



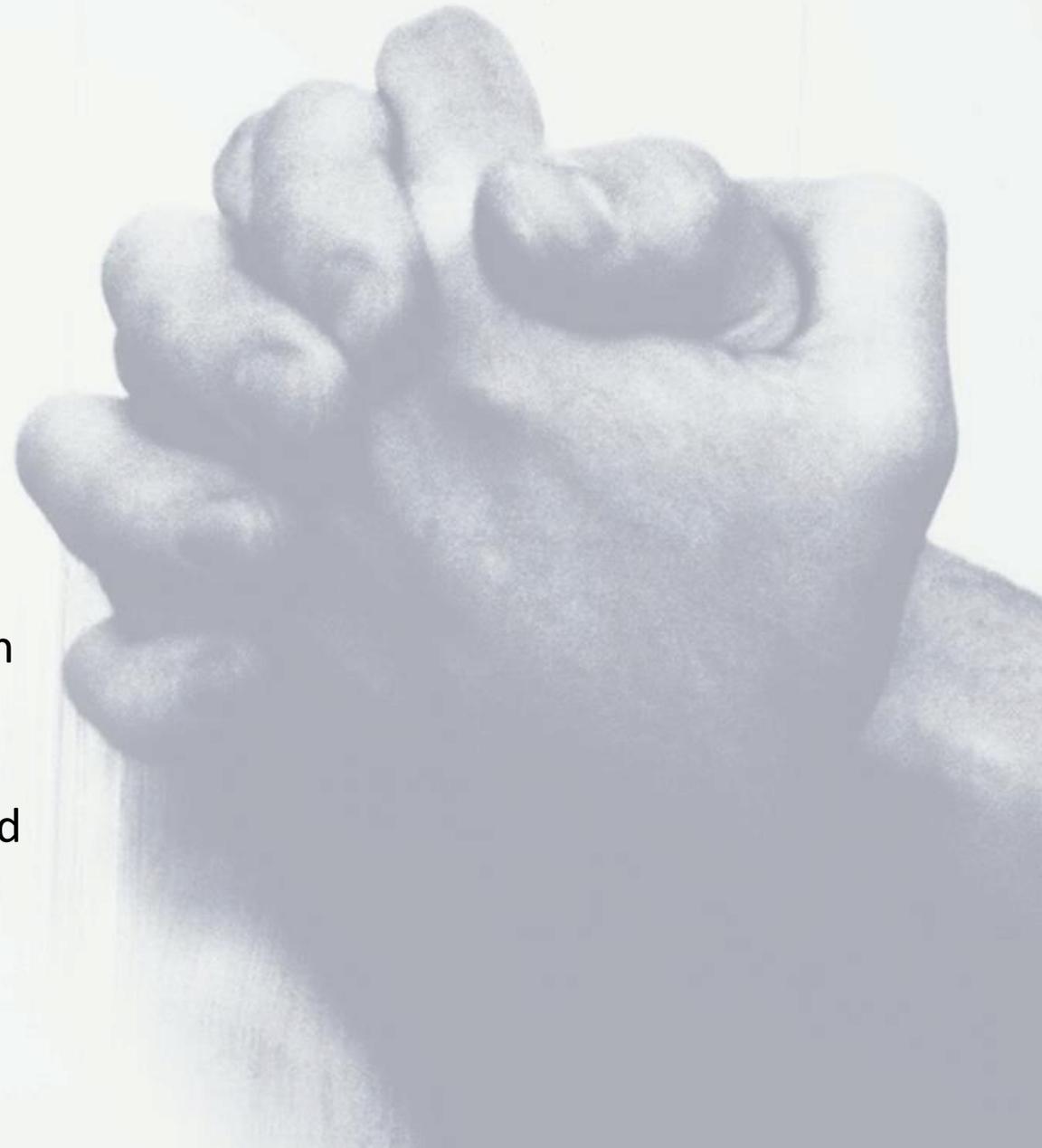
Starting Point For Effective Prayer:

Understanding prayer is not the issue ...
Knowing God is the issue!

Prayer is *our* reply to God ... as *He* seeks to develop an individual, personal connection with us.

Christian prayer is the continuation of a conversation that God has started ... and seeks a real, personal connection with our Creator – not simply to get information about Him, but to actually meet Him and hear what He has to say to us.

Tim Keller



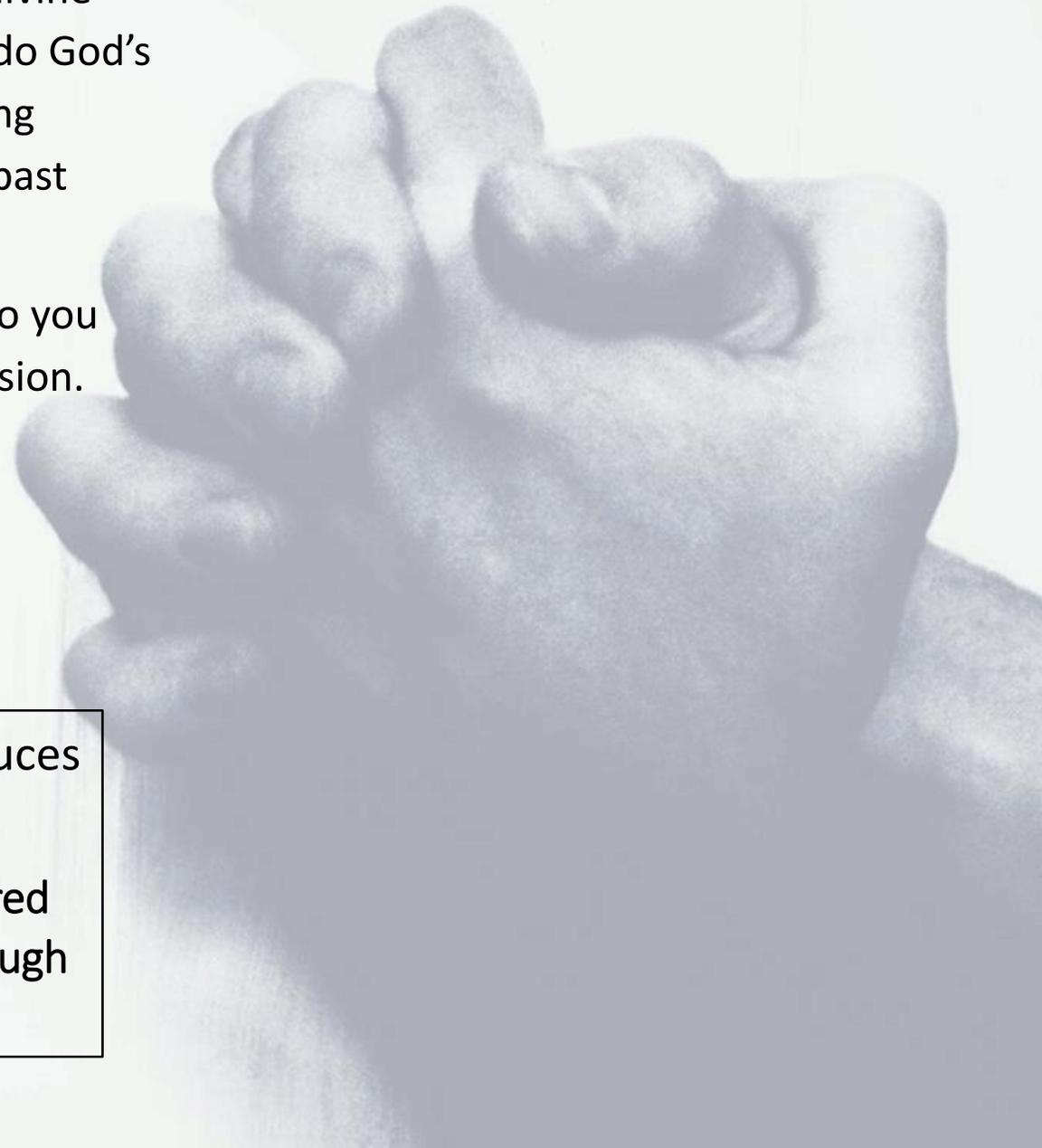
Perhaps the greatest lack in the lives of most Christians is the divine bestowal of the Spirit's empowerment. We are attempting to do God's work depending only nominally upon God, but in fact depending primarily upon ourselves – our training, our personalities, our past experience, our knowledge, and our sincere efforts.

The greatest and most revolutionary change that can happen to you is for you to receive & continually experience the divine dimension. Once you receive it and experience the difference it makes in your daily living for Christ, you will not want to live without it.

Wesley Duewel – President, OMF International

Truth: Prayer is the mechanism, the activity, that produces the “*divine experience*”.

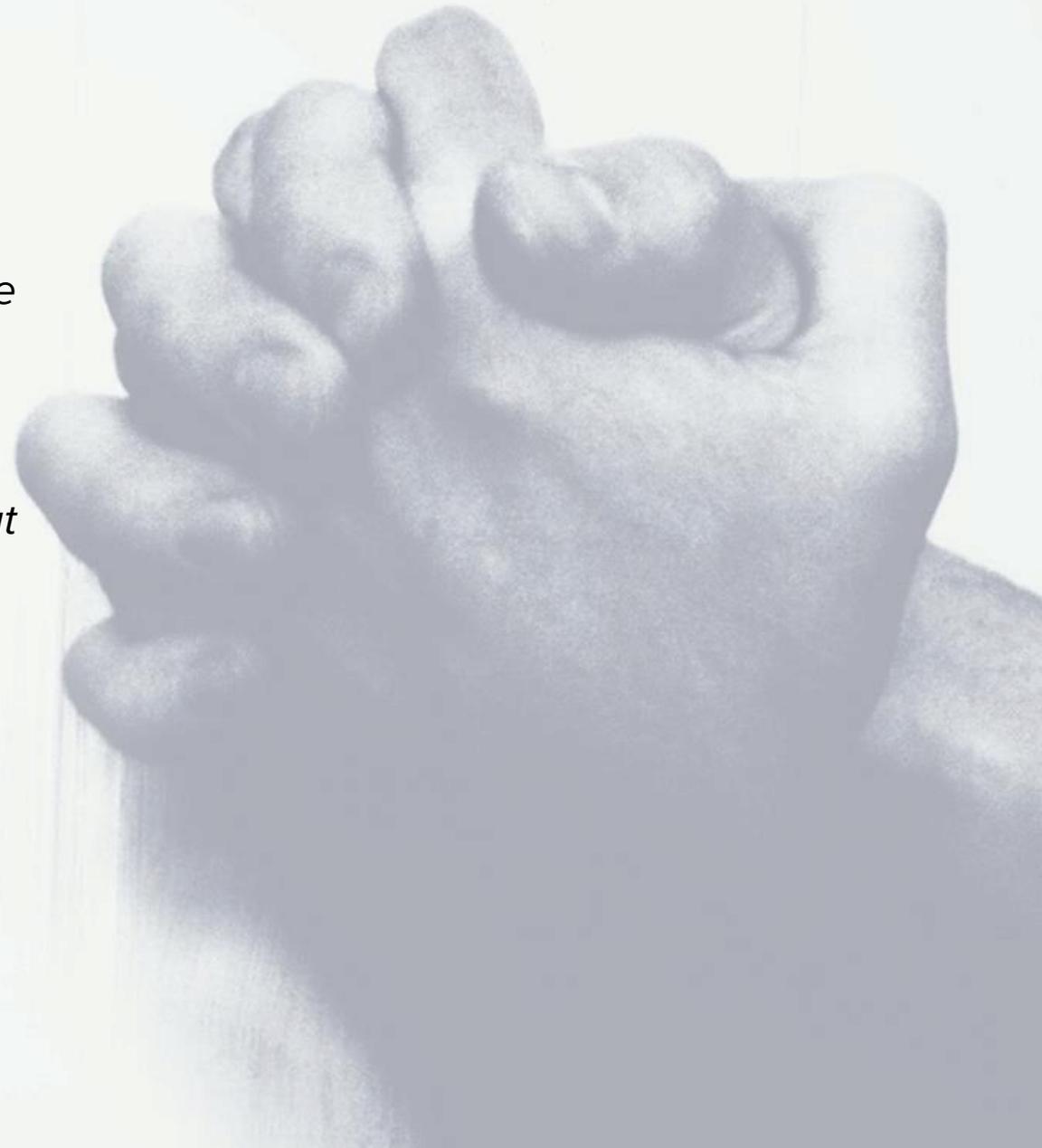
- we are not *trained* to be anointed & empowered in Christ ... it is bestowed by Him upon us through times of prayerful intimacy with Him.



1. Private Prayer.

⁵ “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6



What is Private Prayer?

- a quiet, solitary time.
- a quiet, solitary place.
- ... where God has all my attention.

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.

Mark 1:35

After he had dismissed the crowd, Jesus went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.

Matthew 14:23



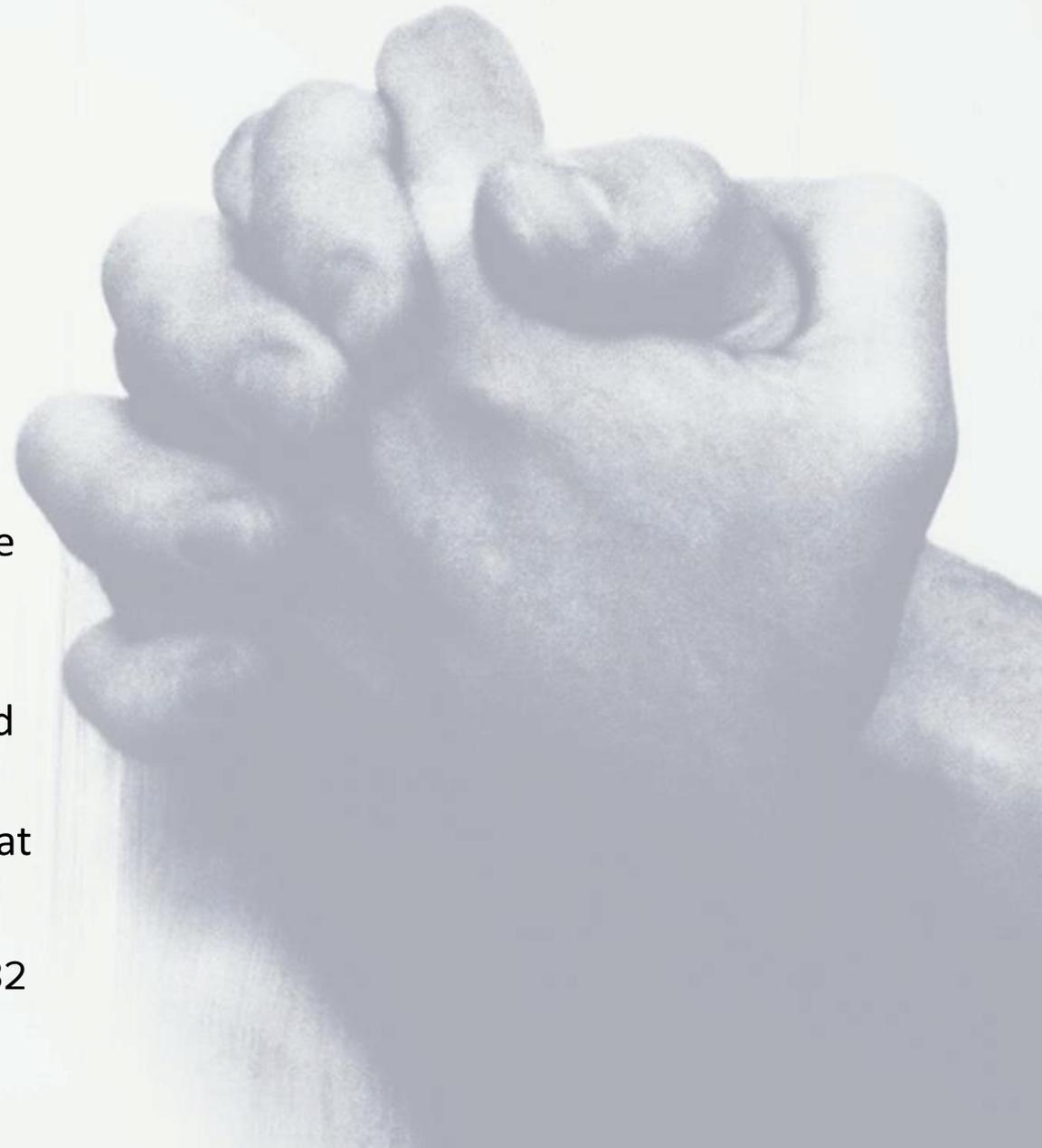
Why does Jesus model & teach private prayer?

1. Because God wants ALL my attention.

- there are truths He wants to tell me about, and plans He has prepared for me that demand I give Him my full attention.

The soul needs its silent spaces for all of its faculties to be awake and alert ... daydreaming is not meditation, and drowsy repose is not praying. The secret place of prayer calls for every faculty of mind and heart ... When our Lord took Peter, James and John up the mountain for His transfiguration, it took all of their attention to realize what was happening.

Samuel Chadwick – 1860-1932

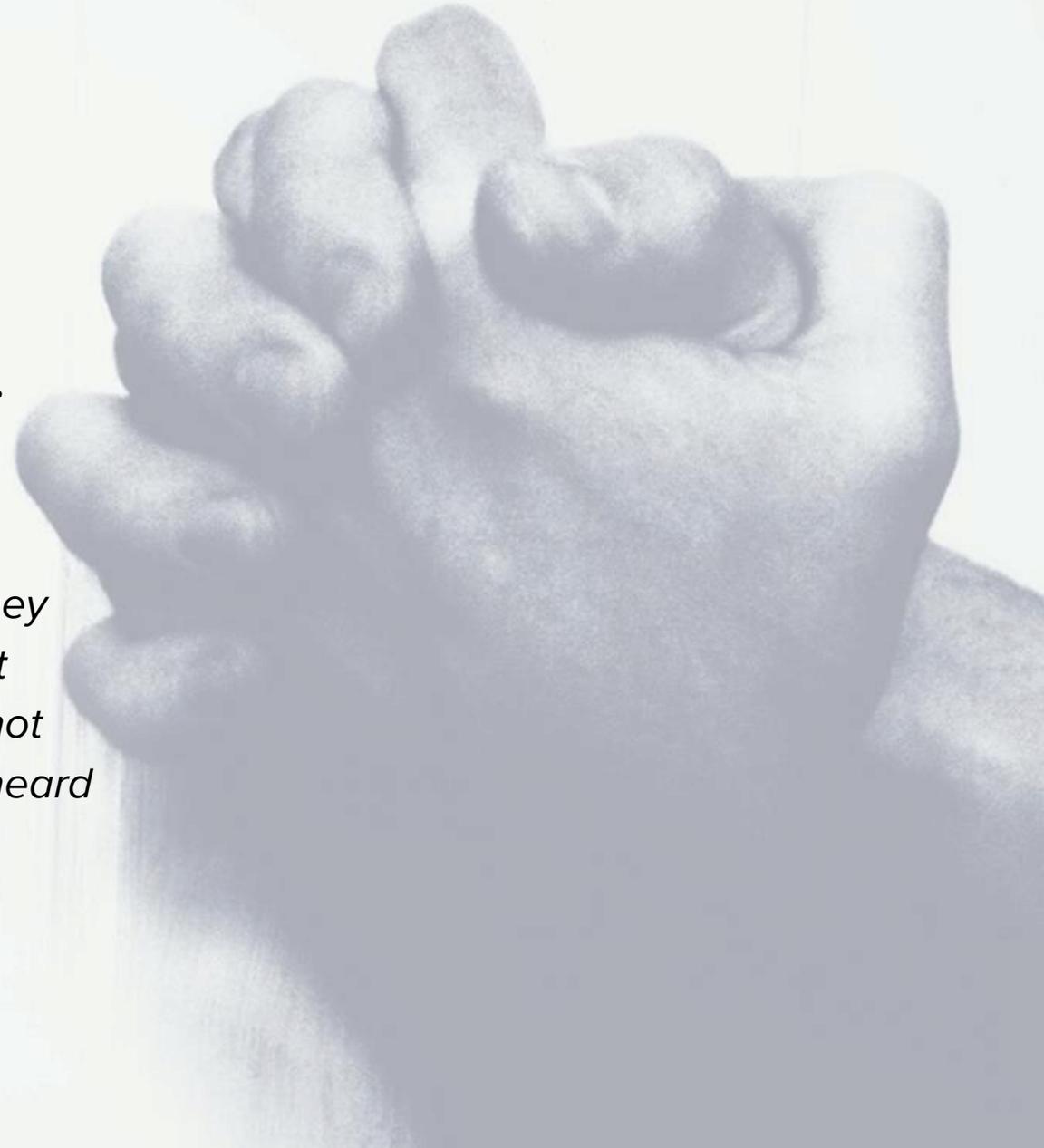


Why does Jesus model & teach private prayer?

2. Because God wants me unencumbered by what others think of me.
 - Speaking with God requires that I'm really myself, and not what others think I should be.

⁵ “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others ... ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them.”

Matthew 6

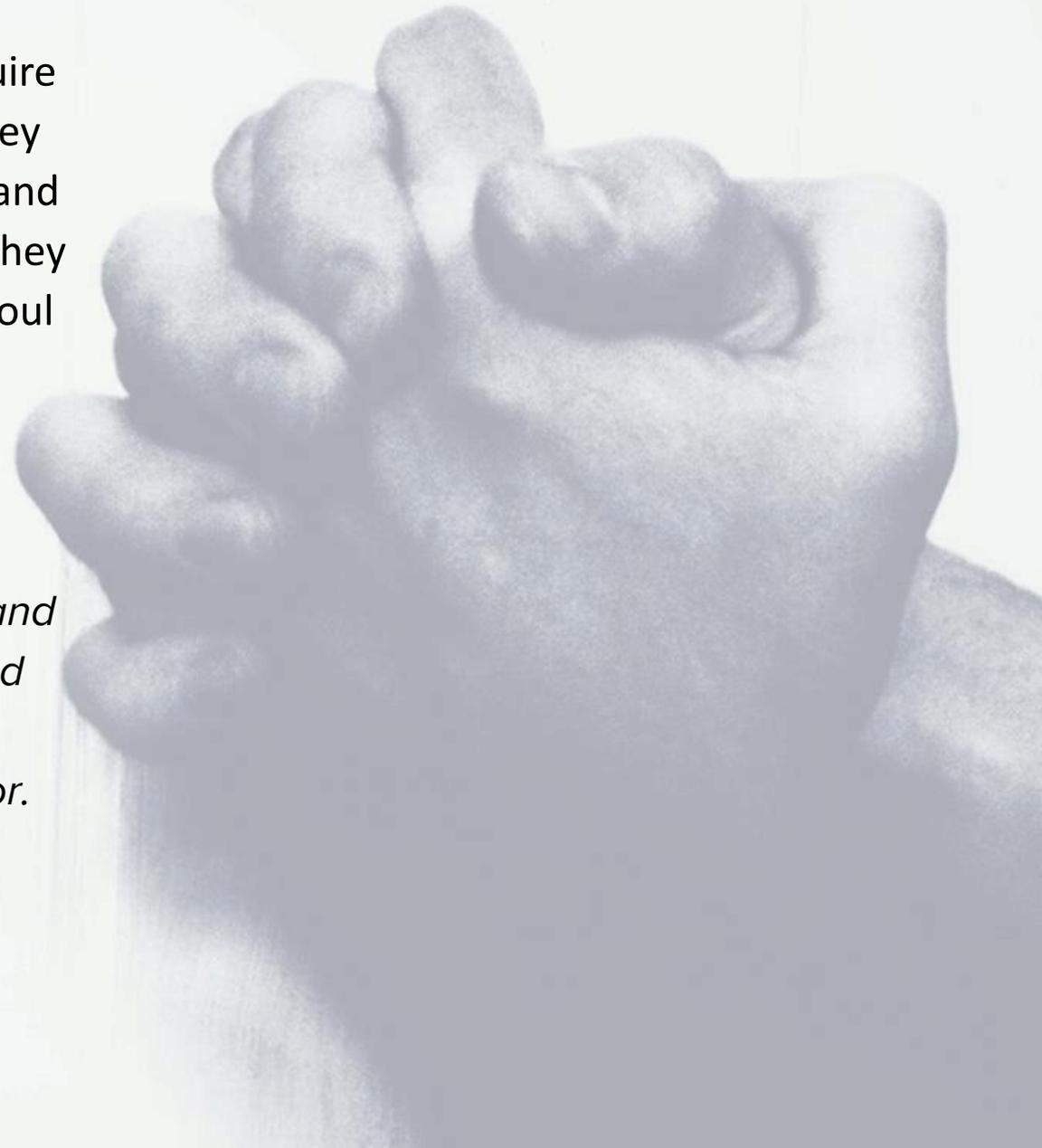


The first quality God requires in prayer is reality. Hypocrites never pray in secret, because prayers that are a pretense require an audience. They are intended to be heard by others, and they have their reward in skill of phrasing, a show of earnestness, and a reputation for piety. These things do not count with God - they cannot live in His presence – because prayer is between the soul and God alone.

Chadwick

¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

Jesus - Luke 18



Why does Jesus model & teach private prayer?

3. Because I need a quiet, silent space to bring God my deepest thoughts, needs, hurts and hopes.

- Busyness robs me of knowing God, and knowing myself.

*²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Psalm 139



Why does Jesus model & teach private prayer?

4. Because I am a Creature of habit.

- private prayer creates for me a consistent time & place to speak with my Father face-to-face.

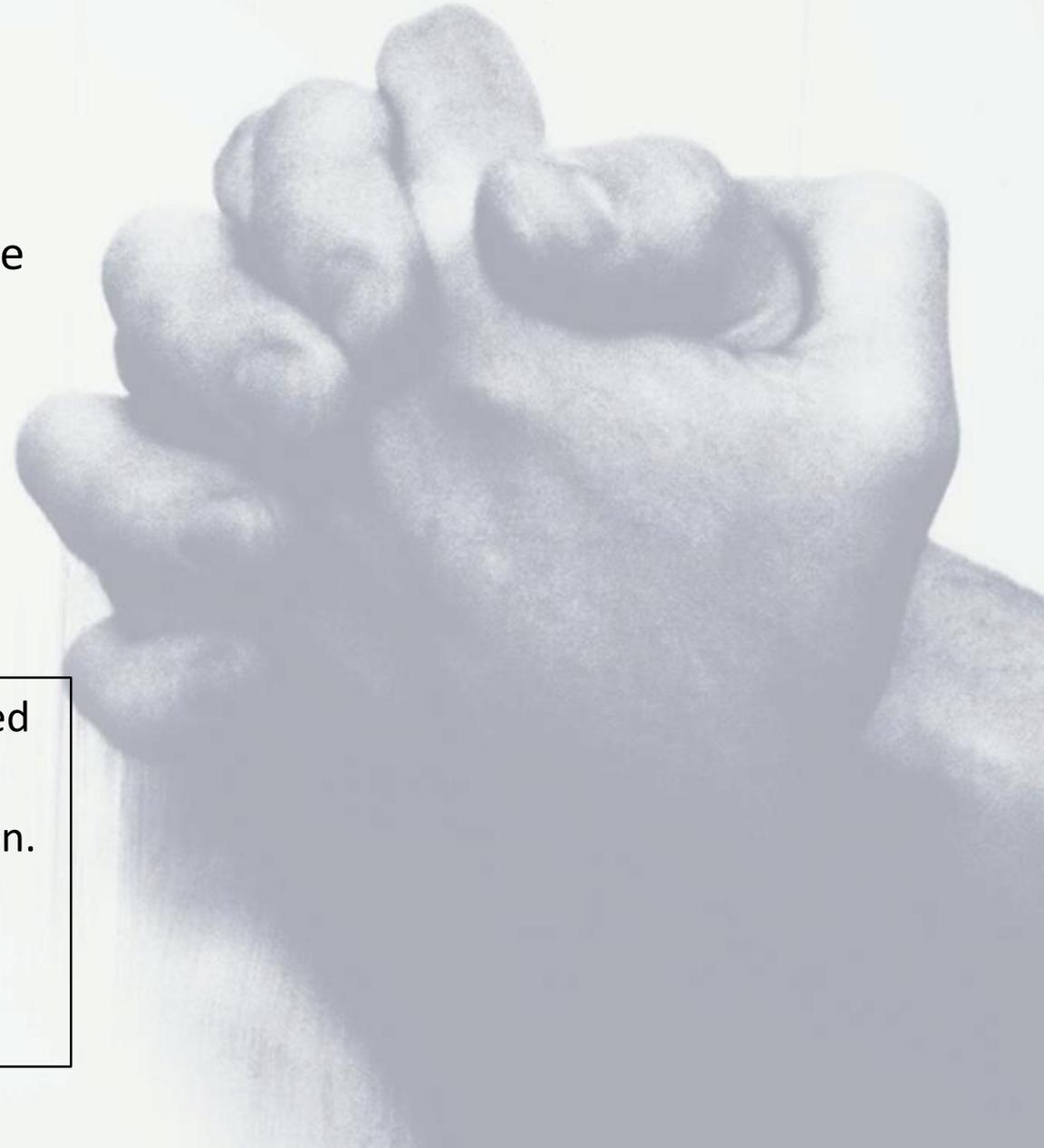
³Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD.

*Each morning I bring my requests to you
and wait expectantly.*

Psalm 5

Attention is an act of the will, and the will can be disciplined and the power of concentration developed. A (prayerful) mind is trained to attention, discrimination & concentration. By patience the soul is won, and by discipline the mind is trained.

Chadwick



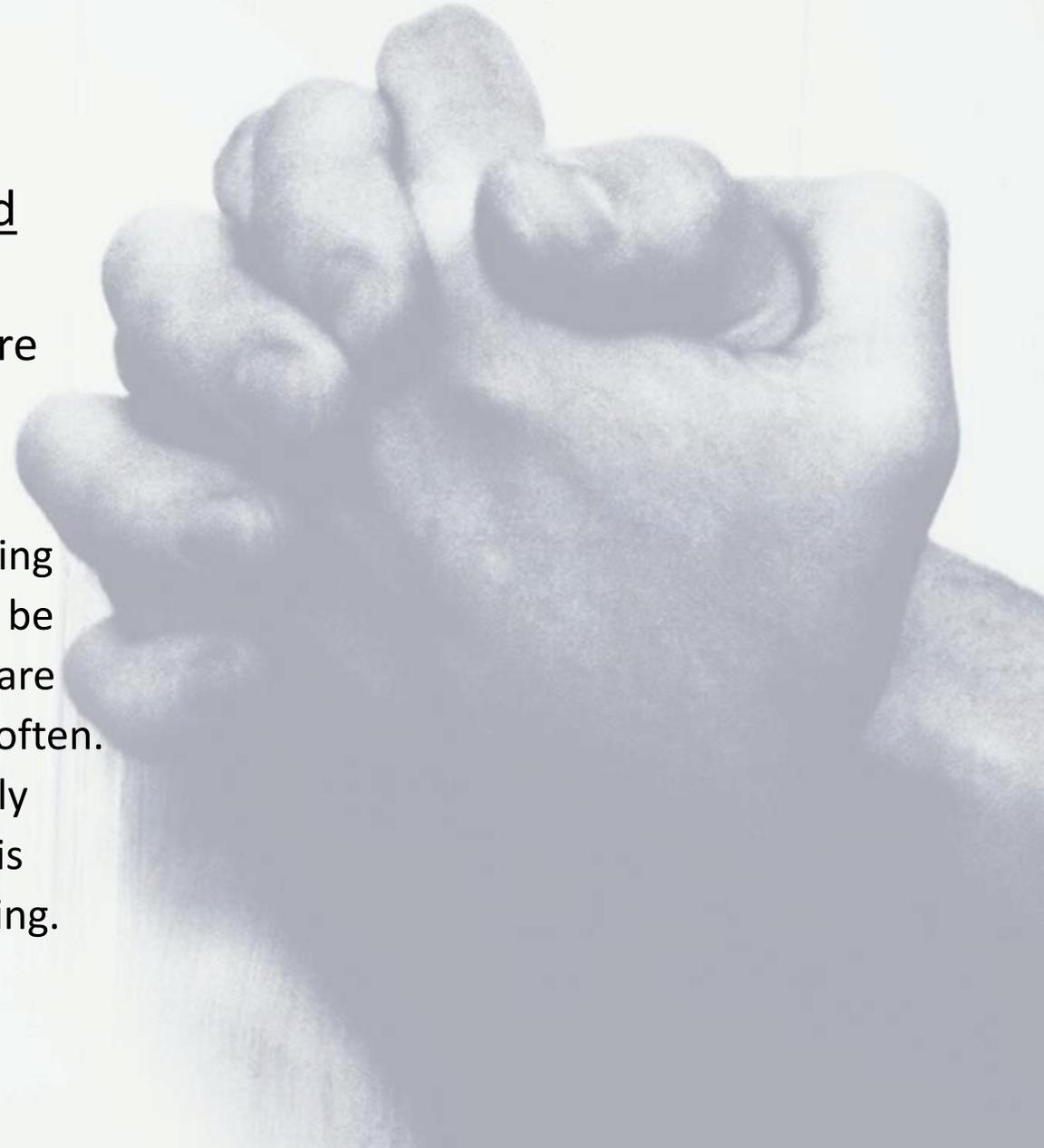
Why does Jesus model & teach private prayer?

5. Because a place & time of private prayer tells God that I am serious about life with Him.

- prayer is measured in its consistency, and there is no way to learn to pray but by praying.

We experience little of God's touch upon us because our asking for it is so casual and superficial. We recognize that it would be nice if God would bless our efforts and plans. But if not, we are content to carry on in our own strength as we have done so often. We tend to be more concerned to perform our part creditably than we are about God's mighty involvement in our lives. It is easy to be more hungry for success than for God's empowering.

Duewel

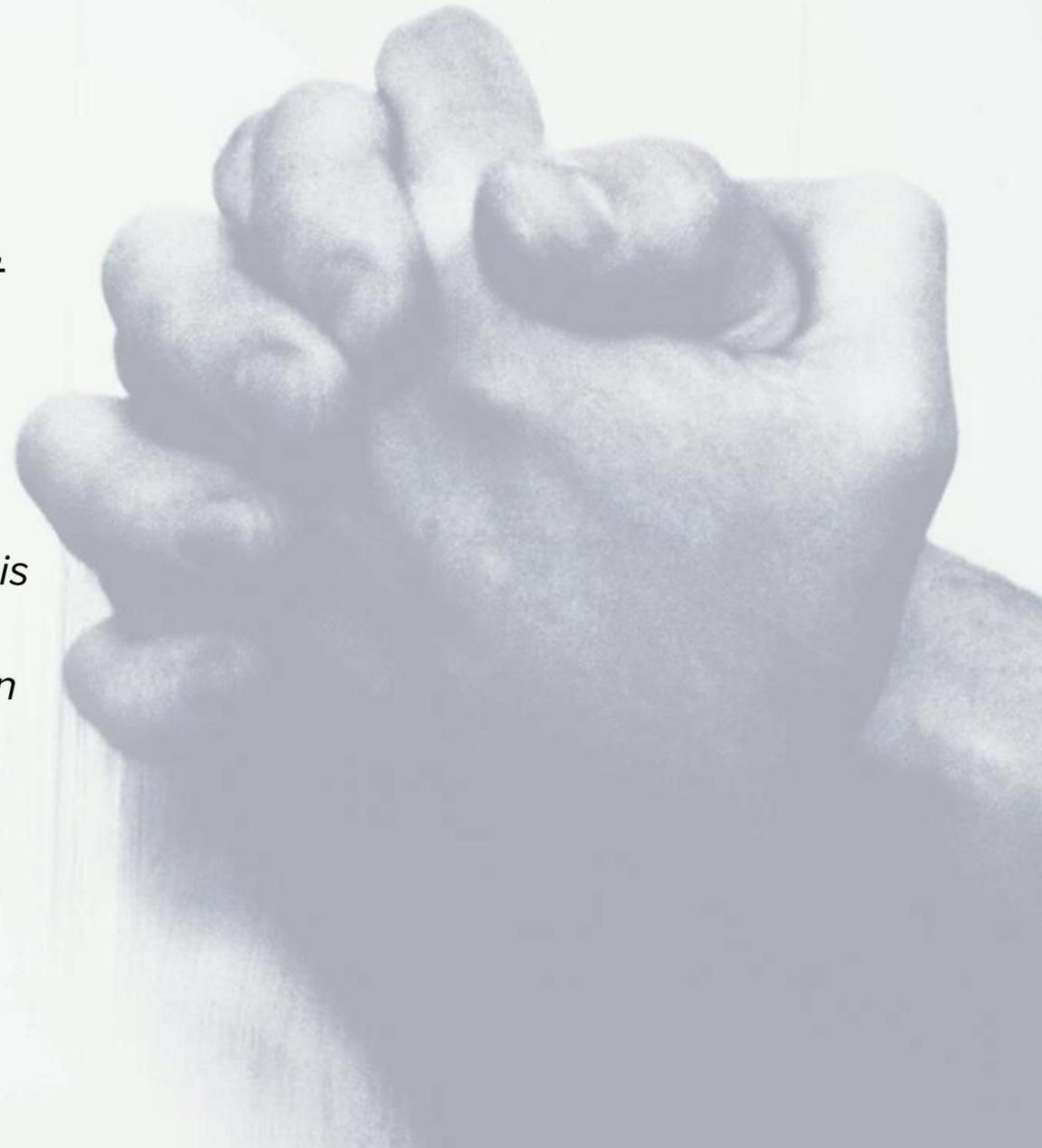


Why does Jesus model & teach private prayer?

6. Because He knows that busyness robs me of rest, and that private prayer reminds me that God is never in a hurry.

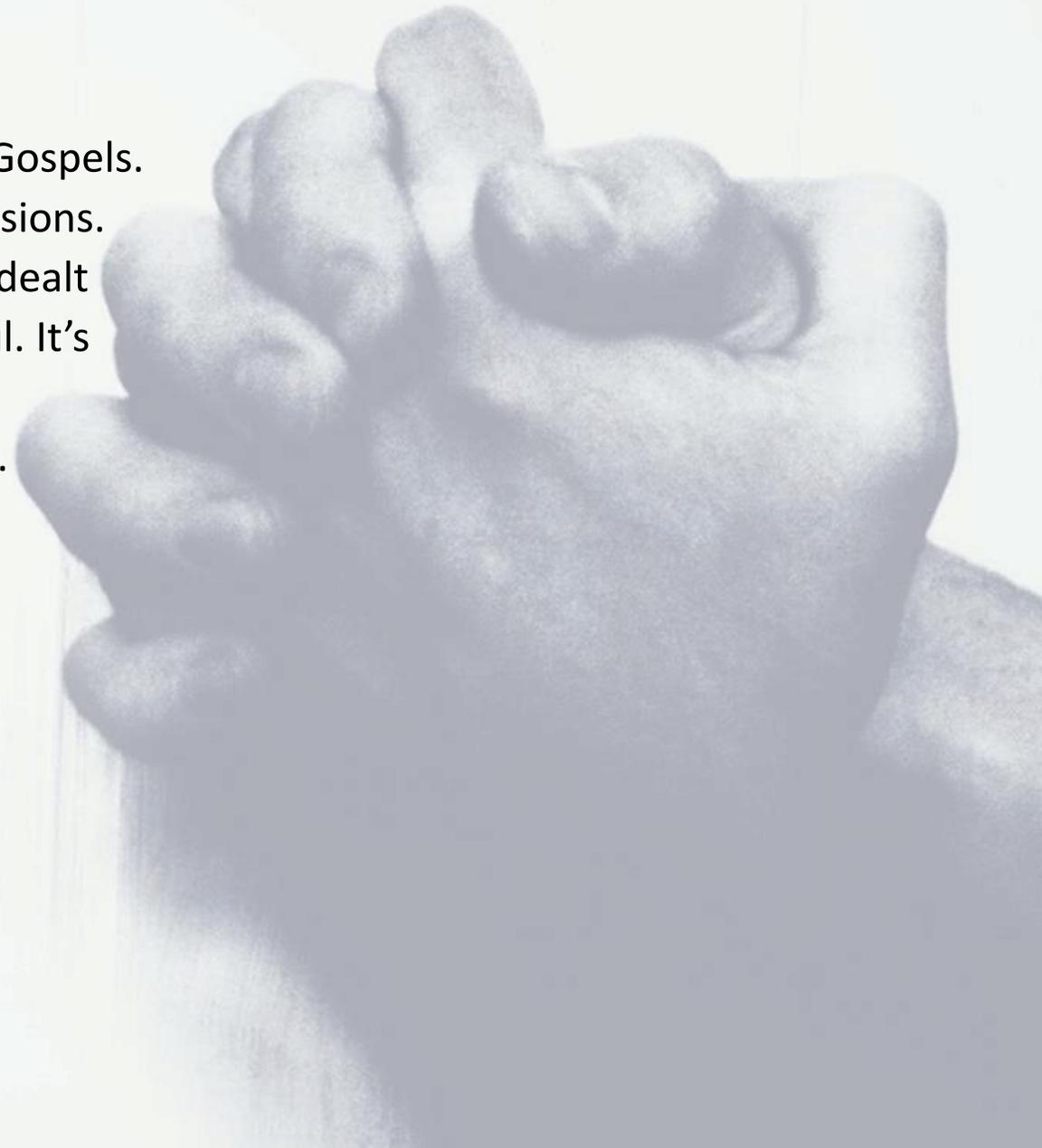
Because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.' So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place ... and after leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

Mark 6



The priority of Jesus' solitude and silence is everywhere in the Gospels. It's how he began his ministry. It's how he made important decisions. It's how he dealt with troubling emotions like grief. It's how he dealt with the constant demands of his ministry and cared for his soul. It's how he taught his disciples. It's how he prepared for important ministry events. It's how he prepared for his death on the cross.

Bill Gaultiere

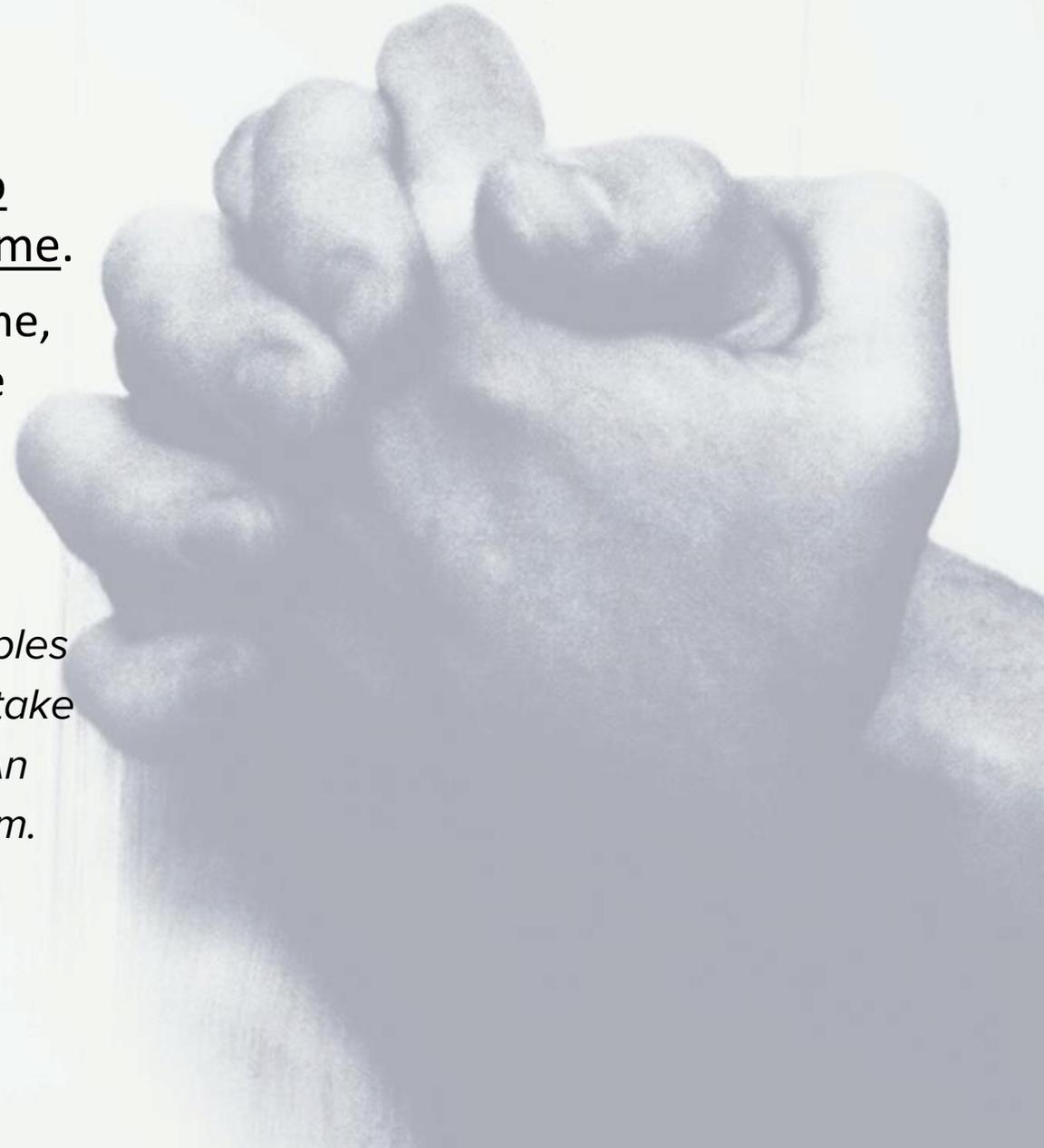


Why does Jesus model & teach private prayer?

7. Because there are some things that God wants to talk with me about that are private, and only for me.
 - It is in private with God where He confronts me, enlightens me, empowers me and assures me before leading me forward into what He has prepared for me.

⁴¹ Jesus withdrew about a stone's throw beyond the disciples and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.

Luke 22



God's preparation for you must always come first in whatever you do. This is a lesson we all have to learn over and over again. Pray and beseech God till He gives you His instructions. ... Then trust for His special anointing on you as you move forward. Don't plan and then ask God to bless you plans. Get your plans from Him, not in a ten second prayer, but by taking the time to seek His face and His assurance.

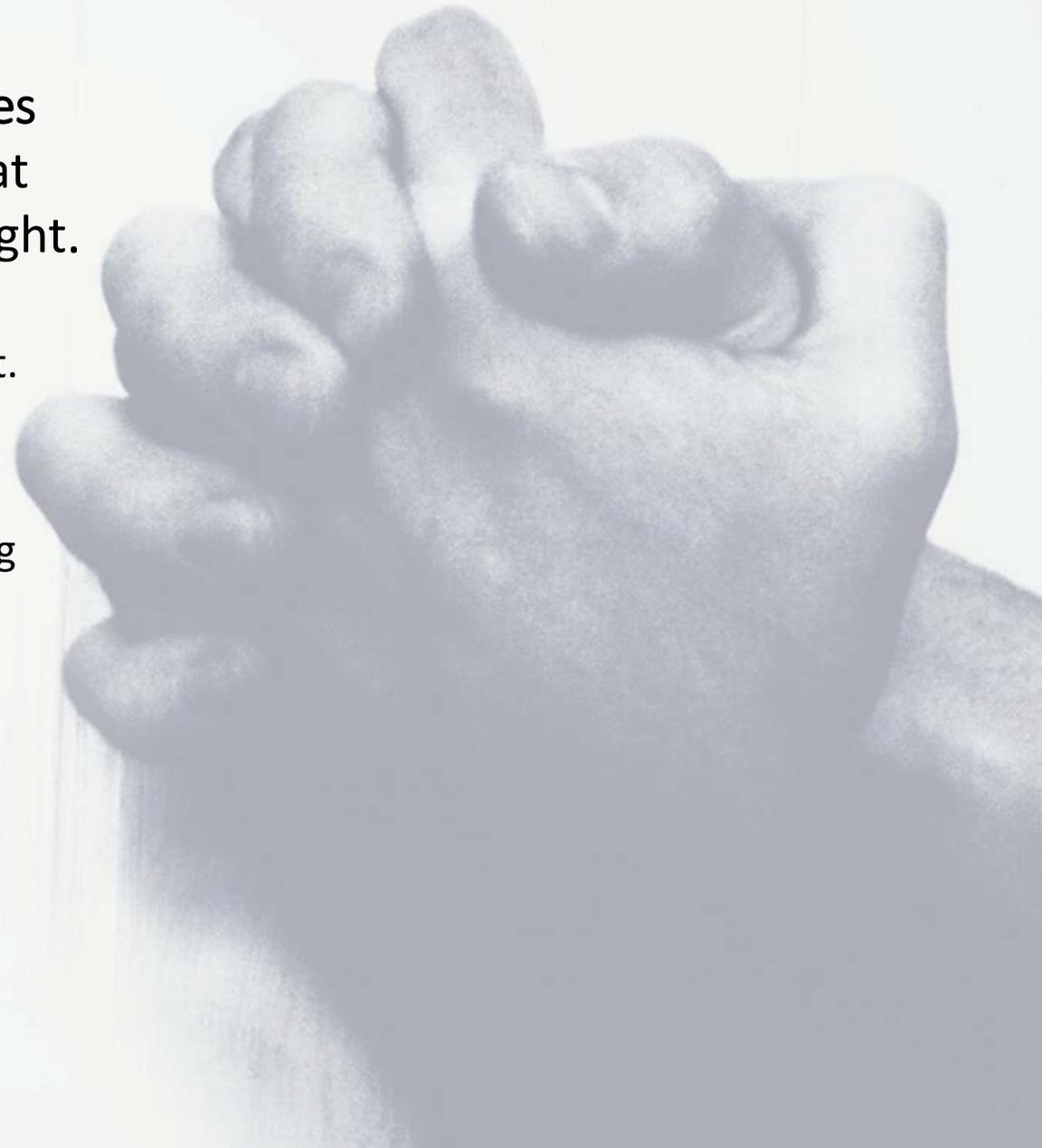
Wesley Duewel



Summary: Private prayer is hard work that produces joyful consequences ... it demands great discipline, and it reaps maturity & delight.

The reason so many people do not pray is because of its cost. It is a forbidden place for all but those of set purpose and resolute heart. Strong men often break down under the strain, and concentration here is a heavier task than handling a hammer or guiding a horse & plow. The discipline curbs freedom and drills the mind to attention ... It is the acid test of devotion – nothing in the life of faith is so difficult to maintain ... there is no test like solitude with God.

Chadwick



What must you adjust to enjoy a private, unhurried time with God each day?



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