

# The Jesus Prayer

**“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”**

Like breath prayer, the Jesus prayer is a way to tie prayer to your breathing. The text of the prayer is rooted in Scripture. In his book on the spiritual disciplines, “Soul Shaper,” Tony Jones writes:

“...the Prayer itself is strongly rooted in the Gospels, an combination of many who called out to Jesus, including blind Bartimaeus who shouted, ‘Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me,’ (Mark 10:47 and parallel in Luke 18:38) and the tax collector in Jesus’ parable who beat his breast and cried out, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner’ (Luke 18:13). The cry for mercy, for God’s unrelenting steadfast love is a constant of Scripture... The need for God’s mercy seems obvious.

To cry out for mercy as a helpless sinner seems foreign to modern sensibilities, even to modern Christianity. All the more reason for us to make a practice of doing it....

**Position:** Sit in a comfortably alert position. Many people throughout history have prayed this prayer for hours on end, so it’s important that you are alert and comfortable! A dimly lit room and silence will also help to facilitate your experience of the Prayer.

**Concentration:** With great concentration, one can cause “the mind to descend into the heart with the breath.” So, seated comfortably alert, attend to your breathing, and then begin the prayer in rhythm to your breathing.

**Breathe:**

Breathe in: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God;”

Breathe out: “have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Guarding the mind against all distractions, the person praying focuses during every repetition on the meaning of the words, praying them from the heart and in the heart.

Though many practitioners of the Prayer have done as many as 12,000 repetitions (taking between 11 and 14 hours!), a repetition of 100 to 500 prayers is a valuable and achievable practice for us today. Develop your concentration by starting with 30 to 40 repetitions.