navigating tough moments

MARK 14:32-42

THE QUESTION

What can we learn from Jesus about how to pray during difficult times?

THE POINT

During difficult times, we can pray honestly and trust God's plan.

02

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

PEOPLE

We all encounter difficult moments in life. In Jesus, we have a Savior we can pray to, trusting that He knows what is best for us.

LET'S start

QUESTION

Share a time when you felt nervous on a roller coaster—what made it scary or exciting? *Talk about what you rode and the scariest parts of the ride.*

CONNECT

Game: This or That?

Have students form a single-file line. Give students the following options and have them choose which one they would rather do by going to the left side of the room (option #1) or to the right side of the room (option #2).

- Go down a forty-foot-high water slide or go whitewater rafting for ten minutes
- Swim in the middle of a large ocean or swim with a killer whale
- Eat twenty hot dogs in ten minutes or eat a slice of cake that has been in the freezer for a year
- Sing the national anthem at the World Series or star in the lead role in a Broadway play
- Start a new club at your school from the ground up or take over a struggling club
- Spend a day replacing a member of your favorite band or have lunch with a famous person from another century
- Face a one-hundred-mile-per-hour fastball or walk across hot coals
- Have ice water poured over you in fifteen-degree weather or go to the beach in 120-degree heat with no sunscreen

DID YOU KNOW?

Currently, the tallest roller coaster under construction in the world is *Falcon's Flight,* standing at an impressive 639 feet tall. The ride is located at Six Flags Qiddiya in Saudi Arabia.[1]

LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider the following:

ITEM #: Engage students in the session and introduce the main idea by displaying the **Poster Name**.

BIBLICAL SETTING

Setting up the celebration of Passover, Mark shows us Jesus experiencing a final meal with His disciples before He was tried and crucified. During this meal, Jesus revealed that one of the disciples would betray Him (Judas) while another would deny Him (Peter). In these dark and uncertain times, the scene shifted to the garden of Gethsemane where an intense and intimate moment happened between God the Father and Jesus the Son.

MEMORY VERSE

Mark 14:36

LET'S look

MARK 14:32-42

32 Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he told his
disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James, and John with
him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 He said to
them, "I am deeply grieved to the point of death. Remain here and stay
awake." 35 He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if
it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, "Abba,
Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me.
Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will." 37 Then he came and
found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't
you stay awake one hour? 38 Stay awake and pray so that you won't enter
into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 39 Once again
he went away and prayed, saying the same thing. 40 And again he came
and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open.
They did not know what to say to him. 41 Then he came a third time and
said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The time has
come. See, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Get up;
let's go. See, my betrayer is near."

LET'S talk

THE POINT

During difficult times, we can pray honestly and trust God's plan.

ENDURE DIFFICULT TIMES // MARK 14:32-34

CONTENT SUMMARY

As this passage begins, we see Jesus entering the garden of Gethsemane with His disciples at night. The word *Gethsemane* means "olive press," and it was a common meeting place for Jesus and His disciples. At a certain point, Jesus was with Peter, James, and John—his "inner three" disciples. These men had pledged to die for Him. In verses 33-34, the text describes Jesus as "deeply distressed," which is a reference only found in Mark's Gospel, and "troubled." The word for troubled expresses extreme anxiety (CSB Study Bible Notes). In Luke's Gospel, we learn that Jesus was so stressed that He sweat drops of blood. This moment helps us see Jesus' humanity and full divinity.

APPLICATION TO STUDENTS

Jesus went through difficult times as well. We live in a fallen, broken world in need of a Savior. While we cannot understand the weight of taking on the sins of the world, we can relate to moments that are tough to bear. During our times of distress, we will inevitably turn to something to help us deal with it. In this passage, Jesus was accompanied by His disciples and ultimately went to His Father in prayer. While this was a heavy moment, it does not mean God was unloving for allowing it to happen or inactive in the midst of it. God was not absent—in fact, He was close. Even in our darkest hour, God is there, and His nature and character never change. He always wants what is best for us, but more than that, He wants His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. It's okay to pray, "God, this moment is heavy, but I pray for Your will to be done."

Why do you believe this passage goes to great lengths to describe Jesus' physical state?

How do you tend to respond in difficult moments? What does this say about your faith?

Jesus was about to bear the sins of the world. How does this help us understand Jesus and His mission?

LET'S talk

PRAY HONESTLY // MARK 14:35-36a

CONTENT SUMMARY

"The hour" tells us that Jesus knew what the garden of Gethsemane meant and what was next. Here, Jesus was alone with the Father, as He had asked His disciples to remain where they were, stay awake, and pray. The moment had come—Jesus was only a short time away from shouldering the world's sins. The fact that Jesus "fell to the ground" communicates that He knew just how heavy a burden this was. The term *abba* is the same word for "father" and shows intimacy and affection between Father and Son (CSB Study Bible Notes). The "cup" was a metaphor for God's wrath (God's judgment on sin) and refers to personal suffering and death (CSB Study Bible Notes). Jesus knew this was His mission, and He approached the Father in willing submission.

APPLICATION TO STUDENTS

Verse 35 reveals how Jesus responded in one of the most crucial moments of His earthly ministry: He went to His Father in prayer. It's vital to note *what* He prayed. Consider two phrases and what we can learn from them:

- "All things are possible for you." **Always remember—nothing is beyond the power of God. You can bring anything to Him.** Jesus knew God could take this "cup" away from Him. But Jesus also knew what the Father had sent Him to do.
- "If it were possible . . . " This presents us with a uniquely human interplay between the *heart* of the Son and the *will* of the Father (*The Gospel According to Mark, Pillar New Testament Commentary*). **When you put your yes on the table for Jesus, you give Him everything.** Jesus beautifully demonstrated this for us in this passage.

How does Jesus' suffering for us prove that God cares?

What happens to your prayers when you believe nothing is too difficult for God?

How does this help you understand who Jesus really is?

LET'S talk

TRUST GOD'S PLAN // MARK 14:36b-42

CONTENT SUMMARY

The second part of verse 36 shows Jesus' total submission to His Father's plan. Could God have removed the cup or chosen another way? Being all-powerful, the answer is yes. However, due to His holy and just nature, along with His plan to save humanity, there was no other option. Our broken world needed a Savior, and that Savior is Jesus; He is the only solution. Jesus completely trusted His Father and accepted His will. This is an important lesson for us to learn.

In verse 38, when Jesus says "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," He's talking about the disciples' human spirits—not the Holy Spirit. They wanted to stay awake, but their bodies were exhausted (ESV Study Bible Notes). Then in verse 39, Jesus prays the same thing again, showing His deep desire to follow God's plan.

APPLICATION TO STUDENTS

Like the disciples, we can be well-intended believers who easily fail to fulfill our calling due to physical needs and desires (CSB Study Bible Notes). We must trust and embrace God's plan for our lives. His plan will always unfold as He thinks it should. **Furthermore, God will use our experiences to draw us closer to Him.** Again, notice the closeness of the Father and the Son in this passage. While Jesus fully knew the events that were going to take place and why they had to occur, He still demonstrated incredible reliance and trust in the Father.

What can we learn from Jesus' prayer in this passage?

How can we submit to God's plans for our lives, even when it's difficult?

Do you believe God's plan is more important than your desires? Explain.

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

We all encounter difficult moments in life. In Jesus, we have a Savior we can pray to, trusting that He knows what is best for us.

FAMILY

COMMUNITY & WORLD

LET'S go

Bible Meets Life

THE QUESTION › What can we learn from Jesus about how to pray during difficult times?

THE POINT › During difficult times, we can pray honestly and trust God's plan.

Life can feel like a roller coaster—full of ups, downs, and unexpected twists. We all face challenging moments that test us along the way. We must wrestle with the questions of what we will do with these moments and who we will turn to. In this session, we're reminded that as believers, we can pray honestly and trust God's plan in all circumstances. Jesus went to the Father in prayer, and He never wavered in His commitment to the things of God. He asked His disciples to pray, but they fell asleep. We will never be perfect, but we should always strive for obedience.

MOVING forward

Take a moment this week to consider the situations or areas that cause you to be anxious. Are you going to the Lord and seeking His will for your life? You can rest in knowing God hears you and His plans are always best.

MEMORY verse

This week, let's memorize **Mark 14:36** together:

> **And he said, "*Abba*, Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will."**

MAIN TAKEAWAY

What is one insight or takeaway you got from today's session?

Think about this:
How you pray during tough times shows who holds your heart and who you truly serve.