

# *The Gospel of Luke*

## *Lesson 24: Luke 11:1-13*

It has been said that “prayer presupposes a belief in the personality of God, His ability and willingness to [commune and have dealings with us], His personal control of all things and of all His creatures and their actions”.<sup>i</sup> These were the very things that Christ sought to instill in His disciples when they asked, “*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Luke 11:1, NKJV).

Their petitions were not to be like those of the religious leaders, repetitious obligatory empty words, but bold and persistent pleas for God’s enablement to live lives that honored Him. Jesus explained that they must simply, “*ask, seek, and knock*” (11:9), and “*let their requests be known to God*” (Philippians 4:6) and He would supply what they needed without limitation (Luke 11:8). Through them, God’s name would be glorified, His kingdom extended, and His will accomplished.

If, like the disciples, we must simply ask the Father to accomplish these things in us, let us come boldly and confidently before His throne to obtain mercy, to find grace in our need (Hebrews 4:16), and to accomplish exceedingly more than we could ask (Ephesians 3:21).

### *Read Luke 11:1-4.*

1. What is prayer? Why is it necessary to pray?
2. The disciples witnessed and participated in this important aspect of Jewish worship. Why might they have asked Jesus to teach them to pray? What was different about His prayers?
3. What had the disciples observed about Jesus’ prayer life according to Luke 3:21, 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 9:28-29? Compare Jesus’ prayers to those made by the heathen and the religious in Matthew 6:7, 23:14. Also read, Ecclesiastes 5:2.

4. According to the following verses, what characteristics or attitudes are to accompany prayer? Read Deuteronomy 4:29, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Isaiah 58:9, Jeremiah 29:13, Mark 11:24, Hebrews 10:22, James 5:16, and 1 John 3:22, 5:14.
  
5. Jesus' instructive prayer begins with the acknowledgment of God as "Father" (v.2). Although God is referred to as "Father" in the Old Testament, the title is not used when addressing Him in prayer. Why was speaking to God in this way revolutionary for the disciples? What does this title mean to the petitioner?
  
6. "In antiquity 'the name' meant far more than it does to us. In some way it summed up the whole person"<sup>ii</sup>: all of one's attributes, etc. What are we declaring by hallowing God's name?
  
7. The disciples were looking forward to the day that Christ ruled and reigned on earth as King; they would soon learn that this prayer was eschatological in nature. By asking God to establish His kingdom, what is required of the supplicant? (For further study, read Matthew 24-25.)
  
8. Where Christ rules and reigns, His will is accomplished in human hearts and lives. "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Luke 11:2). What is proclaimed by the one who speaks these words to God? What actions must be taken to align one's heart with God's? (Think on John 15:7.)

Consider Christ's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, Matthew 26:39. Does this change your interpretation of this prayer? Explain.

Charles Spurgeon stated, "He that taught us this prayer used it himself in the most unrestricted sense. When the bloody sweat stood on his face, and all the fear and trembling of a man in anguish were upon him, he did not dispute the decree of the Father, but bowed his head and cried. 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'"

9. As Jesus continues, His prayer turns to material and physical provisions, emphasizing daily needs. What do day-to-day requests provoke in the heart of the needy? What does abundance cause one to forget? (Consider Luke 12:13-34.)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. In Matthew 6:12, sin is described as a debt. Why do we consider he who has injured or offended us a debtor?

Reread Christ's prayer regarding forgiveness in Luke 11:4. What declaration is made? This includes all sins; sins of omission (forgiving others for not doing what they ought) and commission (intentional offences and injuries). See Romans 5:8; also Matthew 5:7, 6:14-15, 18:21-35.

Consider Who is instructing the disciples to pray in this manner. Why is it imperative that the believer demonstrate forgiveness to others?

Can one approach God with the attitudes that accompany unforgiveness? Why or why not? Of what is the one who readily forgives mindful?

Andrew Murray has said, “As bread is the first need of the body, so forgiveness for the soul.”

11. In His next plea, Christ instructs His disciples to pray that they not be led into temptation, but be delivered from the evil one. Read 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 and James 1:12-15. What are we to pray against?

Knowing our weakness and our predisposition to go to sin, what is our role?

With what intent does the evil one tempt, test, and try? (Consider the Genesis 3 account; also, John 10:10.)

Now read James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:6-7. What is the Lord’s purpose in allowing such things?

12. Reread the opening paragraph. Does prayerlessness reflect one’s beliefs about God? Why or why not?

*Continue reading in Luke 11, verses 5-13.*

13. Describe the circumstance under which the friend approached his neighbor.

14. At the telling of this parable, hospitality was of such great importance that the refusal to entertain a guest would bring disgrace upon the host as well as the entire village, making his ability to provide bread a need. How then are we to approach God for that which we cannot live without?
  
15. At what point are we instructed to stop asking? Read Luke 18:1. What qualities are produced while we wait for the answer? (Consider Romans 5:3-4.)
  
16. If a tired and selfish neighbor is finally willing to meet his friend's need, how much more is our Father in heaven willing to meet our needs? According to verse 8, what will be provided to those who seek God with earnestness and intensity?
  
17. Like the friend who beat vehemently upon his neighbor's door, we are to "*ask, seek, and knock*" (v.9) until the door is opened. The language reveals that all three verbs are continuous. Describe the relationship between asking, seeking, and knocking. What results? (v.10)
  
18. A human parent will give what is best and profitable to his child; not what is harmful or useless. What does this convey about God's heart toward the petitioner and the gifts He gives?

Philip Brooks said, "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness."

19. In verse 13, Jesus shifts from tangible gifts to the gift of the Holy Spirit. While we seek, ask, and knock for what is needed, God promises to give *Himself* to all those who ask. Why is this our greatest need?

20. According to Matthew 6:33, if our sole aim is to honor God's name, to seek Him and His kingdom, and to perform His will, of what can we be assured?

#### Appendix: Examples of Answered Prayer

“Abraham’s servant prayed to God, and God directed him to the person who should be wife to his master’s son and heir (Gen. 24:10–20).

“Jacob prayed to God, and God inclined the heart of his irritated brother, so that they met in peace and friendship (Gen. 32:24–30; 33:1–4).

“Samson prayed to God, and God showed him a well where he quenched his burning thirst, and so lived to judge Israel (Judg. 15:18–20).

“David prayed, and God defeated the counsel of Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:31; 16:20–23; 17:14–23).

“Daniel prayed, and God enabled him both to tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream and to give the interpretation of it (Dan. 2:16–23).

“Nehemiah prayed, and God inclined the heart of the king of Persia to grant him leave of absence to visit and rebuild Jerusalem (Neh. 1:11; 2:1–6).

“Esther and Mordecai prayed, and God defeated the purpose of Haman, and saved the Jews from destruction (Esther 4:15–17; 6:7, 8).

“The believers in Jerusalem prayed, and God opened the prison doors and set Peter at liberty, when Herod had resolved upon his death (Acts 12:1–12).

“Paul prayed that the thorn in the flesh might be removed, and his prayer brought a large increase of spiritual strength, while the thorn perhaps remained (2 Cor. 12:7–10).

“Prayer is like the dove that Noah sent forth, which blessed him not only when it returned with an olive-leaf in its mouth, but when it never returned at all.” (Robinson’s Job).<sup>iii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Easton, M. G. *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*.

<sup>ii</sup> Comfort, Phillip W. & Elwell, Walter A. *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*.

<sup>iii</sup> Easton, M. G.