

Praying for Difficult Things (Mark 14:32-38)

1. Select one person to be the narrator and another to read dramatically as Jesus. Can you convey the emotion that Jesus is portraying? Does anyone else want to try? Then see the video.

They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples,

“Sit here while I pray.”

He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch.”

Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.

“Abba, Father everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping.

“Simon, are you asleep? Couldn’t you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Mark 14:32-38, NIV)

2. Jesus knows His Father’s plan, but He asks if it is possible to avoid carrying it out. How does Jesus pray?

3. Why did the disciples fail to stay awake and pray?

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Teacher Notes

Video Abstract (Author: Wild Stories About Jesus and Max7.org): This episode of WILD STORIES ABOUT JESUS retells Mark 14:32-38, detailing Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. This video is suitable for showing in schools, kids' clubs and churches and could be helpful for family devotions.

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Ask the student if he knows what will happen to Jesus. Understanding the context is vital to understanding the text.

Jesus knows that there will be a trial, torture, and crucifixion.

What do you observe from Jesus' concern, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death”?

Jesus is very sad – not mad or angry, not upset at anyone, not afraid or scared, not combative or vengeful.

Jesus speaks literally when He says “to the point of death.”

2. Jesus knows His Father's plan, but He asks if it is possible to avoid carrying it out. How does Jesus pray?

Help the student see a sequence in Jesus' prayer:

1. “Abba Father” – a warm affectionate title similar to “Dear Father.”
2. “Everything is possible for you” – acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and omnipotence.
3. “Take this cup from me” – the difficult prayer request.
4. “Yet not what I will, but what you will” – acknowledgment that Jesus' request is secondary to the primacy of God's plan. Jesus will still fully obey, without grudge or malice, to whatever God's will may be.

Does Jesus' prayer get answered?

3. Why did the disciples fail to stay awake and pray?

Ask the student if the disciples really listened and heard the needs of their best friend. What is required to really understand what you hear?

Explore with the student if the disciples loved Jesus. Do you love someone because they are good to you? Does your love mean that you are concerned for that person? Do you want the best for your friend? What if it comes at your expense like when you're very tired or have to walk an extra mile?

How should have the disciples prayed?

With concern for Jesus' distress and troubled demeanor. When did Jesus, the One who controls nature and demons, ever be distressed or troubled to the point of death?

Prayers would be like Jesus'.

Persistent, unceasing, ardent.