

FOCAL TEXTS

Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8

BACKGROUND TEXT

Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8

LESSON EIGHT

Prayer

NOTES

1. Spiros Zodhiates and Warren Baker. *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible—New International Version*, (Chattanooga: TN: AMG Publishers, 1996), 1533.

MAIN IDEA

Disciples persistently offer faithful prayers to God.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

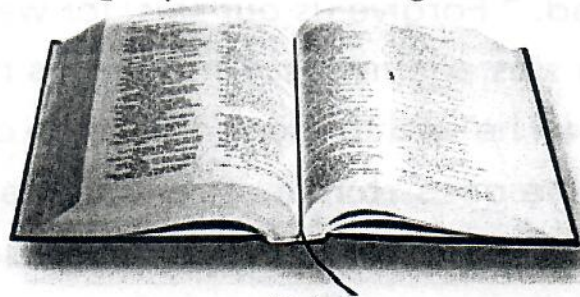
Do I persistently offer faithful prayers to God?

STUDY AIM

To examine my time spent in prayer and to choose to persistently offer faithful prayers to God

QUICK READ

Jesus taught his disciples a model prayer which included worship, intercession, and petition. Jesus also emphasized the power of persistence in prayer to a loving God.



Introduction

The surgeon Atul Gawande's book *The Checklist Manifesto* shows how doctors can use checklists to save lives and reduce mistakes, especially during surgery. Gawande's surgery checklist includes the following three "pause points": before anesthesia, before incision, and before leaving the operating room. Each pause point is designed to add a "speed bump" before an important task so people stop and think about what they are about to do. The results are striking.¹

That's also a good idea for every follower of Christ. Developing pause points throughout the day and using those moments to pray could produce miraculous results.

Prayer Lesson Eight

Focal Texts: Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8

Background Text: Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8

Teaching Aim: To lead members to discover the secrets to power and effectiveness in prayer and apply this discovery to their own prayer life.

Connect with Life: Ask members to recall a time, after hearing someone pray, they found themselves wishing they could pray like that. Then ask members to list some of the reasons they were so impressed with this person's prayer. List these on the board as they are shared.

Then read Luke 11:1 and ask members what it was about Jesus' prayer that made them ask their question? Then read the following from the Study Guide: "The disciples didn't need Jesus to teach them how to pray, in general. However, they had noticed that prayer was one of Jesus' most consistent habits (Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28-29; 18:1; 22:41,44). One day, after watching Jesus pray, they asked him to teach them how to pattern their prayers after his. Their desire was to experience the power and effectiveness of Jesus' prayers."

Ask members if they would not wish the same thing for their times of prayer? Our study for today will help us with this important need in our spiritual lives.

Guide Bible Study: Then lead members to identify the ways that Jesus taught the disciples to pray that can be applied to our prayer lives today. List each and discuss as follows:

1. Pray for the "right" things (11:1-4). Jesus shared a model prayer with the disciples filled with requests that God will always provide. He prayed for God's name to be regarded as holy and for his kingdom to come. "He called God, Father. This was the equivalent of calling God, Daddy." "Even as we praise God who is in heaven, we are calling on him to make his name known throughout the earth." "Jesus' prayer quickly moved from praise to intercession. The request for bread reflected the general concern for the needs of the world. Bread was considered to be the basic element for the sustenance of the body. The fact that Jesus asked for daily bread, reflected a desire to have only what was necessary, and no more." "Finally, Jesus concluded his prayer with a two-fold petition: (1) the forgiveness of sins; and (2) the avoidance of temptation." "After interceding on behalf of the entire world, Jesus called his disciples to pray for their own spiritual lives."
2. Pray with faith that God will answer our "right" prayers (11:5-10). "After offering the prayer, Jesus told a parable. The parable was designed to encourage the disciples to be persistent and faithful in their prayer lives. In the parable Jesus painted a familiar picture for his listeners. Village life was built upon the principle of shared existence." (Share additional background about this principle from the Study Guide, p. 85.) "Luke 11:9-10 are two of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible. The point of the parable has nothing to do with the content of our prayers. Jesus was speaking

specifically about the commitment to prayer and persistence in prayer. The focus was on bold asking, not on what we are to ask for.” “If we pray selflessly (as modeled in Jesus’ prayer), and persistently, God will answer our prayers. The joyful point of Jesus’ parable is that we have the certainty of God’s response to bold and persistent prayer.”

3. Remember that you are praying to a loving and gracious God who wants to answer our “right” prayers (such as a prayer for the Holy Spirit) (11:11-13). “This parable, like the one before it, was told to contrast the frail and imperfect nature of human love, as compared to the perfect love of God. If a fallible human father knows how to love his child, how much more will a perfect heavenly father know how to love his own?”
4. Pray often and with persistence for the “right” things (such as justice for the people) (18:1-8). “As the disciples awaited his return, he encouraged them to pray constantly, especially in difficult times.” (Share background material about this parable from the Study Guide.) “If this heartless judge would finally do the right thing for the wrong reasons, how much more likely is it that our perfect Judge in heaven will do the right thing, and for all the right reasons!”

Encourage Application: Then ask members to list the secrets to power and effectiveness in prayer. These will include the following:

1. Pray for the “right” things. In this passage we are told to pray for God’s name to be praised; for his kingdom to be complete; for daily needs; for forgiveness of sins; for deliverance from temptation; for the presence of the Holy Spirit; and for justice for God’s people. Ask members to suggest some additional things that would be “right” to pray for that we know God would want us to have. Then ask them to suggest some things that can be included in our prayers but without the assurance that our requests will be granted. The first key to power and effectiveness in prayer is to pray for those things that we know, beyond a doubt, that God would want us to have.
2. Pray with faith. It is not that we are trying to force God to do something that he doesn’t want to do. Our persistence reveals to God that we are ready to receive what he wants us to have. If our prayers are correct, we can pray with great confidence that our prayers will be answered.
3. Remember that we are praying to a loving and gracious God. God wants us to have every blessing and spiritual gift that we need to accomplish his will in our lives.
4. God’s response to our “right” prayers may not be immediate. It is a good thing to repeat our prayers often and with persistence. Good fellowship with God can occur when we are praying often for what we know He wants to do in our lives and for others.

Close with a challenge for members to apply these secrets to power and effectiveness in prayer to our times of prayer this week.