

Teach us how to Pray (A twelve week program)

Go to: “Teach us how to Pray” found on:

www.Vimeo.com/Rivest

Mark 2:1-12

New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man ² A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ² They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³ Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? ¹⁰ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, ¹¹ “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Below is a list of reflective questions. Look deep within yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to inspire, direct and heal you. Ask Him how this scripture applies to your life. Answer each question completely and honestly. Write down your observations and insights. Use the information from the video, “Teach us how to Pray.” These reflections will use the above Scripture in the manner of “Lectio Divina”, or Divine Reading.

This is designed to be a 12 week program. Take your time do not rush it through. You might want to view the video several times throughout these weeks.

Use a separate sheet of paper to write your reflections.

In this experience of “Lectio Divina” we will examine each character and event in this Scripture story and allow the Holy Spirit to help us examine ourselves.

Week 1. “Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man”

Who am I and what paralyzes me?

My family of origin taught me that I am not a worthwhile person. I feel inadequate and a failure. I believe that something is essentially wrong with me. I often feel shame and guilt. These feelings do not go away. I believe that I do not deserve to have good things happen to me. Actually bad things should happen to me. My struggle with my sexuality and other behaviors prove that I am a failure and have low self worth. I conclude that I must hide my weaknesses from others.

I feel unloved and unlovable. My needs will never be met. Consequently I internalize my rage and it shows up as depression, resentment, self-pity and even suicidal feelings.

I can confuse nurturing and sex. Support, care, affirmation, and love are all sexualized. No matter how much sex I get it never seems to be enough.

Week 2. “Carried by four of them”

How do I relate to my closest friends and family?

I often create a front of “normality” to hide my inadequacy. I wear a mask all the time. It takes a lot of energy from me. I may even appear to be grandiose and full of exaggerated self importance or, I pretend to be humble. My real friends and family see that I am conflicted between who I feel that I am and who I pretend to be. They see my decisions or behaviors as irrational and self-destructive.

I assume responsibility for all the pain of loved ones.

I feel isolated. I am often unaware of other peoples’ pain or appreciate their opinions.

I cannot depend on others to love me. I do not have confidence in others’ love. I expect rejection.

Week 3. “Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it,” “When Jesus saw their faith”

How do others relate to me?

Close friends and family become angry and frustrated with me because of my egocentricities, especially when I am insensitive to others. They are troubled by what looks like destructive or curious behaviors.

I often do extreme or indulgent things as if making up for something.

Significant persons feel pushed away, useless, neglected, and unnecessary. They are confused, seemingly generous gestures, but lack any personal warmth or presence. People become angry and hurt with a sense of abandonment in reaction to my irresponsible behaviors.

Those closest to me see a double life. My ups and downs are difficult to understand. They begin to distrust me. There are inconsistencies between my private and public life.

Week 4. "And then lowered the mat the man was lying on."

What embarrasses me and who would care about me anyway?

I believe that everyone would abandon me if the truth of who I am and what I do would be known. I dare not be dependent on others, reach out to others, or let others help me.

I believe that my sexual or other behaviors are so bad that everything becomes my "fault."

I believe that something is fundamentally wrong with me. I am embarrassed about who I am and how little I have accomplished. There is no way that I could be good enough.

Week 5. "He said to the paralyzed man, "your sins are forgiven."

Who is Jesus and how do I relate to him?

I relate to Jesus at all it is from a distance. I believe in my head but not my heart.

I sometimes look to Jesus to be my savior, helper, sustainer but I doubt if He really cares enough about me personally. Hell feels closer to me than heaven.

Jesus could not forgive my sins. There are too many and too big.

Although I speak all the right words about Jesus and my relationship with Him I do not really trust Him. I avoid His lordship over my life. I have to be in charge of my life.

God the Father and the Holy Spirit are intellectual concepts not realities that dynamically affect my life.

Week 6. "I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."

What are my sins, and which make me feel the most shame?

I fear that I may be emotionally, sexually, and generally out of control. I often promise to be in better control of myself but it does not work.

My obsessions pervade my life and behavior.

I cover up and lie about who I really am.

I am ashamed of me.

Week 7. “Now, some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming!”

How am I a hypocrite?

I cannot honestly express guilt and remorse because that would require me to be honest with myself, others, and God.

I create a false image of being in charge of my life. I am a perfectionist. I appear to be unaffected by any problem.

I put on the mask of being charming and sociable but I am really trying to be unreachable and emotionally closed off from others. I appear not to want anything.

I am purposely unclear about my intentions in relationships.

I put a great deal of effort to show that I am respectable and law-abiding. I even publically profess extreme sexual propriety and moral self-righteousness particularly about sexual matters.

Week 8. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

How do I try to manipulate others to go along with my beliefs?

I can be calculating, strategizing, manipulative, and even ruthless. Rules and laws are made for people who are lovable. Those who are unlovable survive in other ways.

I often mislead or lie to people. I will tell them what they want to hear. For example I might say that I want to be emotionally nurtured because that is what they want to hear, but really what I want is sex. I am afraid to have a life without sex. I will even abstain from sex for a while to eventually get the sex that I really want.

I try to control others and situations to assure that I get the sex that I want. I make maximum effort to insure all possible sexual opportunities.

My plan for acceptance from others is to be good enough although I know that I am not. Being good enough often means doing things for others that I do not want to. I have a difficult time saying NO.

Week 9. “Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things”?”

What secrets does Jesus know about me that I wish He did not know? I know that Jesus knows everything about me and that scares me. Although I speak otherwise I know that I am doomed for sure. Perhaps I can successfully hide from Jesus also.

Week 10. “I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. So he said to the man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home. He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.”

What sins or emotional problems hold me back from becoming a full and complete person?

I am afraid to trust. No one, even the Divine, is trustworthy. My whole life has validated this. I know this to be true. I am “wired” not to believe.

I often want to believe. Honestly, I am ridding on the faith of others and what I read. Although again, being honest, I do not read much. Certainly I do not read Scripture much or go to church much, or even pray much. If I give five minutes a day to God He is lucky. My laziness and lame excuses of being so busy are really evidence that I do not believe that Jesus is close to me, cares about me, and can affect me in positive way. Let’s be honest I am more about myself than Jesus.

Week 11. “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

Who does Jesus say that I am? I really do not know who I am in Jesus. I know what others have said but I have not integrated that into myself. Others have said that we are all dirty rotten sinners but that Jesus can make us good and holy. I believe the dirty rotten part but the other seems too good to be true. I do not trust it. I might say the churchy words but I really do not believe it.

Certainly Jesus would never call me son or daughter.

Week 12. “This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

What amazing things would you like God to do for you?