

Author: Patrick J Griffiths ©  
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Title: The Gospel of Jesus Christ in Galilee – Early Galilean Ministry –  
A Picture of Contrasts: Our Lord’s Private Life  
Text: Mark 1:35-39 (vv. 35-37)  
Theme: Jesus Christ ministered powerfully from the overflow of communion with His Father.

#### THE BIG PICTURE:

- A picture of contrasts (vv. 35-39)
  - Our Lord’s private life (vv. 35-37)
    1. The devotion of our Lord to His Father (v. 35)
    2. The distraction of our Lord by His disciples (vv. 36, 37)
  - Our Lord’s public life (vv. 38, 39)
    1. The determination of our Lord for His people (vv. 38, 39)
      - Preaching the good news of the Kingdom (“preach” and “preaching”)
      - Powerful displays of Kingdom authority (“casting out the demons”)
- A picture of compassion (vv. 40-45)

There are two primary ideas inside of this one paragraph (vv. 35-39). I have noted both. However, because of the strength of each I believe both need separate attention. I would like us to consider our Lord’s private life and the need to cultivate relationships.

**Introduction:** Here our text makes reference to Galilee. The city of Capernaum mentioned in 1:21 and referenced again in 2:1 is in the region of Galilee. From verses 1:35 through 45 Jesus is “traveling throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.”

#### **Its Eternal Value:**

There is a quiet movement to life whereby we are sustained in our hardships. The overwhelming clutter of our day robs us of meditative moments.

This passage removes the veil and allows us to watch our Lord in His devotion before the Father. Our Lord rested in and depended on the Father.

“Jesus’ conversation with Peter (1:35-38) indicates that he is not simply a healer—or perhaps more accurately, that his healing is tied to a larger campaign that involves announcing that the kingdom of God is at hand; his mission cannot be reduced to healing. Jesus’ need to press on does not imply indifference to suffering, however. The stories of his encounters with the sick invite confidence—faith—and offer promises to those who ask.” [http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/8-1\\_Spirituality/8-1\\_Juel-Keifert.pdf](http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/8-1_Spirituality/8-1_Juel-Keifert.pdf)

**The Present Danger:**

“The feeling of being hurried is not usually the result of living a full life and having no time. It is on the contrary born of a vague fear that we are wasting our life. When we do not do the one thing we ought to do, we have no time for anything else -- we are the busiest people in the world.”

<http://www.wisdomquotes.com/001331.html> (Eric Hoffer)

**The Present Danger:**

We have made prayer something other than a relationship between a Father and a son. When prayer becomes an obligation, or duty, it becomes sterile and burdensome. Prayer is the dialogue of intimate friends. It is the relationship that is to exist between a husband and wife, between one's children and parent. Prayer is the language of love.

If, in reading this story, we walk away saying, “Jesus prayed, so I need to pray,” we have completely missed the point of the passage. The Holy Spirit desires for us to see the relationship between the Father and His beloved Son.

**Questions:**

1. Why did our Lord have a quiet time?
2. Why did the crowds seek Jesus?
3. What actions characterized His ministry?

**To Know:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to know our need to live in complete dependency on God for life and in life.

**To Choose:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to rest in His power.

**To Feel:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the assurance of knowing He is in control of our moments.

**How will they best hear:**

Like most relationships I am in, if I am not intentional, I will fail to communicate. I find this with my wife, my son, and my daughter. Nothing can break the relationship, but I fail to enjoy the relationship unless I am intentional in setting aside time to communicate.

- How many older adults bemoan the distance between themselves and their children as their children grown older? In failing to be relational when the opportunity afforded itself, they grow distant and when they desire the relationship it is lost.
- How many marriages live life around their children only to find themselves with a complete stranger when their children are gone? We must invest in our relationships right now. This is no less true with God.

Learn to know God in the moment so that when you come to the end of your life you are familiar with His presence. There are two ideas inside of these three verses (vv. 35-37) that I desire for us to consider in our study.

I. The devotion of our Lord to His Father (v. 35)

“In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there” (Mark 1:35).

Notice his determination to have this time of quiet communion with His Father (v. 35).

“In the morning’ is the last watch of the night from three to six AM.” (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest’s Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:38)

“Behind the public activity and controversy lay Jesus’ life of total dependence on the one he called Abba, Father.” (Tom Wright, Mark for Everyone, [WJK, 2004], 15).

Mark records for us those occasions when our Lord separated Himself for the purpose of praying (1:35; 6:46; 14:32, 35, 39). Prayer was a natural part of our Lord’s life. “The evangelist who is most often alone in recording that Christ prayed is Luke (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28; 11:1; 23:[34], 46).” (Alfred Plummer, The Gospel According to St. Mark, Thornapple Commentaries, [Baker, rev. 1982, 1914], 73).

To say because Jesus had a private devotional life we should have a private devotional life is tantamount to saying because Jesus healed diseased people we should heal diseased people. The life of Christ is not to be imitated. His life is not prescriptive, but descriptive. All of what Jesus did is what the Holy Spirit does in and through His people. He lived His life completely dependent on God. The New Testament calls this “the fruit of the Spirit.” However, in not making the private devotional life normative does not mean it is not necessary.

Although I do not believe it is sin if you do not have a private devotional life, I would suggest to you that you are missing an enormous blessing of personal enrichment.

For example, our grandson Solomon loves food, but he is eating food that is appropriate to his age. Initially it was milk and then food with more body, but it is still not the full palate of food that is available. I would not want to suggest that because he is not currently enjoying all of available food that he is sinning, but I would suggest that there is still more to experience and to enjoy. In time, I trust he will be able to enjoy all that is available. The same is true with a private devotional life. It is not sin if you do not have one, but there is so much more available to you in your experience and enjoyment of God if you do have a private devotional life.

The Christian life is the Christ life. It is not you trying to be anything other than what you already are. I am not trying to live the Christian life. It is not my life to live. My life is His life in me and through me to those around me.

Let me suggest for your consideration three faces of a devotional life.

- My private life is relational.
- My private life is experiential.
- My private life is vital.
  - A sensitivity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to lead
  - A dependency on the ability of Christ to perform
  - A yielding to the sovereignty of God to rest

## II. The distraction of our Lord by His disciples (vv. 36, 37)

Why Simon would seek our Lord during this time is unknown, but perhaps Peter failed to appreciate the need of this quiet time our Lord spent with His Father. The word “searched” “literally means ‘to track down’ or ‘hunt’ and usually has a hostile sense.” (Walter W. Wessell, “Mark,” EBC, [Zondervan, 1984], 8:629).

“The verb **katadioko** (only here in NT) is an intensive compound of **dioko**, which means ‘run after, pursue.’ It carries the idea of ‘search for eagerly, hunt for’.” (Ralph Earle, Word Meanings in the New Testament: One-Volume Edition, 31).

“This indifference to popular applause, and this desire for spiritual exercises, were alike beyond the comprehension of his friends, even of those whom he had lately called to be his personal attendants and disciples.” (Joseph Addison Alexander, The Gospel According to Mark, [Baker, 1858], 27).

Of all the disciples it would appear appropriate that it was Peter who broke our Lord’s quiet time. Perhaps Peter did not think to have this type of relational devotion.

This intrusion “here denotes an eager and determined following, perhaps with some implication of displeasure at the act which caused it, showing a false view both of their privilege and his prerogative.” (Joseph Addison Alexander, The Gospel According to Mark, [Baker, 1858], 27). Our Lord’s devotion to God never conflicted with His duty for God. My devotion to God never conflicts with my duty to my wife, my family, or the ministry. It only becomes troublesome when duty fails to flow from devotion. Duty is always the result of the overflow from devotion. You can never be too devoted. You can be misguided and hypocritical, but such expressions are not biblical.

Our Lord’s response to Peter’s interruption would suggest that our Lord was careful not to promote a wrong conclusion about His ministry that might be developing among the people. Jesus did not come to work miracles as an end. Miracles were only means to an end.

APPLICATION: (Where do we go from here, what's the NEXT STEP?)

1. "Cat's in the Cradle" by Harry Chapin  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlHdjHNEC8>

The song is told in first person, and relates the story of a father who is too busy to spend time with his son. Though the son repeatedly asks him to join in childhood activities, the father always responds with little more than vague promises of future quality time, which is peppered with images from nursery rhymes. While the son grows up loving and admiring his father, he picks up his father's habit of putting family on the backburner. This is seen in the third verse where the father asks the son, who at this point is a college student, to sit for a while but the son asks for the car keys instead. The son is now starting to become like his father in the sense that he does not have much time to spend with his father. The father becomes aware of his influence in the final verse, where he finally recognizes that his failure to spend time with his son growing up has made his son the same way, and he'll never be able to recapture those years.

Years pass and the lonely, aging father, who is now retired and free from the constraints of work, finally desires to spend time with his son, who by this time is a full grown man and is now living in a city far away. Hoping to make up for lost time, he reaches out to him. The son however has his own life and family to worry about; he warmly responds that he is now too busy with his own work and family to spend time with (or even talk to) his father. Like his father once had, the son promises that someday in the future they will spend time together. The last verses end with the lines *"I'd love to dad if I could find the time/You see my new job's a hassle and the kids have the flu/But it's sure nice talking to you, dad ... And as I hung up the phone, it occurred to me/He'd grown up just like me/My boy was just like me ..."*. The father realizes that his son has become a self-involved career man who has no time for his own children, just like him when he was younger and working. The last line also says that the son's prediction about growing up to be like his father came true, although not in a way the father would have liked, and that the recurring lines of "we will get together then...we are going to have a good time then" are purely imaginary. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cat's\\_in\\_the\\_Cradle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cat's_in_the_Cradle)

You and I have the great privilege and opportunity of being relational with God right now. How tragic if we pass up this opportunity and sell it for a few fleeting pleasures.

2. What about those relationships most important to you right now. Are you squandering them or are you seizing them?