

Recharge YOUR SPIRITUAL



What was the power behind Jesus' ministry? What is the secret behind strong ministries? Start 2010 well by recharging your spiritual batteries by being alone with God in prayer. **Rev. Dr Tan Siang Yang** explains.

MARK 1:32-39

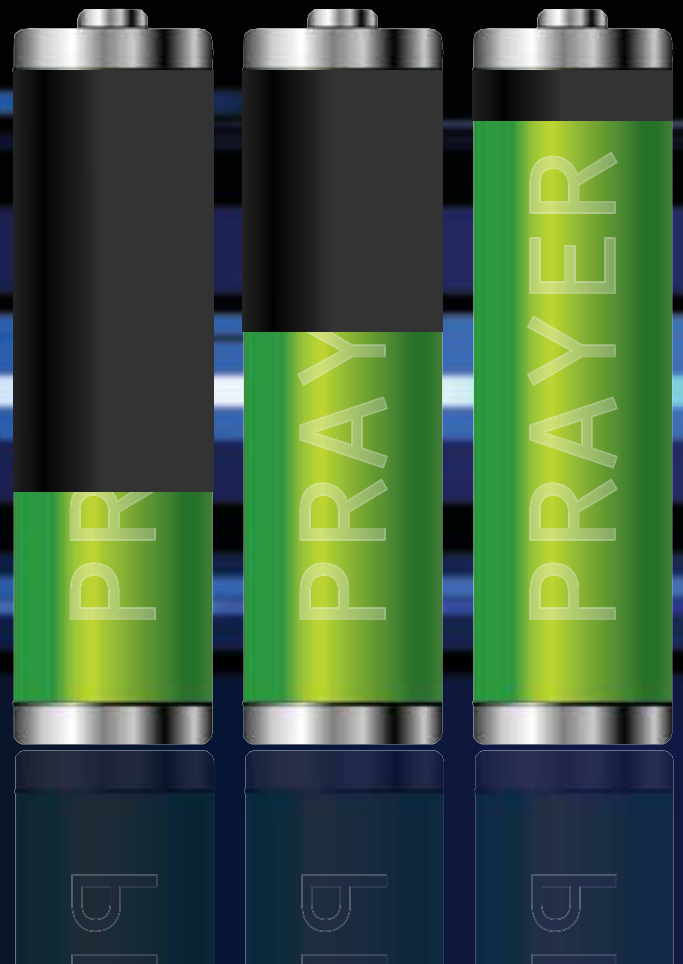
That evening after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but He would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for Him, and when they found Him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else – to the nearby villages – so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." So He traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Let us unlock the secret behind Jesus' ministry and His transforming power as we explore and walk in His example and footsteps through these passages in the Bible.

BATTERIES

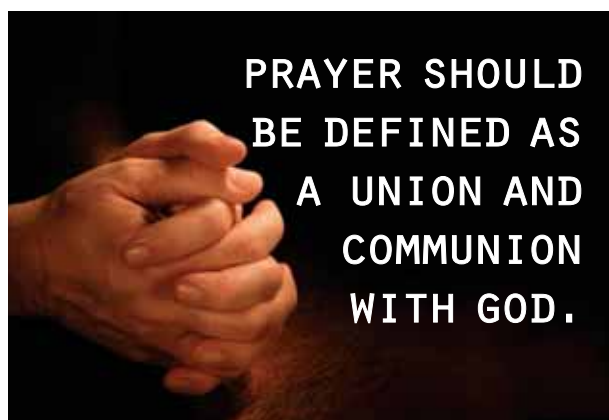


SECRET OF TRANSFORMING POWER: PRAYER

Verse 35 reveals to us the 'power' behind Jesus' ministry, and in fact, His entire being: PRAYER. Each time after He ministered to the crowds, Jesus would withdraw Himself from the crowds to pray.

Let me now share more about this topic on prayer. When I was growing up in Singapore, I was taught that prayer is like talking to God, and reading the Bible is akin to God talking to me. I also learnt that quiet time was pray, read the Bible, and then pray again.

However, over the years, I have realised that there is a problem with defining prayer as 'talking to God'. It is not a complete definition. Prayer should be defined as a union and communion with God, so that in prayer you are joined to God, and brought into the community of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



In other words, during prayer you are one with God and in communion with Him; and in prayer, you might talk to God, or you can refrain from talking too. This is because prayer may include long periods of silence, where you can simply sit and bask in the light of God's love, grace

and mercy for you. And as you sit and be amazed at the glory of God, you are silenced. You also repent in dust and ashes as you enjoy His love for you.

That is the kind of prayer that I believe Jesus partook in. He spent time in union and communion with His Heavenly Father and in the presence of the Holy Spirit, where in the community of the Trinity, He recharged His spiritual batteries. Remember, Jesus is both FULLY GOD and FULLY MAN, and He needed to recharge His spiritual batteries like we do, and He did so in prayer.



A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON TIME ALONE WITH GOD (TAWG)

Now that we have a better understanding of what prayer is about, then our quiet time, or TAWG, must be defined differently: **be quiet, be quiet, pray; be quiet, be quiet, read the bible; be quiet, be quiet, pray; be quiet, be quiet, be quiet.**

Many times, our quiet time is not quiet at all! We are so rushed for time. We also carry around this guilt that rears its head whenever we meet our spiritual parents

TAWG IS REALLY NOT ABOUT DOING; IT'S



or pastors, as they are sure to ask us how we are doing spiritually and whether we are doing our quiet time. To expiate this guilty feeling, we would rush through our TAWG, just so that we can tell them that we have done our 'spiritual duty'. But our hearts were never in it; it was too short, too rushed.

TAWG is really not about doing; it's about being with God. Foster calls this 'wasting time for God'. People around us might view it as a waste, but it is not. Rather, this **'wasting time' with God is the most beautiful, wisest investment of time you can make each day.** To spend the 30 minutes, or however long you need with the Lord, and enter into intimacy with God will transform your life and ministry.

Jesus alludes to this in John 5:15 (my comments in brackets) – *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me (stay in me, commune with me, stay in union with me, centre your life in me) and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

Jesus is saying that our part is to abide in Christ. Bearing fruit has never been our business; **He will MAKE us bear fruit, if we just abide.**



COMING HOME TO GOD

In 1992, Richard Foster wrote a book entitled

ABOUT BEING WITH GOD.

Prayer, Finding Your Heart's True Home. While writing this, he received a vision that God told him to share, and this was the account in the book:

“Today the heart of God is an open wound of love. He aches over our distance and preoccupation. He mourns that we do not draw near to Him. He grieves that we have forgotten Him. He weeps over our obsession with muchness and many-ness. And He is inviting you and me to come home because He longs for our presence, to come home to where we belong. His arms are stretched out wide to receive us. His heart is enlarged to take us in.” Foster then concludes that the key to this home is prayer. Prayer should be the chief preoccupation of a Christian's life, nothing more, nothing less and nothing else!



GOD, THE JILTED LOVER

My response to Foster's message is that I believe God is the most jilted lover in the world. Why? As the greatest lover of our souls, millions of His children, Christians from everywhere, don't show up for their date with Him. Yet God is there, ready; ready to pour out His love into us, ready to speak the secrets of His Kingdom to us. God is ready to whisper, in His still, small voice, His will, His word and His way for us so that we can experience abundant and eternal life. But we miss our date. And God is heartbroken.

God is simply saying this: “I miss YOU. I really love YOU. My heart is wounded, broken and hurt without you. Would you please come home? I have been waiting a long time. Would you please recommit yourself to me and to our times of intimacy? Would you make prayer the chief preoccupation of your life, and let me transform you by the power of the Spirit as we do this?”

I trust that we will respond.

This was what Jesus did. In Verse 36, He was praying and having a deep, intimate fellowship with the Father and the Spirit, when Simon Peter interrupted His quiet time.

Allow me to liberally paraphrase what the disciples

subsequently said: "Hey, what are you doing? Why are you spending so much time in prayer when there are so many people waiting for you? Come on Lord, let's go and conquer another kingdom for Christ!"

Jesus did not flinch nor apologise. He replied, "Let us go somewhere else..."; away from the crowds and all the people waiting for more ministry. Jesus knew He had to go to another place. He was clear about God's will because He had just prayed.



PRAYER ESTABLISHES MINISTRIES

Jesus then travelled through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. **Strong ministries are established through prayer that leads to proclamation of God's word. But it must begin with Prayer.**

Is God speaking to you? Perhaps He is telling you, "My friend, my child, let us go somewhere else. Get out of the boat if you want to walk on water; you have to get out of your comfort zone". He could also be calling you into full-time ministry. For some, you could assume the mantle of being His marketplace representative, and be the salt and light to your colleagues, classmates and family relatives.



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In my walk with God though, I have come to learn that **the same Holy Spirit who does the miraculous is the same Spirit who will move us into the wilderness, a place to be alone with God in deep prayer.** So before you embark on anything, draw close to God in prayer and be amazed at what prayer can do!

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Pastor Margaret Tay shares practical ways to commune with God.

Every Moment

Be conscious of the Presence of God.

Every Day

Choose the best time for the most important person in your life (Time Alone With God).

Every Week

Spend an extended Time Alone With God.

Every Few Months

Take periodic times of personal retreats.

Every Decision

Commit major decisions and assignments to God.

As we commune with God, we become more like Him and live our lives to fulfil His plans and purposes.