

# Luke 5:16

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/luke/luke-5/luke-516/>

*Luke makes the observation that it was Jesus's practice to often slip away to the wilderness so He could spend time by Himself with God, praying.*

The direct parallel for Luke's observation is Mark 1:45, however the Gospels record similar occasions where Jesus would seek solitude to pray. Some of these are Matthew 14:13; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12.

Following His miraculous healing of the man covered with leprosy (Luke 5:12-14), and other miracles (Luke 4:33-37; 38-41) and teachings (Luke 4:31-32, the news about Jesus continued to spread as more and more people and large crowds gathered to hear Him and to be healed by Him (Luke 5:15).

But even with His growing popularity and increasing demand, Luke makes an interesting observation of *Jesus's* habits and practice.

*But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray* (v 16).

The place *Jesus would slip away to* was *the wilderness*. This means a place away from the crowds of people who lived in the cities and travelled on the roads. People go to the *wilderness* to be alone.

*Jesus went to the wilderness* to be by *Himself*, alone with God. The reason *Jesus* sought this kind of solitude was to *pray* to God.

It is amazing to consider how *Jesus*, the perfect man, and the Son of God, required time alone with God. Luke does not say exactly how long Jesus would spend in the wilderness by Himself praying to God, but it appears to be considerable chunks of time—likely hours or days at a time.

Luke writes that *Jesus would slip away to the wilderness and pray often*. It was His habit and practice to do this frequently. The Gospels describe some specific moments when Jesus sought out this kind of solitude:

- *Jesus* “was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness” for 40 days before being tempted by the devil and beginning His earthly ministry (Luke 4:1-2).
- *Jesus* “spent the whole night in prayer to God” before making one of the most important and world-altering decisions of His time on earth—the calling of His twelve disciples (Luke 6:12-13).

- *Jesus* withdrew to *pray* alone when He finished preaching and miraculously feeding of the multitudes after learning of the death of His cousin, John the Baptist (Matthew 14:22-23).
- *Jesus* also prayed to God the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane before submitting Himself to be taken and crucified (Luke 22:41-42).

These times of solitude and communion with God seem to be precursors to important events or decisions in the life of *Jesus*. But they were not the only times *Jesus* removes Himself and prays to the Father (Mark 1:35-36; 6:46; Luke 9:18, 28-29; 11:1).

Luke's expression that *Jesus Himself would slip away* implies that *Jesus* would quietly seek solitude without making a show or display of His righteousness—as self-righteous men were prone to do (Matthew 6:5-6). He did not go *to the wilderness to pray* for the reward of impressing men. *Jesus* did this because He wanted the reward of His Father's presence and blessing. He wanted to better know His Father's plan for His life and mission as the Messiah. He wanted to draw discernment and strength from the Holy Spirit in prayer.

This short but important comment by Luke is a reminder to us that *Jesus's* public life on earth was informed and fueled and driven by His private, personal relationship with God—a relationship that was largely experienced through prayer.

*Jesus* well understood, “that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 8:3—see also Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4).

Even though *Jesus* was God, He deliberately and frequently cultivated oneness and unity with God by *often slipping away by Himself to pray*. In so doing, *Jesus*, the perfect man and Son of God gave us an example to emulate in our lives.

We too should seek to spend time with God in prayer if we are to better understand His plan and purpose for lives. If we do this often, we will be better in tune with our Heavenly Father and have a great reward of knowing Him and His will as we encounter our temptations; and we will have greater strength to courageously overcome these trials in the power of God's Spirit.

### **Biblical Text**

<sup>16</sup> **But *Jesus Himself* would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.**