

# Lord Teach us to Pray

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[ 0 : 01 ] Let's turn again to the chapter we read in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 11. And I want us to consider this section that we read. Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, and so on.

Now I'm sure there are times when you hear people pray, you say to yourself, Oh my, I wish that I could pray like that.

Not saying that you're saying that out of any form of jealousy or envy. It's just maybe you're saying, I just feel, as I listen to some people praying, that I've never really mastered prayer myself.

As you look at your own prayer life, you say to yourself, Well, you know, I just, I do not have the expression. I'm not able to put things together.

The spiritual requests, the temporal requests, all these things, I just don't seem to be able to put it together properly. And I'm sure if you're like me, there have been many times that you have actually said to the Lord, Lord, teach me to pray.

[ 1 : 15 ] I've certainly, many a time, I've felt just like these disciples. Because I don't know at what particular juncture, but it was after a time when Jesus himself was praying.

And this disciple, one of the disciples said, Lord, teach us to pray. It must have been a wonderful thing, hearing Jesus in prayer. And then we have a summarized version of what is termed the Lord's Prayer.

Now, of course, when we use the expression the Lord's Prayer, it's not the Lord's Prayer as such in the sense that this is a prayer that Jesus himself would pray.

There would be aspects of it he would pray, but he wouldn't pray all the prayer. Because, for instance, Jesus didn't need to ask, Lord, forgive me my sins. We have to ask that.

But Jesus himself had no sin. So what Jesus is setting out before us is a model for prayer, or a model of prayer. If we really want to see the Lord in prayer, we go, for instance, to the likes of John chapter 17, where we have there what is termed the high priestly prayer, the prayer that Jesus offered before he was crucified.

[ 2 : 35 ] So here we have this, what we do term the Lord's Prayer, and it's termed that because the Lord taught it to us. And it's a model of or for prayer. Now, it teaches us, first and foremost, the importance of fixing our eyes upon God when we pray.

And that's very important. Because so often we can rush into prayer, and we kind of forget who it is that we've come to. And, again, when we look at prayer as it's found in the Bible, one of the things also we come to discover is that prayer is an opportunity given to us to get to know God all the more.

It's not just a shopping list. It's not a thing where we say, well, I've got a few needs. I'm going to go to God, and all I'm going to do is I'm going to tell God the problems I have, the things I want.

End of story. Prayer is far more than that. And God wants us to use prayer all the time, but not simply just as a list of things that we need.

It's in order, at the very heart of it is that we will get to know Him better. You know how so often we get to know one another better by spending time with one another.

[ 3 : 53 ] And as we talk to one another, and as we interact with one another, we get to know one another all the better. And it's the same with the Lord.

It is as we interact with Him. That is how we get to know Him more and more. And if we do not spend much time with the Lord in prayer, and if we do not spend much time listening to the Lord speaking to us in His Word, we will not get to know Him very well.

Be absolutely persuaded of that. Your Christian development and Christian growth is dependent upon getting to know the Lord more and more. And the way you get to know Him more and more is

by spending time with Him, in His company, in prayer, with the Word.

It's as simple and straightforward, when I say simple in a sense, as simple and straightforward as that. So we begin with a focus upon who God is.

Now, while the Bible reveals to us that God is a consuming fire, the Bible also has revealed to us and shown to us that God has come near to us in His Son, the second person of the Godhead, that the Father has sent His Son, the Father has revealed to us through His Son.

[ 5 : 20 ] And God deals with us as a Father. And this particular section here, at the beginning, it says, the prayer starts there, Our Father, Our Father, we have just the word Father here, Our Father, hallowed be Your name.

It begins with the Father, and this section, right down to 13, the whole area, the whole section, has got the idea of the Father. A Father to protect, a Father to keep, a Father to provide for, and to watch over.

So, we have this idea of the Fatherhood of God, His intimacy, His closeness, His nearness. And that's one of the great blessings.

We're told that when a person becomes a Christian, it's one of the great things that we call, the Holy Spirit works within us, so we call to Him, Abba, Father. It has become so natural that we all of a sudden have become His children.

We feel the right. We don't question and say, I wonder, can I actually, dare I actually go and call Him Father?

[ 6 : 34 ] No, there's an instinct of grace that draws us to Him. And we're able to say, Father. It's one of the great and wonderful privileges that we have.

However, while having said that, it says, Father, hallowed be your name. And straight away, this is showing us that while He is a Father to us, He is somebody who is unique, somebody who is set apart, somebody who is altogether holy and majestic.

So that when we come into His presence, we must always remember that we are in the presence of the King. I suppose if we ever stand side by side with anybody who is...

Supposing you were to stand with somebody who was a king or with a prime minister or with some major A-list celebrity or somebody of real world renown, you'd be saying to yourself, wow, I'm really in exalted circles today.

And however that might be true from an earthly point of view, the person you are standing with is still, at the very core, the same as you.

[ 7 : 54 ] As the poet said, a man's a man for all that. And when you strip everything down, whether it's to the palace or to the prison, a person is just a person. End of story. We may have different...

There might be a different status in life. But when you take all these things away, a person, you bring it all down to the one level. We were born and we will die.

We are human beings. But when you come to the Lord, we go to another dimension altogether. That He has no equal in this universe.

And we've always got to remember that when we come in prayer, that He is unique. That we're coming into the presence of this King. And we have to come with a sense of reverence, sense of awe in our heart.

Hallowed be Thy name. And that's what we want. Lord, we want to hallow. We want to stand in awe. We want to respect. We want to adore You for who You are.

[ 8 : 53 ] And then it says, Your kingdom come. That is that God's just and right rule might be the influence in this world.

And what a wonderful prayer that is. Lord, may Your right and just rule be the rule... The rule of the kingdom be the rule of government in our land.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if God's right and just rule were to operate in the United Kingdom? What a different society we would live in.

It would be totally different. Today, so much of society just seems to live in rebellion, in selfishness. It would be so different if God's rule and justice held sway. And also when we pray for God's kingdom to come, we pray that God's kingdom, that means His rule and His kingship in our own heart.

[ 9 : 59 ] That the Lord, that His kingdom... In fact, when we pray this prayer, it's really we're praying for people to be saved.

Because that's what happens when a person is converted. That King Jesus comes into a person's life, into a person's heart through the Holy Spirit. That's why Jesus said the kingdom of God is within you.

That's what happens when a person is converted. The kingdom comes within. Because the king of the kingdom comes to live within. So when we're praying, Lord, may your kingdom come, we're praying that souls will be converted.

There are various aspects to this particular request. But that's one of them, that souls will be saved. And may your kingdom come into my own life, into my own heart, more and more.

So that the king will become more powerful in my life. More evident in my life. That I will live my life to the king. In submission to the king. More and more and more.

[ 11 : 05 ] So you see, when we pray, when Jesus gives us these, as it were, these kind of requests or these statements, they're there in order for them to be developed.

And we ought to think about what it is saying. But we're just moving very quickly here. And it's also a prayer that while it is praying for the here and now, and longing for people to be saved, and for the rule of Christ to be more and more within our own heart and life, and the rule of Christ to be more and more within our kingdom, we're also looking forward to the day when Christ will return.

This is part of it as well. Lord, may your kingdom come. I'm looking forward, Lord, to the day when you will come. And when this kingdom, which you have already established, it will be the only kingdom.

Thy kingdom hath none end at all. It doth through ages all remain. Other kingdoms come and go. Some of the great nations, the mighty nations.

Who would ever have believed that there would come a day when Babylon, that mighty, the head of gold in Daniel's dream, the most powerful nation in the world, Babylon.

[ 12 : 27 ] It went. Broken. Dismissed. The Assyrian Empire. All these great empires, they came. They flourished. They became world-dominating powers.

And they went. They faded. But here is a kingdom that will never end. It will flourish. It will grow. It is the only kingdom. And so that prayer is all caught up in this.

And then it says, Give us each day our daily bread. Very simply acknowledging God as the provider of everything in life.

This is a prayer of dependence. And I know that we live in a day where we have so much. If you talk to some of the old people, and they will put their minds back to when they were very young.

And when they will hear of how it was for their people. Many in this island faced real poverty. Many people went to bed with no food. And they didn't know where they were going to get food the next day.

[ 13 : 29 ] That's how sometimes it was. We live in a... We are living in this island in such a different day to how it was. And for these people, this was such a real prayer.

Lord, give us... Literally, give us this day food. Because sometimes there was no food. But even when we do have our food, and we have our plenty, we ought to be praying this prayer, acknowledging that whatever we have, that ultimately it's God who gives us.

And he also gives us the abilities and the capacities for different areas of work. People in here, I'm sure there are so many unique and different talents.

Some people are tremendous with their hands, with the precision, where they're able to make things and do things. Other people are clumsy with their hands.

Some people have great minds, maybe for writing, maybe for mathematical equations. Some people are great artists. Some people are great musicians. Some people...

[ 14 : 39 ] The gifts are incredible, but whatever, wherever. Sometimes we haven't recognized. I'm sure there are so many people here, and they have abilities and talents that they've never actually dug into.

They've never actually realized they have. But all these things are given to us by God. And this prayer is acknowledging that God is the one who is providing for us and the God who is able to open up for us in order that we will day by day get and receive and fulfill life as we live it.

But it's also, I believe, the request for our daily spiritual bread as well. That's what we call the Bible so often, our daily bread, our daily spiritual nourishment.

Just as I'm going to get my physical nourishment, please, Lord, give me spiritual nourishment as well. And then it says, Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

We need daily cleansing and forgiveness and pardon. But you'll notice that we must give in return what we've asked for.

[ 15 : 51 ] Have you noted that? We have to give in return what we've asked for. We cannot ask God to forgive us and at the same time have hearts that refuse defiantly to forgive those who may have wronged us.

This can be one of the most difficult parts of the Christian life. It can involve a lot of soul searching. It can involve a lot of digging down deep within our own mind where there might be many issues and many things that are bothersome and troublesome.

Forgiveness is one of these difficult areas. We expect to be forgiven by others, but we may sometimes find it hard to forgive.

Well, the Lord says, it doesn't work like that. You come to me and ask for forgiveness, forgiveness. And I will give you forgiveness, but I expect one thing in return from you is that you will forgive those who have wronged you.

And I think probably it's true that those who are truly repentant before the Lord, who are really repentant, you will find that they generally are those who are of a forgiving spirit towards others.

[ 17 : 21 ] But those who see the sins of others as being huge and magnified are often those who have a small view of repentance before the Lord.

If we were to get a proper view of how we have wronged the Lord, if God were to open up before us just the heinousness and the ugliness and the perversion of our own sin and character and life, we would become so disturbed we wouldn't know what to do.

I think it would unhinge a reason. David got a glimpse of his sin and that's how he just poured out his heart in Psalm 71. Sorry, in Psalm 51.

Now, David was a good man and he often had views of his sin but God gave him at that moment a real insight and it broke him.

Whatever sort of, remember how he was sitting in judgment when Nathan came and told him the story about the man who had stolen the neighbor's lamb and David was incensed, he was in his high horse, he was indignant and he was that man.

[ 18 : 38 ] Nathan the prophet said, David, you're that man. And all of a sudden David came off his high horse because his heart was broken and he just saw his sin and his ugliness and his unworthiness and you could see him it was like a balloon being deflated and just down and down and down he came.

And he wasn't thinking any harsh thoughts about anybody else anymore. It's just himself, oh, what have I done? What a sinner I am. And that's how it works.

That's why I mean those who have a truly repentant heart before the Lord, they will find it so much easier to forgive. Now, we need God's grace in the department of forgiveness.

Let's not for one moment think that we don't. But it's so important. And then it says, lead us not into temptation. And this request very simply is for spiritual protection because we need the Lord's help. Because if we go out of his will and if we get involved in situations of temptation, we will fall. We need his help. We need his grace. Lord, lead me so that I won't fall into temptation.

[ 19 : 53 ] And then, I have to move very briefly here. Jesus, after giving a model for prayer, then he goes on to press home the next section here is the need for persistence in prayer of keeping going and going and going.

And he tells a little story about this man and a visitor came really late at night. Now, of course, bread was kind of the daily diet in these days.

And you couldn't get bread in the way that we can. There was no 24 hours shopping or open all hours or anything, any of these kind of stores. But bread was made sort of daily. And here is this man and all of a sudden he's in a predicament because we've got to remember hospitality was absolutely vital and important.

It was a disgrace to have somebody come and stay and not provide for them. And so this man is in a predicament and he runs to a neighbor who's a friend.

And he starts, you can see, banging on the door. And he says, please, please, could you get up and lend me three loaves because a friend of mine, he's come on a journey and I've got nothing, I've got nothing in the house, the cupboards, I'd be in.

[ 21 : 04 ] Please, will you get up and give? And the voice comes back and it's a voice. You can almost imagine it being one of these muffled, you know, when people speak in a whisper but in a

loud whisper.

And the man inside I doesn't want to have to get up because again we've got to remember the day that we're living in, or the day, sorry, that Jesus is talking about. Generally, there was only one bedroom in the house and everybody was in that room, normally speaking, unless people were in exceptional circumstances or were able to, wealthy, able to have more than one.

But normally, there was just one, one bedroom and they were all piled into this room. So, can you imagine and I'm sure many in here as parents will remember what it was like trying to get little ones to sleep and maybe tiptoeing out of the room after so many times trying to get someone to sleep. Well, here, they've all gotten to sleep. And if he has to get up, he's going to wake and everybody's going to probably clamber over the bed and wake in the whole household. It's not just getting up and you can almost hear him say, listen, I'm in bed and everybody's, you know, you can almost hear that kind of, that's the kind of voice that we're coming back with.

Sheer frustration. Oh, look, I've just got everybody quiet. I don't want to have to get up. But the man keeps knocking and knocking and knocking and in the end what Jesus tells us is that the man gets up and he gives him what he's asked for.

[ 22 : 40 ] Not because he's a friend, they're good friends. But on this occasion, he gave him not because he was a friend, but because of his, the word here we have is impudence.

It's actually a very hard word to translate. Very rarely used. And it's a, the word has the idea of boldness and shamelessness.

For somebody has no shame at all. It's got this idea of I don't care what you say. This is what I want. And I'm not going to take a no for an answer.

You know, that's why it's translated here as impudence. In Navy, I think it's importunity. Down in the margin, down in the bottom here, it's got persistence. But it's a persistence that is impudent.

A persistence that has no shame attached to it. You know how you can, you might be really asking for something and then you say, oh, no, I can't go. I cannot ask anymore.

[ 23 : 39 ] I think, I think I've overdone it. Well, it's not that kind of reaction. It's just, it doesn't matter. I'm still going to go for it. I am not taking no for an answer.

It doesn't matter what. And Jesus is actually saying to us, we've got to have that kind of boldness when we come to the Lord. It's quite extraordinary what Jesus is teaching us.

So he's showing to us it's vital that we are persistent in prayer. And let us remember that we are coming to our Father. And as somebody put it beautifully, we are already the children who are in the house with the Father.

Rather than coming to the house to the Father, we are already like that man who has his children already in bed, that we are already in the house with the Father.

And then, Jesus goes on and he gives us these well-known words about asking and will receive, seek and you'll find, and knock and it will be opened. And the language is, it's continuous.

[ 24 : 43 ] In other words, it's continuous knocking, continuous asking, continuous seeking. And that's the kind of prayer that Jesus wants us to operate in.

Come on, keep on praying, keep on asking. You don't need big words, you don't need to have an encyclopedic biblical knowledge.

You don't need to be the greatest theologian. You don't need to know everything that's in the Bible in order to pray. But make sure you do pray and make sure you keep on praying.

Keep on. Bible is full of examples of people like Abraham and people like Elijah and so on, all these people. And they knew the importance of perseverance in prayer, of persistence in prayer.

Don't give up. And may I say to anybody in here today, if you are in here today as an unbeliever, and when I say an unbeliever, at one level, I don't believe there's anybody in here who is a non-believer in the sense that you do not believe the gospel and you do not believe that Jesus Christ is Savior.

[ 25 : 59 ] I'm persuaded that everybody in here is a believer in that sense that you believe these things. But when we talk about a believer it is that you've gone beyond simply believing these things in your mind and you believe it in your heart.

In other words, you've come to say, well, Jesus is mine. I want this Lord. This Lord I hear about. This Lord I actually believe about.

I want to believe in Him. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. That this, that you will come and maybe you've been here, maybe you're here and you say, I have been seeking the

Lord for a long time.

Many a time I have asked the Lord to save me. Many a day under the preaching of the word I have said, Lord, save me. Many a time I have asked.

Many a time I have knocked. And as far as I can see nothing has happened. Well, as I said, the language is continuous.

[ 27 : 08 ] Keep on because there is a promise and it's very interesting. Jesus uses words that are quite interesting because He says in verse 9, and I tell you. Now, every word of Jesus is true, but it's like Jesus is putting added emphasis here.

And He's saying, look, what I'm telling, every word I tell you is true, but please take note of this. Keep on asking and you will receive.

Keep on seeking and you will find. Keep on knocking and a door will be opened to you.

That's what Jesus is saying. Don't give up. It's easy to give up. And that's why He's given us this story about the man who kept on and kept on and kept on.

You keep on. It's so easy to lose heart. And indeed, the reality of what we're praying for is the proof of it is in our keeping on asking.

[ 28 : 13 ] And again, that is true for those who have not come to faith in Jesus Christ and it's true for those who have already come to faith in Jesus Christ because our Lord will often test us in being slow to answer our prayer.

And then, just finally, in a word, Jesus concludes this coming back to the picture of the Father. And He's saying, if a child ask, and again, these were normal diets of the day, the fish and the egg, if a child was to ask, if a child comes and asks his, what father among you?

And again, it's the idea of the father. And He says, look, here are human fathers who, even with the best will in the world, they're sinners.

But their child comes and says, look, I want an egg, I want a fish. Do you think that a father in this world is saying, oh, I want to muck up his life.

I want to give him something that's dangerous. I want to get him a serpent. I want to get him a scorpion, something that's going to sting him and hurt him. I want to mess up his life. No father is going to think or act like that.

[ 29 : 27 ] That's what Jesus is saying. And if human fathers who are sinners want the best for their children and will provide for their children, how much more, the argument is from the lesser to the greater, how much more, Jesus is saying, will your heavenly father provide for you?

When this is spoken about, is it in Matthew's gospel, it's even wider than simply the spiritual benefits. Here it is give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

God will provide for all our needs, but particularly for our spiritual needs. The Lord will never, ever, sometimes, we've looked at that before, sometimes the Lord, when we pray, he will say his answer will be no.

Because just like earthly fathers will know sometimes that what their children want, it's not for their good, and will withhold it. other times the Lord says to us, wait, you're not ready, the time is not yet, I've got work to do in you, before you receive this.

And other times the Lord will say, yes, I'm going to give you. These things are true at a temporal level, at a spiritual level, the Lord will all, he will never refuse you anything that you ask that is for your soul's benefit and good.

[ 30 : 56 ] let us have bold prayers, let us never forget who God is, that he is the father in heaven, in heaven, and that his name is hallowed, he is set apart, he is a God of majesty and glory.

But, let us go with boldness, let us go with expectancy, let us go with urgency, and let us go with persistence. Are we asking the Lord God?

Let us pray. Oh, Lord, oh, God, we give thanks for the great encouragement that the word gives us to pray. Sometimes we have all kinds of strange ideas regarding prayer, but may we just have that natural instinct by grace that will cause us to go to the Lord, to cry to him, to call upon him, to seek him, to ask.

Lord, do in us and for us beyond what we could ask or think. Bless our homes and our families, bless our children, Lord, bless the old people, those who are going through difficult times in life, those whose bodies are weak, who feel tired, and who feel frail.

Oh, Lord, be with us all, do us all good, and guide us and take away our sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.