:16)

An effective prayer life is based on spiritual growth maturity in bible doctrine of the word of God (1 John 5:14-15; John 15:7; 16:23-24).

We pray at all times when we are fully assured that God is willing and able to do what He promises (Rom.4:21; Ps.66:18-20).

"Now He was telling a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart." (Luke 18:1)

5. Gethsemane means a place of squeezing!

It was place of squeezing oil from olives. It reminds us that there will be places and times for squeezing the spiritual advancing believer in the plan of God. It will be these times that the importance of a confident private prayer life will be essential for inner peace.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil.4:7-8)

Note **five emotions** associate with Jesus' prayer life in Gethsemane that were interrupted by other responsibilities and then resumed by prayer.

Deeply grieved to point of death

Distressed

Troubled (Mark 14:33)

Agony (Luke 22:44)

Very fervent with sweat like drops of blood