



ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

This is part 11 of the PrayER – Learning From Jesus How To Pray sermon series

SUMMARY

God knew that as we make our way through life that there would be certain elements and circumstances that would come into our life that were simply greater than we are. His solution to the problems of our life was to make Himself and His resources available to His people. The means by which we can tap into the presence, the provisions, and the power of God is prayer, and yet, most of prayer lives are struggling to show any signs of life. In this series of thoughts, we are taking our prayer life to the emergency where we will learn from the Great Physician how to pray.

REVIEW

In this study, we're journeying through the model prayer and we're discovering how to pray. So far, we've considered the following:

We looked at the phrase "...Our Father which art in Heaven..." and we found that when we pray, we should pray according to our **ADOPTION**, according to our Father's **AUTHORITY**, and according to a right **AFFECTION**.

We looked at the phrase "...Hallowed be thy name...." and we found that our prayers should consist of two parts: the **VERTICAL** part (our relationship with God) and the **HORIZONTAL part** (our relationship with the world around us). Prayer is more than just a way for us to **GET**

SOMETHING FROM GOD; prayer is a way for us to **GIVE SOMETHING TO GOD**. We give God glory when we recognize the holiness of God when we enter into His presence.

We looked at the phrase “*...Thy kingdom come...*” and we found that it is an expression of the heart that desires for the **WORD** of God and the **WORK** of God to become a reality.

We looked at the phrase “*...Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven...*” and we found that the goal of our prayer life must be our surrender to the Lord’s will. There is nothing that we **WANT** that is more important than God’s **WILL** for our life – **NOTHING!**

This marked a shift in the model prayer from the vertical (our relationship with God) to the horizontal (our relationship with the world around us). We found that the latter portion of this model prayer is focused on the needs of our life: our **PROVISIONS**, our **PARDON** (forgiveness), our **PROTECTION**, and our **PRAISE-GIVING**.

We looked at the phrase “*...Give us this day our daily bread...*” and we found that God is a good God Who is ready and willing to give good things to His children. He cares about the **DESIRES** of our heart, the details of our life, and the day-to-day needs of our life, and we should bring **ALL** of them to Him in prayer.

We looked at the phrase “*...And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors...*” and we found that our prayer life is an **EXAMINATION** of what is going on in our mind, in our heart, and in our life and whether or not those things match up with what is pleasing to the Lord. We are to **CONSIDER** the sins that are in our life and confess them to our Father Who is ready and willing to forgive us restoring both our fellowship with God and our function before Him.

We looked at the phrase “*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...*” and we found that God often allows our faith to go through seasons of **INSPECTION** (to reveal weaknesses in our faith) and seasons of **IMPROVEMENT** (to strengthen, or temper, our faith), reminding us of the fact that God has the ability to **LIMIT** and to **DELIVER US OUT** of our temptations.

We looked at the phrase “*...For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen*” and we found that we are to “*Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise...*” (Psalm 100:4). God **HAS BEEN GOOD**, God **IS BEING GOOD**, God **WILL BE GOOD**, and I should praise Him greatly and often for the **GRACE**, the **GREATNESS**, the **GOODNESS** that God pours into my life.

When looked at the phrase “*...when ye fast...*” and we found that faith is the fuel to a strong prayer life and fasting is the means by which strong faith is produced. I called it next level Christianity because it is the fruit of much spiritual progress in one’s life.

We found that there were different **KINDS** and **LENGTHS** of fasts (neither of which were more or less right than any of the others), but what mattered most was the **MOTIVE** behind fasting

We found that the proper motives of prayer and fasting in the Scriptures fall into a few categories:

People fasted and prayed in the Bible because there was a great need in their life that they fully believed that God was the only One that could do something about it (Proactive).

People fasted and prayed in the Bible when they were sincerely seeking for clarity about God's will for their life.

People fasted and prayed in the Bible when they were convicted about the need to repent of some great sin that was in their life.

People fasted and prayed in the Bible out of a sense of desperation (Reactive) about the circumstances that were in their life.

People fasted and prayed in the Bible when they felt like their walk with the Lord and their fellowship with the Lord wasn't what it could be or ought to be.

People fasted and prayed corporately (as the people of God) to give God proper worship (worship that was not tainted by sin and self) and to pursue His will.

Throughout the Bible, we find that the result of prayer and fasting is **INCREASED FAITH, INCREASE WORSHIP, INCREASED GIVING, and INCREASED SERVICE.**

To put it simply, fasting and praying is not primarily about me getting something that I want from God; it's about my life being so altered by my relationship with God that I want nothing more than God to receive proper glory and for God's will to be accomplished in my life.

MESSAGE

Up to this point, we have considered the **FORM** of prayer and we have considered the **FUEL** of prayer. Last week, I mentioned to you that Luke chapter 11 emphasizes the **FREQUENCY** of prayer, and indeed it does, but it also deals with the **FERVENCY** of our prayer life.

Luke 11:5-13 says, *"And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"*

If you're in the habit of marking things in the Word of God, I'd like to draw your attention to verse 9 where Jesus says, *"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*

For a few moments, I'd like to consider this thought: **ASK, SEEK, KNOCK.**

We now come back to where we began this study – focused on the example of Jesus. I remind you that Luke emphasized the prayer life of the Lord Jesus Christ more than any other human penman. In his letter, we find that Luke doesn't just emphasize the fact that Jesus prayed, but he emphasized when Jesus prayed and at times how long Jesus prayed.

We find that Jesus prayed in the morning, and we find that Jesus prayed all night long.

We find that Jesus prayed when He was busy, and we find that Jesus prayed in what we would refer to as "spare time or down time."

We find that Jesus prayed before major shifts took place in His ministry and we find that Jesus prayed when He was in pain on the cross.

We find that Jesus prayed when He ate, and we find that Jesus prayed when He fasted.

We find that Jesus prayed when He was with others, and we find that Jesus prayed when He was alone.

We find that Jesus prayed when others had needs that they knew about, and we find that Jesus prayed when others had needs that they didn't even realize.

What I'm saying is this:

Jesus prayed and Jesus prayed **FREQUENTLY.**

Jesus prayed and Jesus prayed **CORRECTLY.**

Jesus prayed and Jesus prayed **EFFECTIVELY.**

James 5:16 said it this way, *"...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

That's the way that Jesus prayed and that's the way that we ought to pray.

When we enter Luke chapter 11, we find another instance where a disciple came to Jesus and asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. And so, Jesus does. He begins to walk through the same elements that He gave in Matthew chapter 6, but then He pauses before getting to the closing section of the prayer and it's as if Jesus says, "Let me help you understand a little more about the privilege of prayer."

Jesus then begins to teach them this parable. It's a parable about three men, three friends. One man who has a need, one man who wants to meet that need, and one friend who has

the ability to meet that need. (We'll look at that more in our next thought because there is a focus there on corporate prayer). Initially, the friend that had the ability to meet the need refused to do so because of the inconvenience that it brought to him. However, because of the *importunity* of the man who wanted to meet the need of his friend, the man who had the ability to meet the need rose and gave his friend as many as was needed.

The word *importunity* is an interesting word that means "to be troublesomely urgent or to be overly persistent in a request." It has the idea of someone who is persistent about something with any regard to time, to place, or to circumstance. He had a need, and he needed an answer. So, he kept on asking with the expectation that he was going to receive something for his need.

1 John 5:14 says, *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."*

The love of God wants what is best for you, the wisdom God knows what is best for you, and the power of God can do what is best for you.

1) We must **PRIORITIZE** the **PRACTICE** of prayer

Luke 11:6 says, *"For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?"*

1 Chronicles 16:11 says, *"Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually."*

1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, *"Pray without ceasing."*

Luke 18:1 says, *"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."*

There are only two times that we are to stop praying about something: when God says, "Yes," and when "God says, "No." What if God says, "Wait?" Then keep on praying. Wait doesn't mean stop praying.

The greater the need the more frequently we should pray.

3) We must **PURSUE** the **PROMISE** of prayer

Luke 11:10 says, *"For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."*

A) We want to receive **AN ANSWER** to our prayer

Luke 11:9 says, *"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*

James 4:2 says, *"...ye have not, because ye ask not."*

Jeremiah 33:3 says, *"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."*

A) Step 1 is to **ASK**

The word *ask* here is a word that is in the passive, meaning that we ask and we receive. Sometimes God does answer our prayers quickly. There's not a lot of waiting and there's not a lot of effort on our part. Our heart is right, our request is right, the timing is right, and God simply answers because we asked. But the reality is that it isn't always that way.

B) Step 2 is **SEEK**

The word *seek* here is a word that is in the active voice, meaning that there is more action that is required of us. If I get up and start looking, I will find that God has already provided what I need.

C) Step 3 is **KNOCK**

The word *knock* here again is in the passive voice, meaning that I simply cannot do anything about my need. It's too big, it's too heavy. God is going to have to do something. The word *knock* has the idea of striking a door with a stick in order to gain admittance." I think here it is referring to loud knocking or boldness.

Hebrews 4:16 says, *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

B) We want to receive **THE RIGHT ANSWER** to our prayer

Luke 11:11-13 says, *"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"*

Romans 8:26-27 says, *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."*