

HE TEACHES ON PRAYER

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 11:1-13

CONTEXT

Having called twelve disciples to follow Him, Jesus trained these men in His ways. He performed miracles in their presence, taught crowds in their hearing, and explained His parables to them while leaving others pondering their meaning. Jesus even empowered His disciples and some others to cast out demons and to heal the sick as He sent them out to prepare His way. The disciples enjoyed their success in the field, but after returning to Jesus, they asked Him for one thing—to teach them how to pray.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus teaches us how to pray because He wants to give us good gifts.

As you examine Luke 11:1-13:

- Recognize that we should pray for God's kingdom, true needs, forgiveness, and protection against temptation.
- Rejoice that when we ask God for good gifts of the kingdom according to His will, He will gladly give them to us.



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches About and Heals
on the Sabbath (Luke 6:1-11)

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son
from the Dead (Luke 7:11-17)

SESSION STUDY: Jesus Teaches
About Prayer (Luke 11:1-13)

Jesus Delivers His Sermon
on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49)

Jesus Forgives a Sinful Woman
(Luke 7:36-50)

Jesus Teaches About Worry
(Luke 12:12-34)

Daily Readings

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| ☐ Day 1: Luke 9:1-27 | ☐ Day 4: Luke 10:25-42 |
| ☐ Day 2: Luke 9:28-62 | ☐ Day 5: Luke 11:1-13 |
| ☐ Day 3: Luke 10:1-24 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 138 |



Scan this QR code to access
this session's Scripture passages.

JESUS TAUGHT US HOW TO PRAY FOR KINGDOM PURPOSES (LUKE 11:1-4).

Number the parts of Jesus's prayer in order.

1 He was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples."

2 He said to them, "Whenever you pray, say, Father, your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. **3** Give us each day our daily bread. **4** And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone in debt to us. And do not bring us into temptation."

Jesus's disciples approached Him with a request: "Lord, teach us to pray" (v. 1). This revealed that they believed Jesus had an intimate relationship with the Father, and they desired to learn how to come to God like Jesus did. Jesus responded by providing them an example to follow.

Jesus began the prayer with "Father, your name be honored as holy" (v. 2). He taught the disciples to call God by the name "Father" to demonstrate that they too were able to approach God in a relational way as a child approaches his dad. While Jesus emphasized the personal nature of prayer, He also emphasized God's holiness. This prayer showed the disciples how their hearts ought to be oriented toward God—with both familial love and humble reverence.

WORD STUDY

HOLY: Holiness means to be set apart, pure, and perfect. God is completely holy. He cannot sin, and His righteous response to sin is wrath. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus emphasized that before asking for anything, our hearts should recognize God's holiness and our dependence on His mercy.

How should addressing God as Father and holy affect the way we approach God in prayer?

Next, Jesus taught them to pray, "Your kingdom come," which is both a request and a declaration. As a declaration, this phrase states that God's kingdom will certainly come. It is also a request that God would bring justice, peace, and righteousness to this broken world while we await His kingdom's arrival.

LEADER NOTE: Often prayer can be more about personal requests and needs than about God-focused priorities. While God absolutely invites His children to bring their cares to Him, we also must seek and understand God's will. God's plan for the world has existed from the beginning of time, and our prayers ought to be in line with God's desires (Ps. 37:4). Praying for God's kingdom to come changes the way we view our own requests. Prayer shapes priorities and aligns our hearts with God's purposes.

Jesus's example prayer then turned to daily needs: "Give us each day our daily bread" (Luke 11:3). The disciples were to depend upon God for their physical sustenance and provision, just as Israel had to during their forty-year journey in the wilderness.

How does asking for "daily bread" challenge the way you think about dependence, provision, and contentment?

Jesus then directed the prayer toward reconciliation (v. 4). Forgiveness is a gift from God and should also be extended to others in light of God's mercy toward us. And finally, the request to protect us from temptation shows that we need God's protection and guidance as we live in this fallen, sinful world. Jesus's prayer continues to serve as a framework for how we should approach God in prayer.

LEADER NOTE: Jesus linked receiving God's forgiveness with extending forgiveness to others. Christians want to receive forgiveness, but we often harden our hearts when someone hurts us. God's forgiveness shapes our ability to forgive. Since God graciously forgives us of all our sins, we have no reason not to forgive someone who sins against us. Forgiving others shows others what God is like and invites them to know God as the merciful Father He is.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus's life was full of prayer and gives us an example to follow in praying for the right things because He desires to bestow on us the good gifts of God. Jesus's best gift is salvation that He gives us freely when we trust in Him.

JESUS TELLS US TO PRAY BECAUSE GOD WANTS TO GIVE US GOOD GIFTS (LUKE 11:5-13).

Underline the response of the friend, and circle the response of our heavenly Father.

5 He also said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him at midnight and says to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, **6** because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I don’t have anything to offer him.’ **7** Then he will answer from inside and say, ‘Don’t bother me! The door is already locked, and my children and I have gone to bed. I can’t get up to give you anything.’ **8** I tell you, even though he won’t get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his friend’s shameless 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, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. **11** What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish? **12** Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? **13** If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”

Jesus continued His teaching on prayer with two illustrations that painted a vivid image of God’s generosity through prayer. Jesus began by asking His audience to imagine a man going to a friend’s house in the middle of the night to ask for provisions for an unexpected guest. Understandably, the friend wouldn’t want to get out of bed. But because of the man’s “shameless boldness” (v. 8), the friend would provide all that was requested.

This story contrasts human reluctance with God’s willingness. Jesus was not implying the disciples needed to wear down God or annoy Him until He responded. Rather, Jesus was showing that if we know we can go ask for help from a friend in the middle of the night, then we certainly can have boldness to go before our loving Father and ask for His help. For those who approach the throne of God with boldness and faith, God will happily supply all that is needed.

LEADER NOTE: Verses 9-10 can sometimes be misunderstood or misconstrued, especially by proponents of the prosperity gospel. Some believe these verses mean you can come to God with a list of what you want and He will give you whatever you ask for. It is important to understand the context of these verses—the Lord’s Prayer. This guide for believers reveals what is aligned with God’s will, what God is willing and ready to answer.

What can we learn about God's character by contrast with the reluctant friend in Jesus's parable?

Jesus then shared a second illustration. He asked the disciples what human fathers are like. The rhetorical questions Jesus asked paint an exaggerated but helpful picture. No decent human father would give his children something that would harm them if they asked for food. Human fathers know how to give good and even basic gifts to their children. But God the Father cares for His children abundantly more because He is holy and good.

LEADER NOTE: When comparing human fathers to our heavenly Father, Jesus referred to our sinful state when He stated, "you then, who are evil" (v. 13). While sin warps and distorts our desires, even sinners, for the most part, know they must love and care for their children and provide for them. Even if sinful parents do not provide loving care for their children, they know they should. Comparing fallen humanity with God's goodness and holiness, Jesus called the disciples to think about how much more, abundantly more, God must care for His children.

Not only is God able and willing to provide for physical needs, He gives the free and ultimate gift of the Holy Spirit to those who trust in His Son. The Spirit provides all that is needed for a godly life. The children of God can boldly approach God with their prayers because they know God is loving, good, and He delights in giving to His children.

Why should we view the Holy Spirit as chief among God's good gifts to us?

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

PRAYER AND PROVIDENCE: If God is in control and already knows the future, why pray? The Bible teaches that although God has a plan for this world that He promises to fulfill, prayer is often the means God uses to accomplish His divine purpose. Even though God knows the end result, the means that lead to that end result will be accomplished through prayer. In this sense, it is true that "prayer changes things," and it is also true that God uses prayer to change our hearts so that our will comes into conformity with His.



Notes

ARRIVAL

ENGAGE: As your group arrives, ask: “When you were a child, what kinds of things did you most often ask your parents for? Did they always give you what you wanted or sometimes what you really needed?”

EXPLAIN: We all know what it feels like to ask for something. Sometimes we asked for things that were not good for us, and our parents, or caregivers, wisely gave us something better. Other times we received exactly what we requested, and it brought joy. Our asking showed our dependence on them. Prayer works in a similar way, revealing both our neediness and our trust in God as Father. Jesus taught us not just to pray but to pray in a way that aligns our desires with God's purposes.

CONTEXT

SAY: *(Pass out copies of Pacl’ Item 12: Jesus Prayed to help set the stage for Jesus’s example of prayer.)* Luke often depicted Jesus in prayer because Jesus was a man of prayer—at His baptism (3:21); before choosing the twelve disciples (6:12); before Peter’s confession of His identity as the Messiah (9:18); and at His transfiguration (9:29). Prayer was central to Jesus’s life and ministry. In Luke 11, the disciples, observing this pattern, asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. His answer was a model and a guide that we often call the Lord’s Prayer.

RECAP

IDENTIFY: Call for the group to rehearse the steps of the Lord's Prayer as they reviewed it during their personal preparation this week. Display **Pac1/ Item 13: Lord, Teach Us to Pray**, and call attention to the Model Prayer if any sections of the prayer need to be filled in. As needed, recap the following: Prayer begins with God, His name, and His kingdom—God is our priority—and then turns to our daily needs, forgiveness, and protection. Emphasize that prayer is not about bending God's will to ours but about bringing our lives into conformity with His purposes. Prayer to our heavenly Father is where human dependence meets divine generosity.

TRANSITION: Today we will review Jesus's teaching on prayer and seek to derive some principles to guide our own practice of prayer to God.



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Notes

ANALYZE: After a few moments, call on individuals to share insights from this passage. As needed for prompts or clarification, ask: “What might it mean for us to approach God with ‘shameless boldness’? // With His statements on ‘Ask,’ ‘Seek,’ and ‘Knock,” is Jesus giving us a blank check when it comes to prayer? Why or why not? // What does it mean for believers to ask in prayer for the Holy Spirit? Why should we view the Holy Spirit as one of God’s greatest gifts to us?”

DISCUSS: How do the insights from Jesus’s teaching on prayer relate to the parts of His model prayer?

DEBRIEF

How does your current practice of prayer compare to the way Jesus taught His disciples to pray?

How can you grow in your prayer life?

SUMMARIZE

Jesus taught us to pray to the Father, who is holy, generous, and near. The Father not only provides for our needs but gives us the greatest gift of all—His Spirit. God is good and He knows how to give the best gifts to His children, so prayer isn’t about changing God’s mind but about being changed as we trust His goodness. Prayer reveals what we believe about God. If we think He is distant, we will pray hesitantly. If we believe He is our heavenly Father, we will come to Him boldly, humbly, and expectantly.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 119). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Hands** section in this week’s study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



HEAD: Understanding our holy heavenly Father is essential in our approach to prayer. Knowing who God is will change how we communicate with Him. If He is only a giving Father, we may not take sin seriously. If He is only holy, we may be afraid to come to Him with all our needs. Yet because He is both, we can approach Him with full confidence in His character.

What are some truths about God’s character that can give you more confidence to come to Him in prayer?



HEART: God desires to give His children good gifts. Yet the desires of our hearts can sometimes cause us to be dissatisfied with what God gives us. Praying for good gifts such as marriage, children, financial security, or a good job are not evil prayers, but when we ask God for these things, we must come

to Him trusting that He has our best in mind. Even if we do not get exactly what we want, God will never give us a snake if we ask for a fish.

What desires in your heart do you need to align with God's will?



HANDS: When we recognize how graciously and greatly we are forgiven by God, we can offer the same forgiveness to those who may have sinned against us. In the same way, because God is generous with us and gives good gifts, we also can be generous with others in need. Generosity is not always giving money to someone, but it can be giving of your time, your prayer, your encouragement, and even your forgiveness.

What are some ways you will practice forgiveness and generosity toward others for God's honor?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this session.

- This week, begin each prayer by praising God for who He is before asking for anything. Meditate on God's goodness and holiness.
- Ask God specifically for the Spirit's work in your life, in convicting, guiding, and empowering you to obey Him and spread His gospel.
- Keep a written list of prayers and note where you see God's faithful provision. Share with someone how you have seen God answer your heartfelt prayers.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 119 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray Psalm 138:1-3 with your group. Thank God for His faithfulness and love for His people and that He hears and answers the prayers of His people.

Notes

