

Living Word Fellowship Church

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Christ Teaching on Prayer

Lesson #2

I. Introduction

After teaching the disciples how to pray Christ then teaches them how to receive answers to their prayers. They must come to God as a friend no matter how inconvenient it may seem. God, even when He may not desire to respond will respond because they are His friends. So, like the man in this story they must be shamelessly persistent in knocking and seeking Him, because if our earthly fathers will give the best to their children there is no way our heavenly Father would not do better.

Christ Himself taught us in several passages how to pray:

- A. **Luke 11:1-13** – The mindset we should have when we come before the Lord as His friends. *"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you."* (John 15:13-14; NASU).
- B. **Luke 18:1-8** – Unjust circumstances we may encounter. Christ knew that the disciples and we would encounter trials that could be unjust (John 16:33; 1 Peter 4:12).
- C. John 14:8:13; 16:23-24 - Christ is our mediator (Hebrews 8:1-2), as we would see in the case of Peter (Luke 22:31-32), so He instructs us to call on His name when we are praying to God.

We will examine key elements of Christ's teaching so we follow His guidance when we pray.

II. Luke 11:1-13

Summary of the Passage: "The following parable was given by Jesus to illustrate the certainty of answer to prayer. In it he placed prayer on the basis of personal friendship with God. *Midnight*. The most dangerous and inconvenient hour for a call. People in our Lord's day seldom ventured out at night for fear of bandits. 6. A friend . . . in his journey is come. If the friend traveled on foot all day, and did not arrive until midnight, he must have been desperately hungry. Hospitality demanded that he be fed."¹

Jesus stated that this good gift is the Holy Spirit, the most important gift that followers of Jesus would receive (cf. Acts 2:1-4). The heavenly Father gives both heavenly gifts and earthly gifts. Believers today are not to pray for the Holy Spirit because this prayer of the disciples (for the Holy Spirit) was answered at Pentecost (cf. Rom. 8:9).²

¹ Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F. (Eds.). (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Lk 11:5-9). Chicago: Moody Press.

² Martin, J. A. (1985). Luke. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 235). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Summary Background:

1. The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. Eastern homes did not have a separate bedroom. Usually the father of the family bolted the door, then unrolled mats on the floor for the children. He and his wife occupied the bed or space nearest the wall. It would have been impossible to reach the outer door without disturbing the children. 8. Because of his importunity. The persistent knocking of the midnight caller was more troublesome than opening the door and handing out the bread.³
2. Hospitality was a crucial obligation; the host must feed the traveler who has graced his or her home by coming to spend the night. Although many homes would have used up their day's bread by nightfall, in a small village people would know who still had bread left over. In modern villages of that region, bread might last for several days, but one must serve a guest a fresh, unbroken loaf as an act of hospitality.⁴

Summary Outline:

1. Friend – To say friend Jesus is referencing a person who is loyal and would share their possessions and personal problems whenever necessary. This is like having a best man at a wedding or military comrades who would die for one another. This is the direct object of this part of the story.
 - a) *“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you.”* (Jn 15:13-14; NASU)
2. For a friend has come – The same reason the man who is asleep must get up (the person knocking is his good friend) is the same reason the man who is knocking on his door must get help; the person he needs to help is also his friend. This seems to imply that we go to Christ because He is our friend, but we do so because we care for our other brothers and sisters in Christ. It is not for selfish purposes.
3. Bother; Labor – The man who was asleep tells his friend that he must stop creating extreme strain on his family. What the friend who was knocking was doing was exerting more stress on a family that was already physically exhausted. Most of these communities were farmers and sheep herders. There are several principles implicit in the text:
 - a) Friendship implies persistent faith because loyalty is expected. Christ, when teaching about being a friend, instructs His disciples to abide in Him. This leads to answered prayers (John 15:1-7).
 - b) Friendship implies a constant seeking of the person who is expected to be most loyal (Prov. 17:17), believing they would respond (Luke 12:29-32).
 - c) Christ can seem non-responsive (Psalm 28). He will test our faith in His relationship with us.
 - The man who was asleep commanded his friend to stop creating problems for his family.
 - Faith kept the man knocking.

³ Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F. (Eds.). (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Lk 11:5–9). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁴ Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Lk 11:5–13). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

4. He will get up – Because the man’s friend is persistent, the man gets up, disturbing everyone, to do what his friend needs.
- a) Under these circumstances, the man will get up. Christ, seeing the faith that drives us to be persistent, understanding the nature of the friendship, responds.
 - b) We have a need, and Christ has the supply.
5. The main purpose of teaching them this is encapsulated in verses 9-10:
- a) Ask – Christ commands the disciples to make what He has just explained a pattern for their lives. They must go to God as they would go to a friend. They are all equal.
 - Ask for what you do not possess; seek for what is not apparent; knock that obstacles may be removed. These three words epitomize the content of persistent prayer.⁵
 - The knocking made the man get up.
 - This is best understood not as an imperative of command (“You must ask in order to receive”) but as an imperative of condition (“If you ask, you will indeed receive”; cf. 6:37–38), for the saying is an invitation to prayer, not an order to do so.⁶
 - b) Seeking – Christ now commands his disciples to continuously strive to be shamelessly persistent when they come before God. This is very different from the prayer format used within the Jewish culture.
 - c) Seeking – We must search God’s Word to make sure we are in His will.
 - d) Will find; Found – God will bless us to discover, after He has scrutinized our request, what He is willing to permanently put in place for us.
 - e) Knock – He commands us to continually knock with no plans to ever stop knocking, like this man, until God responds.
 - f) Open – What we cannot get will become available to us, like the man who knocked on his friend’s door (John 15:15-16).
 - g) Ask – For everyone who does not quit coming to God as this friend did to his friend. Demonstrating confidence, that because of a friendship, God cannot refuse the request.
 - h) Receives – The person who comes like a friend continuously obtains what they requested.
 - i) Seeks, finds – This person who is continuously shameless and persistently habitually discovers answered prayers.
 - j) Knocks will be opened – The person who is continuously persistent is seeking God’s attention habitually gains God’s attention.

III. Luke 18:1-8

Introduction: Even though through Christ we gain a relationship with God (Mt. 6:1-13), and a friendship with Christ (John 15:13), because of this friendship, our commitment to live by faith, which causes us to be

⁵ Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F. (Eds.). (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Lk 11:5–9). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁶ Stein, R. H. (1992). *Luke* (Vol. 24, p. 327). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

persistent in prayer, there are times we may believe God to be unjust, when in the midst of trials, He may take a long to respond. His delay in midst of these circumstances requires the same commitment to boldness and persistence of faith as we grow to trust in our relationship with Him.

Summary Background:

1. The Romans allowed the Jews to manage most of their own affairs. This judge did not fear God, and was therefore probably a secular judge, not a religious one. The dishonest judge represents corrupted power.⁷
2. Under Old Testament law, judges were to fear God (i.e., consider that he will judge those who break his law and mistreat others) and therefore defend the oppressed. Many ancient societies had severe legal penalties for unjust judges.⁸
3. In the law, the widow was the ultimate example of the oppressed person, because she had no means of support (e.g., Ex. 22:22-24; Ps. 146:9; Is. 1:17, 23; Jer. 7:6-7). She certainly could not afford a bride; in Jesus' parable, the widow's opponent is presumably threatening something like taking her land in payment for a debt (e.g., 2 Kgs. 4:1).
4. Many Jews believe that you limit your prayer so that you do not weary God out. Jesus is speaking out against such a notion.
5. The question as a whole presupposes a time of tribulation for the disciples in which they may be tempted to give up faith because their prayers are not answered; it is meant as an exhortation to take seriously the lesson of the parable that God will certainly act to vindicate them. Thus an interval before the parousia is presupposed, but the sense of imminent expectation is not abandoned.⁹

Summary Outline:

1. The widow did not seek vengeance against those who harmed her; she focused on justice and authority with the power to enforce it. So the widow can be respected for the following:
 - a) She trusted in justice, not a fleshly response to her circumstances.
 - b) She totally relied on the authority and power of the judge.
 - c) She demonstrated faith that if he responded, everything would work out alright.
 - d) She was completely helpless and had no relatives or friends to help her.
2. The judge met his match when a local widow pled for justice in a dispute with a neighbor. The nature of her grievance is of no concern for the story. The point is that she was a widow who never gave up. As a widow she should have received special protection and care from the justice system (Exod. 22:22; Deut. 10:18; 24:17-21; 27:19; cf. Jas. 1:27). No matter how long the judge ignored her or denied her plea, she returned to his court asking for justice. The judge finally threw up his hands in disgust and frustration.¹⁰

⁷ Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary* (p. 1288). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

⁸ Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Lk 18:1-5). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

⁹ Marshall, I. H. (1978). *The Gospel of Luke: a commentary on the Greek text* (pp. 676-677). Exeter: Paternoster Press.

¹⁰ Butler, T. C. (2000). *Luke* (Vol. 3, p. 296). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

3. The sense “always to keep on praying” (not “pray without ceasing” as the similar phrase in 1 Thess 5:17), and the latter means “not to give up” in the sense of not giving up on prayer and expresses the expectation that God will respond with vindication.¹¹
4. Came (Gr. *ercheto*) is in the imperfect tense, which implies that she kept appearing frequently in the courtroom of the judge. Avenge me (Gr. *ekdikeson*) of is not a request for punishment of her adversary, but for a decree that would give protection from his injustices. 4. And he would not. The verb expresses his state of mind rather than a single act. The widow’s persistence wore down the judge’s obduracy. 5. She weary me. Literally, *lest she give me a black eye*. Greek *hypopiaze* may mean either “to annoy,” or “to damage reputation.”¹²
5. The term “quickly” (18:8) does not necessarily mean “immediately,” but “in due time,” according to God’s economy and timing. Notice the question in 18:8. The Son of Man will come looking for faith and wonders whether or not he will find any. He will judge the faithless (17:37) and reward the faithful.

IV. John 14:8-15; 16:23-24

Introduction: “The disciples were completely bewildered and discouraged. Jesus had said He was going away (7:34; 8:21; 12:8, 35; 13:33), that He would die (12:32-33), that one of the Twelve was a traitor (13:21), that Peter would disown Him three times (13:38), that Satan was at work against all of them (Luke 22:31-32), and that all the disciples would fall away (Matt. 26:31). The cumulative weight of these revelations must have greatly depressed them.”

Thomas’s question: ‘We know where you are going, but how do we get there?’ In other words, “‘we had a way based on the Old Testament teachings by the leaders of our day – the law and all that comes with it, but you came and changed all of that, so, ‘how do we get there.’”

Background:

1. Here “works” (KJV, NASB, NRSV) could refer to righteous deeds, as often in Judaism (e.g., 8:39), or to miraculous works such as Jesus wrought (5:17; 10:32), or to both. (The works are quantitatively greater because Christ’s work is multiplied through *all* his followers.) In this context Jesus’ words are an invitation to radical faith: Jewish tradition allowed that some very pious teachers could receive from God almost anything they asked because of their intimate relationship with him, but never applied this possibility to the majority even of the pious. This promise also goes beyond claims made for most charms in pagan magic. Magic had no emphasis on relationship with the power addressed and sought only to manipulate forces for the manipulator’s ends (contrast 14:15).¹³
2. In the Old Testament “name” often meant reputation or renown, and when God acted “on account of his name” it was to defend his honor. “In the name of God” could mean as his representative acting on his behalf (Ex 5:23; Deut 18:19–22; Jer 14:14–15), according to his command (Deut 18:5, 7), by his help (Ps 118:10–11; Prov 18:10) or using his name in a miraculous act (2 Kings 2:24).¹⁴

¹¹ Nolland, J. (1993). [Luke 9:21–18:34](#) (Vol. 35B, pp. 866–867). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

¹² Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F. (Eds.). (1962). [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament](#) (Lk 18:2). Chicago: Moody Press.

¹³ Keener, C. S. (1993). [The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament](#) (Jn 14:12–14). InterVarsity Press.

¹⁴ Keener, C. S. (1993). [The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament](#) (Jn 14:12–14). InterVarsity Press.

3. Jews frequently recalled the patriarchs in their prayers, hoping that God would be moved to hear them on account of these holy men.¹⁵

Summary Outline:

1. “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” (Phil. 2:10)
2. At the sound of His name, demons shudder (James 2:19).
3. “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” (Luke 10:17)
4. Notice the similarity between this teaching and chapter 16: *“In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete”* (John 16:23–24). Gangel, K. O. (2000). John (Vol. 4, p. 267). Broadman & Holman Publishers.
5. Obviously, just saying “in Jesus’ name” doesn’t create a magic potion for prayer. The culture in which these words were spoken took names very seriously, so much so that they equated one’s name with the character, spirit, and power of that person. That is why the Jews never spoke the name of Yahweh. Gangel, K. O. (2000). John (Vol. 4, p. 267). Broadman & Holman Publishers.
6. The main point is not simply prayer that mentions Jesus’ name, but prayer in accordance with all that the person who bears the name is (2:23). It is prayer aimed at carrying forward the work Jesus did—prayer that He Himself will answer (vs. 14). (NASU Study Bible)
 - a) “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.’” (Mt 6:9-10; NASU)
6. We have the promise of answered prayer described in these verses if we properly understand the context of Jesus’ last discourse. Jesus promised the disciples that their requests concerning fruit bearing would be answered because it would bring glory to God (see 4:41; 7:18; 8:50, 54). The next chapters clarify this (15:7–8, 16; 16:23–24).¹⁶
7. God will not grant requests contrary to his nature or his will, and we cannot use his name as a magic formula to fulfill our selfish desires. (James 4:1–4) If we are sincerely following God and seeking to do his will, then our requests will be in line with what he wants, and he will grant them. (See also 15:16; 16:23.)¹⁷

V. Conclusion

In the same manner, Christ begins teaching about prayer, and He ends. It is to the Father but in His name and for His agenda. He is concerned about our needs, even when it does not seem that way, so we must be steadfast in our faith, demonstrated by our boldness before His throne of grace and the persistent manner by which we pray. We, in all of it, must trust that His death established the potential for a long-lasting friendship. Because of that, no matter if we are experiencing injustice, and His answer seems delayed, our faith must guide us, keep us, and shape the manner by which we pray.

¹⁵ Arnold, C. E. (2002). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John, Acts](#). (Vol. 2, p. 139). Zondervan.

¹⁶ Barton, B., Comfort, P., Osborne, G., Taylor, L. K., & Veerman, D. (2001). [Life Application New Testament Commentary](#) (p. 436). Tyndale.

¹⁷ Barton, B., Comfort, P., Osborne, G., Taylor, L. K., & Veerman, D. (2001). [Life Application New Testament Commentary](#) (p. 436). Tyndale.

