



Moving Beyond

Day 1: Living Urgently and Intentionally

Read Mark 1:29-39 several times. Notice the sense of urgency in and intentional nature of all that Jesus does. In the midst of daily activities, Jesus knows what matters, and he lives out eternal values. Notice that Jesus' day included teaching opportunities, a ministry of healing, time for fellowship, the need for prayer, and the making of important decisions/choices. Do you live intentionally; is your life ruled by the "tyranny of the urgent" or by the urgency of human needs and eternal values? Pray the Spirit will be your teacher this week.

Day 2: Public and Private Ministry

Read Mark 1:21-31. It is the Sabbath, and Jesus is teaching in the synagogue. The authority of his words is authenticated by his ability to heal the demonic, and the people are amazed. Then Jesus goes to the home of Simon and Andrew, and, there, Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law. In the privacy of a friend's home, as well as in a very public forum, Jesus shows compassion and divine power. Do you experience Jesus' presence in your home as well as in your church? Jesus was invited into the home of his friends; have you invited him to be Lord in your heart and in your home? Tell Jesus you long for an awareness of his presence in your life.

Day 3: Blessed to Be a Blessing

Read Genesis 12:2; Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; and Luke 4:38-39. Three Gospel writers tell this story of the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law, and all also recount her service to Jesus and the others. She was blessed, and then she blessed others by her service. Mentally list some of the ways God has blessed you; consider spiritual blessings as well as temporal or physical ones. Have you responded with gratitude and the desire to be a blessing? Or have you assumed your blessings are something you are due, your "right" to be blessed? Ask the Spirit to give you an attitude of gratitude and a deep desire to serve Jesus and others.

Day 4: Relentless Demands

Practicing Jews could not carry burdens on the Sabbath, so the people waited until sunset (the end of the Jewish day) to bring the sick to Jesus. Then, it seems the whole town appears at Simon's doorstep, wanting Jesus to minister to their needs. Read Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 1:32-33; and Luke 4:40-41. Does it seem that the people want Jesus, to know him, to serve him, to love him? Or do they simply want him to meet their needs? How about you? Read Matthew 6:33 and Ephesians 3:17-19. What is your heart's desire as you come to Jesus? Do you demand miracles or do you delight in HIM? Ask the Spirit to help you love Jesus more.

Day 5: Solitary Prayer

Read Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; 22:39-44; and John 17:1-5,20,25-26. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, the eternal Word clothed in human flesh, needed to commune with God the Father. For precious hours, Jesus put aside the demands of the day that he might have intentional, intimate fellowship with God.

He knew he needed to make time for the Father to refresh, instruct, and strengthen him; he knew his need for prayer. Do we? James Montgomery wrote, "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air...O Thou, by whom we come to God...the path of prayer Thyself hast trod: Lord, teach us how to pray!" (*Public Domain*) Pray!

Day 6: Prayer Prepares Jesus and Us

Prayer prepares Jesus to hear God and to obey. Though prayer should be constant (*Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17*), fervent, private prayer is also necessary. Read Mark 1:35-39 and Luke 22:39-45. Notice that Jesus' prayer time is interrupted by the demands of the day. In the Luke text, those seeking Jesus are the ones who will arrest him and lead him to the cross. In the Mark text, people are also looking for him, but in this situation they are seeking him so he can minister to them. Jesus' prayer times prepare him for God's plan for his life. Notice his decision in Mark 1:39. Pray God will guide you as you seek God's heart in prayer.

Day 7: Called Beyond

Read Mark 1:35-39 and Luke 4:42-44. Jesus was not bound by the demands and desires of others; he knew when to respond to those wanting his time and energy and when he was being "called beyond." Jesus was on a God-directed mission; he lived intentionally, not according to human demands, but according to God's plan. Sometimes that meant saying, "no," to the urgent in order to be available for the divine. Others, beyond Capernaum, needed to hear the good news. Read Matthew 6:10; Acts 21:10-14; and Ephesians 2:10. Pray you will be the presence of Christ wherever and whenever God calls you. Listen for God's voice and say, "yes."