

PRAYING EARNESTLY

Luke 22:44 ... "and being in agony, he prayed more earnestly. Then his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Today's verse is Luke's eye-witness account of Jesus praying on the Mount of Olives – an orchard – prior to his arrest and crucifixion. Luke tells us that Jesus was praying so earnestly (powerfully) that he was sweating profusely. Please note: The verse does not say Jesus was sweating blood, only that his sweat was "like" a wound that is bleeding profusely. Luke was a doctor. He knew the difference.

Your child knows you intimately and understands that his or her blessings (food, clothing, protection and love) come mostly from you. The child understands that without you, he or she has no one to count on; no one who will provide as much attention and the necessities of life that you can. When your daughter desires a piece of candy or a toy she sees in the store, she knows better than to beg the store owner for it. She does not appeal to other shoppers. She only begs you to get it for her. She goes to the source of her blessings instead of wasting her time appealing to others.

The word "earnestly" refers to something very serious. Jesus was about to be arrested, tortured and cruelly executed. He knew to whom he could depend for comfort, encouragement, strength and affection. Asking his followers or the orchard's gardener for help would have been a waste of time. No, Jesus went right to the source; the Father he trusted for all of his needs. He seriously prayed to the Father for comfort.

When we are depressed, sad, hungry or in pain, we often look to other people for help before we consider going to God. When we do that, we are demonstrating that we lack an intimate relationship with the real source of our help. We forget a key spiritual principle: The closer we get to God during the good times, the closer he will be in the bad times.

When you know God intimately, you know not to waste your time on alternatives (other people). You know your best hope is in Christ. You also will know, as did Jesus, that some situations you face are designed to fulfill God's purpose, either in your life or the lives of others. So, instead of praying that the burden will be removed, the Holy Spirit gives you the wisdom to pray for strength and comfort through the trial. Luke knew he needed to record in his gospel the fact that Jesus prayed earnestly to his Father, so we would learn to do the same. Your child knows who to go to for help. Jesus knew who to go to for help. I pray you will learn where you should go when you're facing a difficult trial, and what to ask for. If you are speaking to God during your trial, you are speaking earnestly.

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