



GROWING SPIRITUALLY

Lesson 5: The Prayer Life of a Christian

Last week's lesson:

- ❖ Last week we looked at Ephesians 5:1 -21 "Do not get drunk on wine"...
- ❖ A Contrast of Two Lifestyles
 - ❖ The Wine-Filled Life
 - ❖ The Spirit-Filled Life
- ❖ How Are We Filled With The Spirit?
- ❖ Holy Evidence of a Spirit-Filled Life
- ❖ Hindrances to a Spirit-Filled Life

Today's Text

- ❖ Today's lesson is taken from Luke 11:1-10 "... Lord, teach us to pray ..." and Luke 18:1-8 "...always pray and not give up ..."
- ❖ What the Bible Says About Prayer
- ❖ Jesus Taught Us How to Pray
- ❖ Jesus Taught Us to be Persistent in Prayer
- ❖ God Answers Prayer
- ❖ Additional Thoughts on Prayer
- ❖ Memory Verse

Luke 11:1-4

- ❖ Jesus teaches us to pray:
- ❖ Luke 11:1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." 2 So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." NKJV

Luke 11:1-4 – Background

- ❖ The Jews of this era typically prayed in a manner that was largely “praise” of God (similar to the Psalms).
- ❖ John had apparently taught his followers to pray in a different way, but one that was obviously consistent with God’s will.
- ❖ We refer to this prayer as the “Lord’s Prayer”, but Jesus’ prayers are numerous and recorded for us in other places.
- ❖ This text does differ slightly from that in Mathew.
- ❖ It serves as a model prayer in two ways:
 - ❖ It is an example and is often recited verbatim.
 - ❖ It outlines a specific type of content that should be included in prayer.

Luke 11:1-4 – Content

- ❖ Jesus praises God's name and glorifies the Father (vs 2). Similarly, our prayers should include praise of the Father.
- ❖ Then Jesus moves on to specific requests or petitions and this is what differs from how the Jews traditionally prayed.
 - ❖ “give us our daily bread”
 - ❖ “forgive us our sins”
 - ❖ “lead us not into temptation”
- ❖ The content is simple: praise and requests.
- ❖ Today I hear many requests in our prayers, but not as much praising.
- ❖ **Do you think we should include more praise in our prayers?**

Luke 11:5-10

- ❖ 5 Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6 because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' 7 "Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. 9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

The Need to Pray

- ❖ Jesus reinforces the need to pray by telling the parable of the friend who called at midnight (verses 5-10).
- ❖ Note these four points:
 - ❖ It was not friendship, but persistency that secured the caller's request.
 - ❖ Jesus makes an application: 'So I say to you.'
 - ❖ Ask, seek and knock literally means that we keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking. Persistency.
 - ❖ The Lord answers the prayers of those who are persistent.
- ❖ **Why does the Lord require that we ask again and again instead of just once?**

Luke 18:1-8

- ❖ 18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" NIV

Be Persistent in Prayer

- ❖ **What is the central point Jesus is making in this parable?**
 - ❖ Again, Jesus teaches us to be persistent in prayer
 - ❖ Jesus told this parable to encourage you to pray 'and not give up'.
 - ❖ The point of the parable is this:
 - ❖ If a unjust judge will grant a request,
 - ❖ how much more will God, your Father grant the requests of his children who cry unto him day and night.
 - ❖ God requires you to be persistent not because he is reluctant; he wants you to demonstrate by your persistency that you are serious about your requests.

We are instructed to pray:

- ❖ 1 Tim 2:1-4 - 1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone— 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. NIV
- ❖ Phil 4:6 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. NIV
- ❖ Eph 6:18 - 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. NIV
- ❖ **What do you learn from these scriptures about what should be included in your prayers?**

What we should pray for:

- ❖ All kinds of requests for:
 - ❖ everyone: for kings, authorities
 - ❖ peaceful & quiet lives
 - ❖ Godliness & holiness in our lives
 - ❖ salvation and knowledge of the truth for all
 - ❖ everything
 - ❖ all kinds of requests
 - ❖ the saints

The Holy Spirit assists us:

- Rom 8:26-27 - In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. NIV
- **How does the Holy Spirit help you in your prayers?**
 - ▣ In our weakness (weakness - astheneia (as-then'-i-ah); feebleness of mind or body; diseased or sick; frailty):
 - ▣ We do not know what we ought to pray for
 - ▣ The Spirit intercedes for us in a way that our words cannot express
 - ▣ God knows the mind of the Spirit
 - ▣ The Spirit intercedes according to God's will

We should have the right motive:

- ❖ Your prayers are for the honor and glory of God alone. (Eph 1:6,12,14; 1 Cor 10:31)
 - ❖ 1 Cor 10:31- So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. NIV
- ❖ Your prayers must reflect the spirit of Jesus who prayed to the Father, 'not my will but your will be done.'
- ❖ The doing of God's will must be the goal of all your prayers.

Other thoughts:

- ❖ A godly life is essential to an effective prayer life. (Psalm 37:4; John 15:7; 1 John 3:21-22)
 - ❖ John 15:7 - If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. NIV
 - ❖ 1 John 3:21-22 - 21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. NIV
- ❖ Sin is an obstacle to prayers. (Psalm 24:3-4; Psalm 66:16-20; Psalm 37:4; Prov 28:9; Isa 1:15-17)
- ❖ Prayer is not a formula you recite; prayer is communication with God.
- ❖ Prayer is an act of worship in which you are acknowledging your dependence upon the Lord.

God Answers Prayer

- ❖ The Word of God makes it very clear that God answers prayer. (2 Chronicles 30:18-20,27; 2 Corinthians 1:10-11; James 1:5-8; 5:16)
 - ❖ 2 Cor 1:10-11 - 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11 as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. NIV
- ❖ God may give you what you do not expect. However, what God gives you is always better than what you requested.
 - ❖ 2 Cor 12:7-10 - 7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Closing thoughts:

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray,

- ❖ Our prayers should contain both praise and requests.
- ❖ We are to be persistent with our prayers.
- ❖ We are instructed to pray for “everything”.
- ❖ The Spirit assists us with our prayers.
- ❖ Our prayers are for the glory and praise of God.
- ❖ Pray with the proper motivation (God’s will be done).
- ❖ Prayer should be vital part of your daily life. It is an essential part of “growing spiritually”.
- ❖ What steps are you going to take to make prayer a vital part of your daily life?



Memory verse: Luke 11:9-10

So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.