



## OUR FATHER • Prayer

### What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

Luke 11:1-13

#### The Lord's Prayer

This passage has a parallel text in Matthew 6:5-15, where the Lord's Prayer is also taught. In Matthew, Jesus contrasts His teaching on prayer with the vain and empty prayers of the pagans who endlessly recite the same words, believing that somehow they will grab God's attention. This is important to realize because many have done this very thing with the Lord's prayer, believing that somehow through its repetition, God's favor will be garnered. It is for this reason that the study approaches this as a "model" prayer. In other words, Jesus here gives us a sample of the way in which we should pray, intending for us to personalize and adapt it, not simply repeat it.

#### The Person of God

In seeing this prayer as a model, there are several principles that we can apply to our own prayers. Jesus prays, "Father, holy is Your name." In doing this, He begins His prayer by focusing on the *person of God*. There is no better way to begin a time of prayer than to praise God for His incomprehensible character – goodness, love, kindness, mercy, holiness, etc. This appropriately takes our gaze from ourselves and focuses it on God.

#### The Purposes of God

Next, Jesus prays for God's kingdom to be manifest. Taking time to pray in this way aligns our hearts to *God's purposes* for our lives and the world. We are to be the vehicles of bringing about His purpose and will, not the reverse.

His purpose is to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory. In fact, that's why He made us – so we can see and delight in His greatness. When we pray for His will, we are also praying for the things that will bring us the greatest joy.

#### The Need for God's Provisions

Jesus then instructs us to pray for our daily *provisions*. Our prayers will most naturally focus on our felt needs; God is concerned and wants us to pray about these things. James 4:2 says, "You have not, because you don't ask God." Jesus invites us to submit all of our concerns and requests to God, that He might provide for our needs.

#### The Need for Pardon

*Pardon* is the next principle. It is essential that in our times of prayer, we deal with the specific sin in our lives, and ask for forgiveness. Experiencing cleansing from our sin is vital to maintaining our close fellowship with God.

### What's the Big Idea?

Jesus wants us to believe in God's goodness towards us and pray boldly to Him about God's Person, Purpose, Provision, Pardon, and Protection.

### What's the Problem?

We doubt God's genuine care for us and His willingness to answer our prayers. This keeps us from being bold and persistent in asking Him for what we need.



### Protection

Last, Jesus prays for Protection from temptation and the author of it – Satan. There is a great spiritual war that is raging. Christians are in the middle of it and must never lose sight of this fact or their need for protection in the battle.

There are other ways to principle-ize the Lord's prayer, but Person, Purpose, Provision, Pardon, and Protection are easy to remember, and a helpful format to begin to structure our times of prayer with the Lord.

### Our View of God

Having told us how to pray, Jesus then addresses the chief reason we find it difficult to pray. He tells a story about a man who is reluctant to grant requests. Though this man is nothing like God, he's very much like the false image we have of God.

Jesus knows that if we doubt that God is favorably disposed towards us we're not likely to pray, and even less likely to pray with persistence. He tells this story to draw attention to our false view of God and to encourage us to be bold and persistent in bringing requests to Him.

### Ask, Seek, Knock

The difference between simply striking a door and knocking on it is repetition. This is a different kind of repetition from the kind Jesus condemns in Matthew 6: 5-15. Jesus is not teaching to say the same words over and over again, but to be assertive, confident, and persistent in approaching God with our requests. This stretches our faith as well as demonstrates our trust in God's goodness. It also cultivates our own hearts to deeply desire to see our reality changed.

### How Much More

In vv. 11-13 Jesus continues to repair our view of God using a "how much greater than" analogy. His point here is that if human parents know how to give good gifts to their children, then how much more does God? Jesus wants to say, as powerfully as it can be expressed, that God cares and loves to give good gifts to His children – more than we can imagine. In fact, His major reason for withholding our requests is that the things we ask for might not really be for our good. In John 14:12-14, Jesus says that He will grant any prayer that is asked in "His name." By this He means anything we ask for that is in accordance with His will. The more we grow as Christians, the more our prayers align with God's will, and as a result, the more we see our prayers answered.

## What's Our Response?

As a result of this study you want to help your group:

1. Consider how they view God.
2. Believe that He is for them.
3. Learn to pray according to the model Jesus gave in the Lord's prayer.

## What Are the Questions?

Luke 11:1-13

### LAUNCH

What was the best birthday present you ever received? What birthday was the most disappointing for you? Why?

### EXPLORE

Read Luke 11:1-4.

1. Matthew 6:5-15 also records this model prayer. What additional lessons does Jesus teach in the section in Matthew?
2. How should these additional lessons effect the way we apply Jesus' teaching on prayer?
3. Jesus begins by extolling God for His Person. What do you love to praise Him for? What passages in Scripture do you like to read that describe His greatness?
4. Next He prays for God's purposes to be fulfilled. What is His purpose? Why did He make us?
5. Jesus then asks for God's provision. Look at Mt 20:29-34. If Jesus were to show up and ask you, "What would you like Me to do for you?" What would you say?
6. Next Jesus invites us to ask for pardon. Take a minute and pray and ask Him to forgive you for any sins that come to mind.

7. Finally Jesus models seeking protection. What makes you feel weak and tempted?

Read Luke 11:5-10.

8. Having told us what to do, Jesus now addresses the primary thing that interferes with our ability to do it. In this story what belief of ours is Jesus addressing?
9. The difference between simply hitting a door and knocking, is the sheer repetition. How is this different from the vain repetition mentioned in Mt.6:5-15?
10. Why do you think that God wants us to persevere in praying? Why doesn't He always answer immediately?
11. What prayer or request have you simply stopped praying, because it hasn't been answered?

Read 11:9-13.

12. In this story Jesus continues His work to repair our view of God. He is using the Jewish teaching form in which one makes his/her case by arguing "from lesser to the greater." Where else do you see this approach?

### APPLY

13. What do you think might change in your prayer life if the foundation of your prayer was that God's name would be "hallowed" (treated with reverence) and that His kingdom would come?
14. Jesus seems to know that we tend to doubt God's favorable disposition toward us. Why do you think we doubt this, and how have you seen this doubt effect your own prayers?
15. What helps you believe that God is good and wants to answer your prayers?
16. Read John 14:12-14. If we do not see God give us what we have asked for, why might this be? How have you seen the things you ask for in prayer change since becoming a Christian?

## What Are the Answers?

1. Jesus emphasizes the need for sincerity. Not praying so that others will think us more spiritual, and not simply repeating empty words.
2. We shouldn't simply repeat the Lord's prayer with the same vain repetition as unbelievers.
3. Allow the group to discuss and share their favorite passages about God.
4. To fill the earth with the knowledge of His Glory. He made us so we could delight in His Greatness.
5. Allow the group to discuss.
6. Allow the group some time to pray. This may also be a good opportunity to explain the gospel.
7. Allow the group to discuss. Being vulnerable yourself may help create some safety for others in the group.
8. That God doesn't really care about helping us.
9. Jesus wants us to be persistent in asking, not simply repeating, the same words.
10. He wants to engage our hearts, and persistence does this. It also expands our faith and expresses our trust in His care and goodness.
11. You might begin by sharing an example from your own life.
12. In the example of the uncaring neighbor.
13. Allow the group to discuss.
14. Let the group share their own areas of doubt.
15. Allow the group to discuss.
16. Because we have asked for things that are ultimately not good for us, and have not asked in accordance with His will and purposes. That's why the initial focus in prayer upon God's purpose and will for His kingdom is so important.

## Memorize

The following pattern will give you a helpful way to structure your prayer times:

Reflect on God's...

Person

Purpose

Provision

Pardon

Protection