

“THE WORLD” TRIES TO STOP US FROM PRAYING UNCEASINGLY
Youth Group Session Six

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We've learned that "praying without ceasing" really means always sending the message to the world that we are children of God, living our lives for His glory. But do you ever feel that no matter how much you may want to SEND that message, the world doesn't want to RECEIVE it, or that somehow the message gets "blocked" or lost, like a dropped conversation on a cell phone. The truth is that "the world" **doesn't** always want to receive this message, so it does try to block it.

What or who is this "world" that's causing us these problems?

We know that our world is God's Creation; He made it and everything in it, to be perfect and holy. But when Man chose to bring sin into this perfect Creation, Satan saw his chance to gain power over it by gaining power over us. Often, in the Bible and Church writings, "the world" is used to describe this difference between the life God intended for us and what we have chosen instead.

But God never stopped loving his Creation. John 3:16-17 tells us exactly how God feels:

"For God so loved _____ that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever _____ in Him shall not perish but have _____. For God did not send _____ into the world to _____ the world, but that the world through Him might be _____."

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came into this world to show us how to live so that one day we can be with Him in the Kingdom of God. Jesus understood that we would not have an easy time following Him; even He was tormented by Satan and made to suffer because the world had fallen so far away from God.

Read Matthew 4:1-11 and talk about it.

What are some other ways that Jesus suffered in this world?

Knowing how difficult it is to follow Christ while we are in this world, St. Paul often tells us that we have to be like soldiers: training, keeping in shape, and never giving up no matter how tough things look. Read Ephesians 6:10-18. List some of the things St Paul tells us we can use as soldiers facing battle:

Shield of _____ Helmet of _____

Sword of _____ The whole _____

Prayer is one of the best weapons we have in our war against the Evil One, and a good soldier always makes sure his weapon is always working!

What are some of the tricks that Satan tries to use on us?

Read 1Kings 19:11-12. Now think about your day...Make a list of everything you hear from the time you wake up.

Do you think that you would ever be able to hear “the still, small voice” if it speaks to you? There's probably nothing on your list...music, TV, crowds of people, even video games... that 's all “bad.” But, when we get lost in these noisy distractions, we aren't giving ourselves the time we need to listen for God, and to think about the people around us.

The world also uses those same noisy distractions to tell us how to live, how to think about ourselves, and about other people. Think of some messages that the world sends to you:

When we hear these messages again and again, they start to fill our heads and our lives until we believe them and start putting God further and further down on the list of things that are important to us. St John, in his first epistle, tells us “Do not love the world, or the things in the world...” because these things don't last like the love of God does.

Sometimes we can just walk away from things that we know are wrong, but we can't live in a cave, hiding from the world and the things that it tempts us with. Prayer without ceasing, with our words, our minds and our actions, will let us keep the things of the world where they belong and leave room for God in our lives.