

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Forever, Firm Foundation, Still Standing, In Your Presence, In Christ Alone

WELCOME

Family Prayer. Send a short message to your family members asking how you can pray for them. Make sure you respond to them shortly after your small group discussion today.

WORD

JOHN 2:13-16

¹³ *The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*¹⁴ *And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.*¹⁵ *And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables;*¹⁶ *and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."*

For us to really appreciate how John developed the message in John 2, we have to look at these two events as one: the turning of water into wine and the cleansing of the temple. These stories were meant to be read together as they show us two sides of Jesus.

At the wedding in Cana (**John 2:1-11**), we see Jesus answering a prayer request, which brought joy and celebration to the host and guests. At the temple cleansing, (**John 2:13-22**), Jesus disrupted the celebration, intervening in people's business activities and festivities as they were celebrating the Passover.

These two events may look very different on the surface, but they really give us a complete picture of who Jesus is. He is a Man of authority, a gracious God, but One who is also just. Yes, God answers prayers, but the prayer of the wicked is an abhorrence to God. Jesus is our sovereign Lord. He is God, so pray to please Him.

PRAISE GOD IN PRAYER

At times, Jesus will "turn water into wine" in answer to our prayer but sometimes He will "turn over our table" because He wants to purge and sanctify us. Whichever way He answers, we can always trust that it is for our good and ultimately for His glory.

At the temple cleansing, Jesus saw the merchants and money-changers turn the temple grounds into a marketplace during the Passover celebration. Jesus was consumed with righteous indignation against their greed and mockery of God's house of worship.

Jesus rebuked them, turned over their tables and drove them out of the temple (**John 2:15**), modeling to us anger without quarreling or shouting, which cannot achieve God's righteousness (**James 1:20**).

The prophecies in **Isaiah 42:2** and **Malachi 3:1-2** said that Jesus would not need to quarrel or shout in the streets, for His very presence exuded authority.

Our prayer should begin and end with God (**Matthew 6:9-15**). When we pray, we should not be preoccupied with ourselves but our focus should be on God. The more we focus on God, the more are our personal intentions and desires become aligned with Him.

BE HONEST BEFORE GOD IN PRAYER

We should not pray to simply impress God in order for Him to answer our prayers. God knows what is in our hearts. We cannot fool God (**John 2:25**). When we come to Him, we need to be honest about our struggles, sins, fears and doubts. Cry out to God with all your heart and He will meet you wherever you are.

It is easy for us to end up saying that we don't want to believe in God anymore because He doesn't answer our prayers. However, this is not the right attitude when we pray. We do not pray to get what we want, manipulate God or make Him change His mind.

We pray to have an intimate relationship with Him, so that we may know His desires for us. We pray so that we can be in His presence and so that we can ultimately be transformed to His image.

WORD (cont'd)

We pray to God and praise Him because He inhabits the praises of His people. Our purpose should be to encounter God. Jesus allows us to understand the heart of God when we pray. God will reveal His secret to us who fear Him (**Psalm 25:14**).

When we experience God in our prayer, everything becomes clear in His light. The answers to our prayers become secondary in comparison to experiencing God Himself. He is enough, therefore:

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. – **Philippians 4:6-7***

Jesus listens to our prayers because He is our God. If we are one with Jesus, we know our prayers are heard because He has made the promise that He will listen to everyone who comes upon Him.

Jesus is pleased with our prayers when we are focused on praising Him and when we are honest before Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

- 1. My Father's House.** What did Jesus do when He saw the merchants and money-makers in the temple according to **John 2:13-16**? Why did He do that according to the passage?
- 2. Pray to Please.** How would you describe your prayer life? How do you please God in your prayer?
- 3. Experiencing God.** What will you do to make your prayer and fasting this week different like never before?

WORKS

HONEST PRAYERS

As you come to God for an intimate time in prayer and fasting this week, be humble and honest to acknowledge all your struggles, weaknesses, fears, doubts, insecurities, pride, anger, etc.

Pray for God to reveal His purposes in every aspect of your life now. Ask Jesus to allow you to experience Him like never before. Write your insights and reflections in your prayer journal and seek God's leading to share it with others in His time.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends