

## A LESSON IN PRAYER

Luke 11:1-13

(Not entirely original with me)

**Introduction:** Most Christians recognize the need and importance of prayer and most Christians pray fairly regularly, with some being very strong in their prayer times. However, too often Christians who know they need to pray more than they do, don't. The disciples of Jesus had this same problem. They fell short in their prayer life and knew that they did, so they requested that Jesus teach them how to pray properly and so Jesus gave them a lesson on how to pray.

### I. A DISCIPLE ASKED JESUS TO TEACH THEM HOW TO PRAY

1. It wasn't that Jesus prayed but the way He prayed for His manner and attitude in prayer saturated His total being and life. Every thing He did, was in dependence on God, His Holy Father. Prayer wasn't just a religious responsibility to Jesus and this fascinated the disciples.
2. Jesus' attitude in prayer as it being a way of life for Him was different from what the disciples had been taught and how the religious leaders prayed.
  - In the middle of a busy schedule, Jesus would walk off to pray.
  - When choosing His disciples, Jesus went aside to pray.
  - Before raising Lazarus from the tomb, Jesus prayed.
  - When Jesus fed the 5,000, He blessed the food, He prayed before feeding them.
3. The disciples saw in Jesus' life that He depended upon His Heavenly Father for all things and therefore spent much time in prayer.
  - Prayer should demonstrate a consciousness of one's need, of one's complete inadequacy.
  - Prayer is laying hold of God's ever present willingness to help.
  - Prayer is not for emergency use only or some sort of "wishing lamp."
  - Prayer is for everyday living, moment by moment.
  - Prayer is a way of claiming God's promises and turning one's self over entirely to God.
    - *John 14:10-14*
  - There is no phase in a Christian's life that does not require/need praying about.

### II. JESUS GAVE HIS DISCIPLES THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER

1. *Luke 11:2-4*
2. The prayer example Jesus gave is not to be some sort of ritual prayer for it was an example, a model to show the nature of prayer.
3. The model prayer was never intended to be something special to quote to protect when in danger.
4. "...*When you pray, say...*" No command as to how often one should pray.
5. Prayer is one of the ways one can draw near to the Lord in submission to Him in "conversation" and is not reciting some phrase over and over again and again.
  - Prayer is the heart and mind speaking to the Lord in worship and dependence upon Him.
6. "...*Our Father which art in Heaven...*" When one prays, he/she is to talk with God as his/her Father, not some far away distant God using high sounding words and phrases.
  - One is to talk with God as a Father who loves and cares for His children and calling God "Father" means exactly that, believing Him to be so.

7. **"...Hallowed be thy name..."** Prayer is to honor God's name and how one lives and acts reveals his/her dedication to God, therefore God's name is never going to be "hallowed" as long as one is walking contrary to God's will.
8. **"...Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth..."** One's prayer should include asking that the world would become the kingdom of the Lord, expressing a hope for the return of the Lord.
9. **"...Give us day by day our daily bread..."** One should pray daily for his/her physical needs for the Lord created one's body and it is the vehicle through which the believer can serve the Lord God, therefore the body is not to be neglected.
  - Man is a unity of body, soul and spirit and what affects one part affects the other. Neglect the body and it can affect the spiritual life, neglect the spiritual life and it will affect the body.
  - The prayer example Jesus gave teaches that one is to be concerned for his/her daily needs, day by day living rather than trying to store up things for some future time.
  - It is day by day that one is live and therefore pray for the needs of that one particular day.
    - Daily praying keeps one dependent upon the Lord God.
    - God does not need to be told what one needs, but it is the means that teaches one to wait upon the Lord.
    - Daily praying causes one to draw close to God every day in fellowship and conversation.
10. **"...and forgive us our sins..." (11:4)**
  - These words are for believers who can call God their Father as born again children, for those who have trusted in Jesus Christ and have been redeemed and saved.
  - Asking for forgiveness is a very important part of one's prayer for it reminds one of his/her sinfulness and his/her need of cleansing to maintain fellowship with God.
    - Mental attitude sins (resentment, envy, jealousy)
    - Sins of the tongue (lying, gossip, criticism, abusive language)
    - Overt sins of every kind (stealing, fornication, adultery, murder, drugs, fraud, etc.)
    - Basic sins (failure to depend upon God's grace, false values, false motives, etc..)
  - It is not a blanket request "forgive us our sins" being a broad, all inclusive and sweeping prayer for sins in general (forgive me all my sins...)
11. **"...for we ourselves also forgive everyone..." (11:4)**
  - God holds His Children responsible for their relationship with others and doesn't want any grudges being held or seeking revenge.
    - If God forgives believers of their enormous debt, how much more shouldn't the believer forgive others of much lesser debts against him/her? No believer can come close to suffering what Jesus suffered for him/her, therefore to forgive those who have hurt a believer shouldn't be a problem.
    - Failing to forgive others demonstrates one's unwillingness to treat others on the same basis that he/she has been treated by the Lord God.
    - Failing to forgive others comes from one's own failure to turn things over to the Lord.
    - Failing to forgive others keeps the Lord from forgiving the one who will not forgive.
12. **"...and lead us not into temptation..." (11:4)**
  1. God does not tempt any of His Children for temptation to sin comes from the world, the flesh and the Devil. It is a warning and a reminder of:
    - One's own inherent weakness to recognize temptation or handle temptation situations.
    - How Satan/Devil would ensnare and entrap the believer using desires and habits to turn tempting offers into sin.

- How much one needs the protection and guidance of the Lord who is one's only strength against temptation.

### **III. JESUS GIVES A PARABLE ABOUT A PERSISTENT FRIEND**

1. *Luke 11:5-8*

2. Jesus shows why one should be persistent in his/her prayers when no answer comes immediately.
3. Prayer is designed to fill the needs of needy people not just for one's own needs, but for the needs of others as well.
  - To pray properly is to become sensitive and open to the needs of others, it is to care for others rather than being occupied with one's own self.
4. In Jesus' parable, a man took the weary traveler/friend into his home at midnight, giving up a night's rest to find bread for his friend in need.
  - This kind of love in word and deed is not automatic nor is it natural, it requires special ability and motivation, like having the mind of Jesus.
5. In Jesus' parable the man had nothing to offer his friend but wanted to help him, therefore in praying for someone else, it is recognizing that the fact that nobody can meet all the needs of their friends, but God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent and can do what nobody else can.
6. In Jesus' parable, the man could not supply the needed bread himself, but he knows where he could find some from someone who would be willing to share.
  - Prayer tests one's friendship with God, of how well one really knows Him and confident that God will answer and supply. If a need really exists, God will supply.
7. In Jesus' parable, the man who could meet the need hesitated to do anything about it but the friend was persistent and kept asking for help.
  - Persistent intercessory prayer is how God teaches His Children about prayer.
  - Steadfast prayer demonstrates one's knowledge and confidence in God and it glorifies Him as well.
  - Persistent prayer demonstrates the maturity of one's faith or lack of it.

### **IV. JESUS WAS TEACHING TO BE PERSISTENT IN PRAYING**

1. *Luke 11:9*

2. One is to keep on bringing his/her request to the Lord, not to quit, not to give up, not to throw in the towel.
3. As one keeps on praying he/she will learn to pray for spiritual wisdom and understanding as to how and what God is doing in the situation being prayed about. What is God trying to teach?

4. *Luke 11:10*

- Those who keep on asking, seeking and knocking, who persist in prayer will receive answers from the Lord, they will receive, they will find, and God will open the door.

### **V. JESUS WAS TEACHING THAT GOD ALWAYS GIVES WHAT IS BEST**

1. *Luke 11:11-13; Matthew 7:11; Romans 5:9; 8:32*

2. Fathers do not give harmful gifts and will give what they think is best for their children.
3. God, the Father, is perfect and He will do much more than any earthly father can or will do.

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. Because of our lack of wisdom and finite human condition and our sinfulness, God cannot, in all of His wisdom and love, cannot answer our prayers exactly as we might pray for answering as we ask, it would be like giving us a stone, a serpent or a scorpion.
2. God knows all the facts, waits until our prayers are changed into His will and we have learned the lesson He is trying to teach us through making us be persistent in our prayers.
3. Until one knows God's will and sensed when praying, God will either answer the prayer in His own time and according to what He thinks best or the prayer is made in complete submission and trust in the Lord to do what is best.
4. Jesus is teaching that prayer should be for others, and should involve asking God, the Father to help one know clearly about that which he/she is praying and that one should give thanks to God, the Father for answering one's prayer according to what God thinks is best.
5. Christian, how is YOUR prayer life? How much prayer is for others? How persistent are YOU in praying for others? Does Jesus' lesson prayer help you any?