

Luke Lesson 15—Luke 11:1-36

Jesus and Prayer



Memorize the TRUTH!

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

Luke 11:9

DAY 1: LUKE 11:1-4—Teach Us to Pray

1. By what name did Jesus say we may address God in our prayers? What would this have meant to the disciples? What does this mean for you?
2. What might be some examples of how we can make God’s name holy or “hallowed”? List as many possibilities as you can think of.
3. What do you think might be included in asking God to cause His kingdom to come?
4. What parts of Jesus’ prayer address people’s needs?



Learn the TRUTH!

This week, pray Jesus’ prayer—verses 2-4—each day. Don’t merely recite it. Pause often and personalize it. Worship God as holy. Come to Him as Father. Confess your sins and receive His forgiveness. Expect Him to provide for your needs. Ask for His deliverance and protection as temptation and danger come your way. Listen for Him to speak to you. Plan to discuss your experience with your small group.

DAY 2: LUKE 11:5-10—Persistence in Prayer

5. Why did the man in Jesus’ story go to his friend’s house at midnight? Do you think it was easy or difficult for him to do this? Explain.
6. Do you think the man thought his friend would help him? Why or why not?
7. What quality did Jesus affirm in the man who needed bread? How did Jesus connect His story to prayer?

DAY 3: LUKE 11:11-13—Good Gifts from God

8. What did Jesus say even “*evil*” (sinful, human) fathers know how to do?

9. Why do you think the Holy Spirit is the best gift of all?

10. The disciples originally asked Jesus for help in prayer. How do you think Jesus' words about the Holy Spirit relate to prayer? (For help, see Romans 8:26-27.)

DAY 4: LUKE 11:14-28—Jesus' Source of Power

11. When people accused Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebul's power, how did He respond? Why was this accusation irrational?

12. According to verse 20, what was the true source of Jesus' power to cast out demons?

13. What is the difference between hearing and obeying? What are some blessings that come from both hearing and obeying God's Word?

DAY 5: LUKE 11:29-36—Something Greater

14. Why did Jesus say that the queen of the South and the men of Nineveh would condemn "*this generation*"?

15. How do you think this rebuke would have affected Jesus' listeners?

16. What are some ways we can hide the "*light*" God gives us? What are some ways we can demonstrate that God's light is shining brightly in our hearts?



Apply the TRUTH!

Jesus encourages us to be persistent in our prayers even when God does not answer immediately. Is there something you used to pray about that you have given up on because the answer hasn't come yet? Perhaps God hasn't said "No." Perhaps He is simply asking you to wait and trust His love for you. We don't persist in prayer as an attempt to change God's mind. We persist so God can guide us into His perfect will. Keep on asking, seeking, and knocking. Talk to Him about your request. Does your request align with what Scripture says? Then, unless God has specifically told you "No," with a humble and submissive heart, resume your praying. Plan to talk about this with your small group.

DAY 6: Participate in Class

Lesson 15 Commentary

Jesus and Prayer

Luke 11:1-36

Luke 11 is the only place in the Bible that records someone asking for instruction on prayer. Most of us long for a deeper prayer life. We can learn a lot about talking with God by noticing Jesus' response to this request.

A Model Prayer

When Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray, He started by offering a model prayer. We refer to this as "The Lord's Prayer." (Matthew 6:9-13 offers a slightly longer version of it.) In only a few words, Jesus gave us a basic outline we can use to talk to God about everything that matters. He probably never intended for us just to recite the prayer, word for word. Instead, it is likely that Jesus meant for us to take the prayer's main ideas and personalize and expand them according to what is on our hearts on any particular day.

The first part of the prayer focuses on God. Jesus invites us to relate to God as our Father. It is a privilege to get to call God Most High our Father. He loves us and welcomes us into close relationship with Him as sons and daughters. Next, we praise our Father for His holiness. When we say "*hallowed be Your name,*" we can pause to mention God's different attributes that cause us to praise and revere Him as holy. We can praise Him for His power, mercy, sovereignty, faithfulness, justice, love, and much more. Our worship then naturally leads to asking Him to send His kingdom to earth. For example, we can ask Him to help us live by the values of His kingdom such as love, righteousness, justice, forgiveness, mercy, and peace.

After this, we can ask God for our "*daily bread*"—the things we need every day to live our lives. We can ask Him for basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter. We can also ask Him for other things we need for life and for working in His kingdom such as health, ministry partners, employment, peaceful government, and so on.

Following this, Jesus encourages us to pray for our spiritual needs—for forgiveness from sin and the ability to forgive others. Maintaining right relationships with God and with others must be a high priority. Daily prayer for forgiveness of our own sins and daily forgiveness of others keeps us spiritually strong and healthy.

Finally, Jesus encourages us to pray for spiritual protection. The word "*temptation*" means *an enticement to sin*. It can also mean a "*trial*" or "*test*." Jesus invites us to ask God to help us with both of these. He may choose to spare us from trouble. Or, He can make us strong to refuse sin and stand firm in times of hardship.

Persistent Prayer

Continuing His teaching on prayer, Jesus told a story about a man and his friend. Late one night, the man was surprised by an unexpected guest. It would have been rude not to offer him hospitality. However, the host had no bread. So, even though it was midnight, he went to a friend for help. And he received what he needed.



Think about the confidence God desires from us when we pray. This man's request was bold. Going to his friend for help at that late hour probably meant waking the entire household. But he knew his friend would not deny him. Because of his bold persistence, the friend ultimately gave him what he needed. Obviously, God is greater than our human friends. Friends may get irritable. They may feel inconvenienced by our requests. But God is always available to us. He always cares about our needs. Anytime of the day or night, He wants to hear from His children. So ask! Seek! Knock!

Jesus concluded His teaching on prayer by asking His listeners a question. If their children asked them for food, would they give them snakes or scorpions instead? Of course they wouldn't! Then Jesus made His point. "*If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*" Even sinful human fathers know how to give their children good gifts, Jesus was saying. God is much greater than human parents. He always answers our requests with good gifts that are according to His perfect will. And the greatest gift of all is the Holy Spirit!

The Holy Spirit is the ultimate help we need to pray. He will teach us everything we need to know in order to pray effectively and enjoy rich conversation with God.

Jesus' Source of Power

Jesus cast a demon out of a mute man, and the onlookers responded with wonder. They “*marveled*” at Jesus’ display of divine power. Some people said that Jesus was using Satan’s power to cast out demons. Others wanted a sign from heaven to prove His identity. Jesus knew what these questioners were thinking. So He responded to their doubts with a logical argument: a house or kingdom is divided against itself inevitably falls to ruin. Why would Satan want to empower Jesus to defeat his own demonic forces? “*If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?*” Jesus asked. Some of the Pharisees’ followers claimed to exorcise demons. If some people, like Jesus, were casting out demons, then Jesus’ accusers were saying that their own followers did Satan’s work as well. Jesus emphasized the divine source of His power, far greater than any power Satan possesses: “*If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*”

Satan brings deception, destruction, and death. Jesus brings truth, redemption, and life. People must choose to either follow Jesus or reject Him. Those who are not with Him are against Him. Jesus illustrated this point with a parable. An evil spirit had been banished from a house. The rooms were carefully cleaned, swept, and “*put in order.*” But the space was left empty. So the unclean spirit returned, bringing seven other wicked spirits with it. Ultimately, this person’s bondage became even worse than before.



Think about the importance of being filled. Jesus said it’s not enough to simply empty our lives of evil. People who want to live in lasting freedom from evil must also invite God’s Holy Spirit to make His home in their hearts. A changed life that lacks God’s presence is open to reoccupation by even greater evil. But people who belong to Jesus are temples for His Holy Spirit to inhabit (1 Corinthians 6:19). He lives in us and gives us power to resist Satan’s deceptions. When He reigns in our lives, His presence drives away sin and evil.

Something Greater

A woman in the crowd declared that Mary had received God’s favor because she had given birth to Jesus. Jesus responded to her by saying that people experience the truest blessing when they hear God’s Word and keep it. Belonging to God as His sons and daughters—which we demonstrate by our faith in Jesus and by following His good ways—is a greater privilege than being biologically related to Jesus.

Jesus called the crowd “*an evil generation.*” Although they were seeking a heavenly sign, they would receive only “*the sign of Jonah.*” Jesus’ listeners knew of Jonah, an ancient prophet God called to preach repentance to the wicked Ninevites. They had heard about the Queen of Sheba, who had traveled from “*the ends of the earth*” to hear the wisdom God had given King Solomon. But Jesus declared that He was far greater than the prophet Jonah or the wise King Solomon. The mighty “*Son of Man*” Himself was standing before them! No doubt Jesus’ listeners were surprised when He compared them with the pagan people of Nineveh. But the Ninevites had repented when they heard God’s truth. Jesus’ listeners, by contrast, refused to believe in Him.

As He had done earlier (Luke 8:16-18), Jesus again emphasized how much we need God’s light. He urged His followers to be sure that the light in their eyes did not turn into darkness. God is light, and His light shows us truth. When we see things the way that God sees them, our lives are changed. When our perspective is aligned with God’s, we are able to recognize Satan’s deception and live in God’s light and truth.



Personalize the TRUTH!

Our beliefs about God’s character and who God is affect the way we approach Him. What do you believe about God? Do you see Him as a good and loving Father? Do you feel welcome and confident to talk to Him about your joys, concerns, and requests? Are you able to trust that He has your best interests at heart? Spend some time talking to God about this. Ask Him to reveal to you any lies that have obscured the truth of His love and value for you. Ask Him to heal places in your heart where you struggle to trust that He is wise and good. Find joy in knowing that He delights in you.