

What Jesus Taught About Prayer



“And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.” Luke 11:9 NLT

- How do you usually pray - do you have a set time & place OR are you more spontaneous?
- When was there a time when you prayed about something and it seemed to you that God did not answer your prayer?

One of the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). All their lives they had seen people pray. Perhaps, they had only seen lifeless ritualistic praying. When Jesus prayed, there was something powerful, dynamic, real, alive.

Jesus modeled prayer in front of the disciples (see Lk. 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28-29; 11:1), but **delayed** teaching them about it. Maybe he was waiting until they saw the difference between **ritualistic heartless-prayer** and **real heart-driven prayer**. Jesus delayed until their hearts were **ripe!** Is your heart ripe?

Once they made the request, Jesus immediately began to teach his disciples to pray. He started by giving them a *pattern* to follow (Luke 11:2-4). Next, he taught them about an essential prayer *principle* to follow (Luke 11:5-13) - praying with **persistence**. There is no power in prayer without persistency in prayer. We are *not* to make a request and then drop it. We are to keep praying persistently until God answers *yes, no, or wait*.

The Central Lesson: Persistency in prayer is essential to power in prayer.

1. The **PATTERN** of Prayer (11:1-4).

- (1) **Adoration of God.** *“Father, may your name be kept holy.”* (v.2)
- (2) **Advancement of God’s Kingdom & the Gospel** *“May your Kingdom come soon.”* (v.2)
- (3) **Submission to the will of God** *“... May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven....”* (Matthew 6:10)
- (4) **Needs** *“Give us each day the food we need,”* (v.3)
- (5) **Forgiveness and Forgiving** *“and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.”* (v.4)
- (6) **Victory Over Temptation & the Devil** *“And don’t let us yield to temptation.”* (v.4)

2. The **PICTURE** of Persistency in Prayer (11:5-8).

*“But I tell you this—though he won’t do it for friendship’s sake, if you **keep knocking long enough**, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your **shameless** [bold] **persistence**.”* (v.8)

Jesus used the illustration of a man persistently knocking on the door of a friend at night for needed bread to feed guests from out of town. The main point is

clear: **If persistence paid off by the man beating on the door of a reluctant friend, how much more would persistence result in blessing when we persistently pray to a loving heavenly Father?**

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), once said: **“prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness.”** God often delays His answer to prayer because He uses the *process* of seeking Him to accomplish important spiritual growth and development in our hearts. God is anxious to answer our prayer - but only when it is *best* for us. From His loving heart, God gets spiritual “mileage” from our circumstances and the process of seeking Him.

3. The **PRINCIPLE** of Persistency in Prayer (11:9-10).

*“9 ‘And so I tell you, **keep on asking**, and you will receive what you ask for. **Keep on seeking**, and you will find. **Keep on knocking**, and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks [persistently], receives. Everyone who seeks [persistently], finds. And to everyone who knocks [persistently], the door will be opened.”*

The principle of *persistency* is seen in the NT Greek grammar in verses 9-10. Unfortunately it is not expressed in most English translations. The more literal meaning is: *“keep on asking... keep on seeking... keep on knocking...”* or: *“ask persistently... seek persistently... knock persistently...”* Bible teacher, Warren Wiersbe explains: *“In other words, don’t come to God only in the midnight emergencies, but keep in constant communion with your Father. Jesus called this ‘abiding’ (John 15:1ff.), and Paul exhorted, ‘Pray without ceasing’ (1 Thess. 5:17). As we pray, God will either answer or show us why He cannot answer.”* *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*, p.173.

4. The **PASSION** of God in Answering Prayer - He loves us and gives only what is best for us (11:11-13).

“11 ‘You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? 12 Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! 13 So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”

Jesus used a second illustration of a father caring for the needs of his son to show how much the heavenly Father loves and cares for His children. The care of the heavenly Father is far greater than that of an earthly father. **Just as an earthly father wants only what is best for his son, even more so, the heavenly Father gives only what is best for us, not what would harm us.** When God says “no” to our prayers, it is for our protection, well-being, or way of providing something better. Do you trust God’s love? Do you believe His “no” is for your best, even when it does not make sense to you?

The expression *“...give the Holy Spirit to those who ask...”* (v.13) was made by Jesus BEFORE Pentecost in Acts 2. The Holy Spirit did not automatically indwell every child of God before Pentecost. Believers today do not need to pray for the Holy Spirit. After Acts 2, every Christian HAS the indwelling of Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:9). However, it is proper to pray for the “filling” of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), and to pray for our needs (Philippians 4:19).

Conclusion

Persistency in prayer is essential to power in prayer.

- ▶ Receive Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
- ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday’s study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.