

The Jesus Prayer Meditation: An Exercise¹

Try to get comfortable in your chair, placing your feet on the floor and closing your eyes. Rest your hands on your legs or the arms of your chair. When you are ready, begin to notice that you are breathing, recognizing that God is giving you your breath as a gift from moment to moment. In this very instance, you do not need to do anything to control your breath. Instead, God is sovereign over your breathing cycle.

After a minute, begin to gently recite the Jesus Prayer in your mind, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” Breathe in by saying “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,” recognizing that Jesus is residing within your inner world in this very moment. Also, breathe out by saying “have mercy on me,” exhaling in order to let go of your own efforts to control the challenges and pressures in your life. Over and over again, inhale and exhale, aligning the prayer with your in-breath and out-breath in a gentle, compassionate manner. Breathe in Jesus’ presence, finding rest in your relationship with him, given he is with you and caring for you. Recognize that he is the Lord of your life; therefore, you do not need to do anything in this moment, other than acknowledging his sovereignty, love, and infinite wisdom. Breathe out as you say “have mercy on me,” truly letting go of the grip you have on the demands of life.

See if you can imagine actually surrendering your life to him, including all of the things that have overwhelmed you in the last week. In this moment, you are asking Jesus for loving

¹ This transcript is taken directly from Knabb and Vazquez (2018, p. 17), and adapted from Talbot (2013).

compassion, recognizing that he understands your predicament and is responding to you in your time of need. Over and over again, breathe in “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,” and breathe out, “have mercy on me.” Each time you say the prayer, try to sink deeper and deeper into an awareness of Jesus’ presence. In this very moment, he is with you and sustaining you, offering you loving compassion in your time of need. Because God is infinitely wise, loving, and powerful, he knows the best path for you, and is walking with you as you face the demands in your life.

As this practice comes to a close, see if you can give thanks to Jesus, recognizing that he has been ministering to you in your time of need over the last 10 minutes. See if you can ask him to continue to be with you throughout the rest of your day, turning to him over and over again by reciting the Jesus Prayer.

References

- Knabb, J., & Vazquez, V. (2018). A randomized controlled trial of a 2-week Internet-based contemplative prayer program for Christians with daily stress. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice, 5*, 37-53.
- Talbot, J. (2013). *The Jesus prayer: A cry for mercy, a path of renewal*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.