

## **“Lord, Teach Us to Pray”**

**Luke 11:1-13.** Prayer is supposed to be a normal and natural outreach of the child of God to their heavenly Father. But if we comprehend the magnitude of the fact that we are speaking directly to the *Creator* of the universe, the *Originator* and *Sustainer* of all things, it can become a somewhat daunting proposition. As with a lot of things, there are two extremes manifested in our petitions to the Father. We tend to either: forget the reverence and respect that should always be given God Almighty, and therefore endeavor to speak to Him in the same way we would our buddy Joe next door- *i.e. too casually*, cp. v.2 with Ex.3:5; or, we forget the access that Jesus bought for us, and the *boldness* it permits us to address the Almighty as “*Our Father*,” cf. Eph.3:12 and Heb.4:15-16. Admittedly, such is a delicate, but important, balance. Apparently, even His disciples struggled with some of these issues too, cf. v.1. On several occasions they had witnessed the Lord praying to the Father, and wanted to likewise be able to address their concerns to Him. Surely we can learn much from His answer to their request also.

### **I. Jesus taught the disciples about the proper *form* of prayer, vv.2-4**

By *form*, it is not meant that prayer should be rote (memorized and repeated), but rather that Jesus gave as a proper guideline or framework around which prayer can be constructed. Please notice, then, the following....

#### **A. Proper Prayer recognizes and acknowledges *Who God Is*, as well as *Who We Are*.**

***Our Father*** dictates a relationship that is as much dependant upon us (if not more so in this regards) than it is upon Him. That is, we had better be doing *our* part to be *His children* if we presume to so address Him as “*our Father*” and expect a hearing upon that basis, cf. 1Pet.1:17; 3:12. Prayer is a privilege granted to children of the Father, Rom.8:14-17; Gal.3:26.

***Who is in Heaven*** indicates a power and perspective foreign to everything we see, know, and experience on this side of eternity, cp. Isa.55:8-9 with 2Cor.12:2-4. We are *mortal* while He is *immortal*. We are *of the earth below* and He is *from above*, cp. Gen.2:7 and John 8:23. We should always, but perhaps especially in prayer, recognize these relative positions and what they imply!

***Hallowed be Your Name***. We pray to the God whose Name is above all names, cf. Ps.111:9; 1Tim.6:13-16. *Hallow(ed)* refers to that which is respected greatly; that which is *holy, consecrated, sacred, and revered*. It is with kind of respect and devotion that we should approach call upon the name of the Father in prayer.

#### **B. Proper Prayer includes *Appropriate Requests*- those in keeping with God’s will.**

***Thy kingdom come*** is in other places linked with “*Thy will be done*,” cf. Matt.6:10. Although here in Luke’s record, the second phrase, and the third one “*on earth as it is in heaven*,” is omitted, the sentiment is the same. It is a *deference* and *subjugation* of will by the petitioner to the will of God who is being petitioned. In other words, “If I, from my ignorance or limited perspective, ask for something which is contrary to Your will, I prefer and defer to Your will.” cf. Matt.6:8,32. In essence, it is a *joining together in deference* our will with the will of God, even if we are not yet capable of perceiving His will.

***Give us this day our daily bread*** recognizes the complete dependence we have upon God even for the barest of essentials, Acts 14:17; Jas.1:17. It is the attitude of heart that allows us to petition God for physical necessities rather than luxuries. It is also the attitude of heart, if truly possessed, which would enable us to be content with such, cf. 1Tim.6:8. This does not mean that we are only allowed to ask for the barest of

essentials, for vv.5,11 (as well vv.9-10) indicate otherwise. Still yet, we would do well to consider that within this “model” prayer, this is the only *physical* request included, and that all others are *spiritual* in nature. Think about your prayers- do *physical* or *spiritual* requests make up the bulk of them?

***And forgive us our sins*** . . . not only pleads for and understands that *justification* comes from God and not from us, it also recognizes that to receive *mercy* and *pardon* from the Father, we must be willing to dispense the same to our fellowman, cf. Jas.2:13 and Matt.6:14-15. Jesus well illustrated this point with the parable of the *unmerciful slave* in Matt.18:22-35. If we would be *with* God in heaven, we must be *like* God while upon the earth- in our *prayers* and *interaction with others*.

***And lead us not into temptation*** provides some difficulty of understanding when compared to James 1:13, which seems to negate the need for this particular request. What must be understood is that although God does not *tempt* us, He does place upon us difficult positive commands which, when coupled together with dire circumstances, may allow temptation to germinate within us and sprout forth into full-grown sin. The point of the request then is to not allow us to be placed *over our heads* in the waters of temptation. This is in complete accordance with the will of God for He has promised the same, 1Cor.10:12-13. Additionally, 2Peter 2:4-9 is an excellent commentary upon exactly how it is that God “*rescue(s) the godly from temptation*”. In each of the cases presented as examples in that text, God *rescued them* by presenting them with *truth* and *choice*. That is, they were given ability to be rescued through the medium of the saving power of truth and the *opportunity* to obey it. Far from circumventing their own choice and the exercise of it, this method of *rescue* requires it!

### C. Proper Prayer recognizes the importance of *Persistence* and *Propriety*.

***A friend in need at midnight, vv.5-8.*** The friendship/fellowship between the man in need and the man in the house asleep with his family was not enough to cause him to get up and help. Yet, the persistence of the needy fellow achieved the assistance he desired. The point is found in vv.9-10. This is not “Nagging 101,” but is an admonition *be persistent in prayer*, and do not *lose heart* in making your requests, cf. Luke 18:1-8.

***A son who asks for a fish, or an egg, vv.11-12.*** Because of the relationship sustained between the two, a *Father* certainly would not answer the request of his son for something to eat (that is something of necessity and to his benefit) with something that would be to his harm or destruction. The point? We are evil and God is good. As such, He knows, much better than we, how to give good and beneficial gifts to us, v.13; Jas.1:17. We may not even know what we *need*, let alone how to properly express those *desires* of our hearts, but God has provided for this inadequacy as well, Rom.8:26-27.

## II. Conclusion

Proper prayer is that which takes into account the proprieties of *Form*, *Request*, *Frequency/Persistence*, and *Propriety*. If we “*Pray, then, in this way*” (Matt.6:9a), then....

Jesus said, “*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.*” vv.9-10

Are you *Asking*, *Seeking*, and *Knocking*? If not, why not?