

The Power of Prayer (Luke 11:1–13)

BIG IDEA: *Prayer is the believer's lifeline of dependence on God, through which the Father gives spiritual help to His children.*

WHAT IS TRUE: God is not distant or reluctant toward His children. Through Christ, believers have access to the Father, who welcomes their prayers, hears their cries, and gives what they truly need. We are not outsiders trying to get God's attention—we are children welcomed into His presence.

WHAT TO DO: Develop a consistent daily prayer rhythm. Pray with persistence, humility, and confidence in the Father's goodness. Move prayer from occasional crisis response to daily dependence. Make prayer a regular part of how you begin your day, face your needs, and bring your heart back to God again and again.

CONTEXT: Luke 11 comes after Jesus Himself has repeatedly been shown as a man of prayer. In Luke's Gospel, prayer is woven into the life and ministry of Jesus. He prays at His baptism, before choosing the twelve, at His transfiguration, and in moments of deep dependence upon the Father. So when the disciples come to Him in Luke 11:1 and say, "*Lord, teach us to pray,*" they are not asking for mere technique. They have been watching Jesus pray, and they want to learn how to share in that same communion with God. This is important because this passage is not merely about saying certain words. It is about learning a life of dependence on the Father. Jesus teaches them what to pray, how to keep praying, and why they can pray with confidence. The text unfolds naturally in three parts: A pattern for prayer (vv. 1–4); A call to persistent prayer (vv. 5–10); A promise of the Father's goodness (vv. 11–13).

1. JESUS TEACHES US THE PRIORITIES OF PRAYER (vv. 1–4)

A. Prayer begins with a desire to learn from Jesus (v.1)

- The disciples say, "*Lord, teach us to pray.*" Prayer is not something we naturally know how to do well. A mark of spiritual maturity is humility enough to say, "*Lord, teach me to pray.*"

B. Prayer begins with relationship: "Father" (v. 2)

- Jesus teaches believers to approach God as Father. When you pray, remember who you are talking to. You are not trying to get the attention of a distant God. You are coming to your heavenly Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.

C. Prayer begins with God's glory before our needs (v. 2)

- Prayer is first God-centered, not self-centered. The first concern of prayer is God's name, God's reign, and God's glory. Before rushing to your own needs, ask: *How can God be honored in my life today? How can His kingdom advance through me today?*

D. Prayer includes daily dependence for daily needs (v. 3)

- Jesus teaches us to depend on God not only for great spiritual matters, but for daily provision. Bring your ordinary needs to God (work, bills, family, health, decisions big and small). Do not treat prayer as something reserved only for emergencies.

E. Prayer includes ongoing repentance and forgiveness (v.4)

- Prayer includes confession of sin and a willingness to forgive others. We should keep short 'accounts' with God and with people. That is, you should confess quickly and forgive honestly. Pray constantly! (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

F. Prayer includes dependence for spiritual protection (v. 4)

- Jesus teaches us to pray as weak people who need God's help to resist sin and remain faithful ("*Do not bring us into temptation.*") Pray before temptation becomes strong. Ask God to guard you.

2. JESUS TEACHES US THE PERSISTENCE OF PRAYER (vv. 5–10)

A. His parable shows that prayer should be persistent (vv. 5–8)

- Jesus tells the story of a man who asks his friend for bread at midnight. The point is not that God is reluctant, as the friend is, but that persistence belongs in prayer. Do not stop praying because the answer seems delayed. Do not give up, but keep praying for wayward loved ones, struggling marriages, wisdom, freedom from sin, and gospel opportunities.

B. Jesus gives three commands: ask, seek, knock (vv. 9–10)

- These commands show us growing intensity. Prayer is not passive. It is active dependence upon God. Prayer should not be your last resort. It should be your repeated reflex of dependence.

C. God responds to persevering prayer (v. 10)

- "*Everyone who asks receives...*" This does not mean God gives everything exactly as requested, but it does mean prayer is never pointless. God hears and answers according to His wisdom and will. Keep praying even when you do not feel much, even when circumstances have not changed and even when answers seem slow.

3. JESUS TEACHES US THE CONFIDENCE OF PRAYER IN THE FATHER'S

GOODNESS (vv. 11–13) "*Now he told them a parable on the need for them to pray always and not give up...*"

A. God is better than the best earthly father (vv. 11–12)

- Jesus uses the example of a father who would not mock his child's need by giving something harmful instead of something good. Do not project earthly fatherly failures onto God. He is not cruel, manipulative, or careless. He is good.

B. God gives what is truly good to His children (v. 13)

- The climax of the passage is not merely that God gives helpful things, but that He gives the Holy Spirit. Do not only pray for changed circumstances. Pray for the Spirit's help within those circumstances: wisdom, strength, endurance, faithfulness, comfort, etc.

CONCLUSION: Jesus teaches His disciples: ***what*** to pray for, ***how*** to keep praying, and ***why*** they can pray with confidence. Prayer is the believer's lifeline of dependence on God. It begins with God's glory, expresses daily dependence, includes confession and forgiveness, persists in faith, and rests in the goodness of the Father. ***A mark of spiritual maturity is this: mature Christians are praying Christians.***

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:

1. **Develop a consistent daily prayer rhythm.** Do not wait for crisis. Build prayer into the ordinary shape of your day.
2. **Pray God-centered prayers first.** Begin with His name, His kingdom, and His will before rushing to your own concerns.
3. **Keep praying persistently.** Do not quit because the answer is delayed. Ask, seek, and knock.
4. **Pray like a child, not a salesman.** You are not trying to manipulate God. You are coming to your Father and laying your petitions and requests before him.
5. **Ask for the Spirit's help.** Do not only pray for changed circumstances. Pray for inward strength, wisdom, and faithfulness.
6. **Christians do not have to pray only to the Father in an absolute sense.** Because the Son and the Holy Spirit are fully God, it is not wrong to address prayer to them. Examples (to Christ): Stephen (Acts 7:59), and Paul (1 Cor. 16:22; cf. Rev. 22:20).