

How and Why to Pray

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[0 : 0 0] to them, which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey and I have nothing to set before him.

And he will answer from within, do not bother me. The door is now shut and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything. I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence, he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

And I tell you, ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks, receives. And the one who seeks, finds. And to the one who knocks, it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent?

Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 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?

[1 : 2 1] This is God's authoritative word. I have never in my life met a Christian who is stagnant, stuck, perhaps even backsliding and beset with many sins, that spends much time in prayer.

Other pastors have made the same observation. 19th century Anglican pastor J.C. Ryle puts it this way.

What is the reason that some believers are so much brighter and holier than others? I believe the difference in 19 cases out of 20 arises from different habits about private prayer.

I believe that those who are not eminently holy pray little. And those who are eminently holy pray much. Most believers theoretically acknowledge the importance of prayer, but functionally we disavow its importance by the lack of prayer.

Many of us know how prayer works, but we don't quite believe that it really works. Why should we pray? How should we pray? And Jesus teaches us in this passage that we should pray boldly to God because he is our heavenly father who is gracious to answer.

[2 : 4 3] And we'll look at that in two parts. First, how we should pray in verses 1 to 4 and why we should pray in verses 5 to 13. Chapter 11 begins with these words, Now Jesus was praying in a certain place.

More than any other gospel writer, Luke emphasizes the importance of prayer as we've seen over and over again throughout this book. In this gospel, every time before something happens that's very important, Jesus is always seen praying.

After prayer, it was after prayer that Jesus was baptized and the Spirit descended on him, anointed him, and the voice of God the Father spoke, affirming him as God's beloved son.

In Luke chapter 3. After praying all night, it says Jesus chose his 12 disciples who will become the apostles of the church, Luke chapter 6. After he prayed, Peter made the breakthrough confession that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ of God.

And after prayer, Jesus was transfigured on the mountain with the dazzling glory of his true sonship of God. And then it's after prayer, here he says again, Jesus was praying in a certain place.

[3 : 52] That's a signal to us as we're reading this that something significant is about to happen. And what follows is Jesus' teaching of his disciples on how to pray and why they should pray.

In Luke 10, if you recall, Jesus sent out 72 of his disciples and they proclaimed the kingdom of God and they healed the sick. They returned triumphantly to Jesus saying, even the demons are subject to us in your name.

But even these disciples who have experienced already so much of God's power and so much of God's authority, even after they have experienced so much ministerial success, they see in Jesus something that they still lack.

They see in Jesus' habit of prayer something that they still must learn. They see that Jesus' authority, his power, his character, his love flow from his communion with God in prayer.

And so in verse 1, they ask Jesus, they wait till he's finished. And when Jesus finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples.

[5 : 10] This is the only place in the Gospels where the disciples make such a direct request of Jesus to teach them something. They have been speaking to men throughout their ministry, but they want to now learn to speak to God as Jesus did.

And so Jesus responds to them in verse 2, and he said to them, when you pray, say. So that phrase, when you pray, means when we pray, this is how we should pray.

Jesus is setting the course, the direction for all of our future prayers. And that's why churches for 2,000 years have used this prayer, the Lord's Prayer, as a part of their worship service and to recite it during their worship service.

And it's not wrong to use the Lord's Prayer in that way. But I do want to say this. We need to be careful that praying the Lord's Prayer does not become this mindless rote activity.

In Matthew 15a, Jesus denounces the Pharisees by quoting Isaiah, this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. God will not be fooled by empty lip service.

[6 : 22] And likewise, he will not listen to prayers that have form but no substance. Prayers that have a lot of words but no heart, no faith. And by definition, rote learning is based on repetition, right?

It's not based on comprehension necessarily. You can repeat something by rote without giving any thought at all to what you are saying and to what its meaning is. But being able to rattle off a prayer from memory is not enough.

We need to be able to understand it and believe it. And we can see that in the fact that God's given us two different versions of the Lord's Prayer. One here in Luke chapter 11 and another one in Matthew 6.

There are overlaps and the themes are very consistent and similar, but they're not identical in their wording. This shows us that what's critical is not the exact words you say here, but the themes, the subject matter, how we are to approach God.

And so this Lord's Prayer is not kind of a magical formula or an incantation that you utter word for word in order to be effective. Jesus is not teaching us what exactly to say every time we pray, but he's teaching us how to pray.

[7 : 33] This is the pattern, a model that we are to follow. So let's look at the prayer itself in verses two to four. It has a very simple structure. It begins with an address of God, Father, followed by two second person declarations that pertain to God.

Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. And then those declarations, those requests are then followed by three first person plural supplications that pertain to us as God's people.

Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins. For we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us and lead us not into temptation.

Notice that there isn't a single I in this prayer. This doesn't mean that we are not allowed to pray for ourselves as individuals, but it does highlight the importance of praying to God as a community.

Even when we pray alone in our prayer closets, we speak to God as members of the family of God. Whenever we address God as Father, we also remember the fact that by virtue of our union with God, union with Christ, and adoption into God the Father's family, we are united also to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

[8 : 46] So our prayers are always, have a communal nature. And that's the first feature of this prayer. We have to address God as Father. A Father is, of course, an authority figure.

So there should be an appropriate reverence for God as we approach Him in prayer. But a Father, the word is also an endearing term. It's a relational term. So there's a sense of intimacy that comes with this as well.

And this, of course, implies that if you do not have God as your Father, then you can't pray to Him and address Him as your Father.

Because in a general sense, yes, it's true that all people, Christians and non-Christians, are offspring of God. In the sense that we've all been created by Him.

So Paul uses it, talks about it in that sense in Acts 17, when he's addressing non-Christians, he says, we are indeed His offspring. But there is a special sense in which only Christians, those who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord, are the children of God.

[9 : 51] And that's the sense in which we address God in our prayers as Father. That's why it says in John 1, verses 12-13, but to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, that's Jesus' name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Only those who believe in Jesus Christ for salvation are given the right to become the children of God. Scripture speaks repeatedly of the fact that God does not hear the prayers of the wicked.

Isaiah 59, 1-2, Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that He cannot save, or His ear dulled that He cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

It's our sins that separate us from God so that He does not hear. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus Christ, you do not have this access to God the Father, because you have been separated from Him by your sins.

But there is one prayer that you still yet can pray, and that's the prayer that God will always hear and answer, and that's the prayer of your repentance of sin and your faith in Jesus Christ.

[11 : 20] It's the prayer for surrender to God and your dependence on God for salvation. In the Gospel of Luke, we see two prominent examples of prayers that are uttered by unbelievers, those who do not believe in Jesus yet.

In Luke 18, the tax collector, who is keenly aware of his own sinfulness and unworthiness before God, he says, Standing far off, he would not even lift his eyes to heaven because he did not feel worthy, but he beat his breast saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

And Jesus says, I tell you, the man went down to his house justified. He heard that prayer of someone who did not know God yet.

Similarly, in Luke 23, 42, the thief who is being crucified next to Jesus on the cross for his crimes, says to Jesus, Remember me when you come into your kingdom.

That's the prayer of surrender, dependence on Jesus for salvation. And Jesus replies, Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.

[12 : 28] If you come to Jesus like that, with that prayer of surrender and dependence, he will not turn you away. That's the prayer I urge all of you who do not yet know Jesus Christ to pray, even today.

It's an invitation. It's an invitation. Then when you pray that prayer, give your life to God, and you give a credible profession of faith that you truly are a follower of Christ, that's when you are baptized into the body of Christ and become a member of a local church.

And when that happens to you, you're born again, the Spirit of God indwells you, and you can truly say to God, my Father, our Father in heaven.

And for those of you already call God your Father, this doesn't mean that we can never pray directly to God the Son or to God the Holy Spirit. We see examples of people in the New Testament praying to the Lord Jesus directly in Acts 1, 24, 759.

And even though there's no recorded prayers addressed directly to the Holy Spirit, we do see examples of prayer addressed to the Holy Spirit throughout church history. But there is a pattern, a dominant biblical pattern.

[13 : 48] And we see that again and again throughout Scripture. And you can see this in John 16. In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He will give it to you.

Until now, you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full. So we are to pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ the Son.

To pray in the name of Jesus means to approach God through Jesus by the virtue of our union with Christ through faith. We pray through Jesus because He's our Savior, because He's our mediator, because He's our intercessor.

And that means Jesus is standing before God and graciously gives, He gives to those who repent of their sins and trust in His name this basis to approach God the Father through Him. And that's why we end most of our prayers with the phrase, in Jesus' name we pray.

To acknowledge the fact that we do not approach God on our own terms, on our own merit, but on the merits of Jesus, with the standing of Jesus. That doesn't mean you have to say the phrase every time.

[14 : 57] You can pray in the name of Jesus without saying, in Jesus' name we pray. In fact, there's no prayer recorded in the New Testament that ends with, in Jesus' name we pray. But even when you don't say that, you should mean that.

Because we are incapable of pleasing God on our own merits. We are dead in sin, incapable of pleasing God. And it's because Jesus, God's beloved Son, died for our sins on the cross so that all who trust in Jesus can be counted righteous as He was.

That's why we have access to God as our Father, because of Jesus, what He has done. That's why we pray through Jesus. And it's the Spirit of God that helps us, intercedes on our behalf, helps us as we pray.

So we pray to God the Father through Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God joins us in that. So we pray with the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Spirit. That's the pattern we see throughout Scripture.

It's hard for us to really kind of fathom the staggering implications of this. Because this means when we pray, we're not just mumbling to ourselves these half-coer words that you wonder whether we'll just vanish in thin air and we'll ever be heard by anybody.

[16 : 14] When you pray, you get caught up in the very communion and the communication of the triune God Himself. We are translated in our prayers to the throne room of God, the Father, speaking through Jesus, our mediator, with the Spirit of God by our side helping us.

And if we just got a glimpse of what a tremendous thing it is to pray and what is happening as we're praying, it'd be difficult to get us to stop praying. Prayer is quite simply communication with God in the context of communion with God.

Communication and communion, speaking and sharing in the life of the triune God. After addressing God as Father, we are to pray, hallowed be your name.

This is the first of two requests that pertain directly to God. Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. And the name of God, as I said earlier, represents God.

It stands for who He is. His character is all that He is. So to pray, hallowed be your name, is to pray that God would be honored as holy. Holy means set apart or consecrated.

[17 : 25] We're praying that God's name, that He will be recognized as a person who is separate from us, who is holy unlike us. So that means prayer is not about manipulating God for our purposes.

It's not about finding some kind of therapeutic catharsis. Its purpose, the purpose of prayer, is to glorify God.

That means everything we say in prayer, our prayer for daily provision, our prayer for pardon from sin, our prayer for protection from evil, has as its goal to make much of God and not make much of ourselves.

It's a common thread that unites all non-Christian prayers is a way to exert control over a deity, to manipulate deity for our purposes.

But Christian prayer is not like this. It's to submit to Him, to say, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. The second request of the prayer is also about God.

[18 : 42] It says, your kingdom come. The kingdom of God is the realm of God's dominion. It refers to God's rule over His people. So wherever there is the people of God who have submitted to His rule, there is where the kingdom of God is found.

And the prayer then is for the culmination, the fulfillment of God's promised rule, that God's kingdom program would be worked out in every corner of the earth, that God's rule of justice and righteousness would be extended over every area of life.

And we're asking that God will do that. God will bring up the fulfillment of the kingdom. But frequently, instead of saying, your kingdom come, prayers can sound more like, let my kingdom come.

Make me successful. Make me rich. Make me powerful. Make me desirable and beautiful. But because the purpose of Christian prayer is hallowed be your name, the thesis of Christian prayer, the main point of it is, let your kingdom come, is to seek God's will to be done in our lives.

Prayer is not about bargaining with God to get what we want. It's about surrendering our wills and conforming ourselves to His kingdom agenda. And so when we're praying rightly, we are thinking God's thoughts after Him.

[19 : 59] We're loving the things that He loves and we're desiring the things that He wills and that's what we seek in prayer. That's why 1 John 5, it says, and this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him. when our prayers flow from your kingdom come, God answers all of our requests.

A very practical and helpful way to practice praying in this manner is to pray through the Scriptures. I commend it to all of you guys. The Bible is God's revealed will for us.

Everything we need to know to be saved, everything that we have to know to become mature Christians are contained here in the Scriptures. And because prayer is communication and communion with God, it makes sense to hear from His Word than to respond back to God in prayer.

That's why we do, that's what we do whenever we respond to the reading and preaching of God's Word on a Sunday morning with the corporate prayer time. That's why every Wednesday during our corporate prayer service, we have a preaching from God's Word in Psalms before we pray.

[21 : 21] often believers struggle in prayer because they don't know what to say. They feel like they're saying the same old thing over and over and over again.

And that also solves this issue. If you're praying through the Scriptures, if you're meditating on the Scriptures and you take a verse at a time, you reflect on it, see what God would say to you and for the church, and then you respond back to God those things in prayer, then you will find that the time will fly by the light faster than you are used to.

And you have no shortage of things to pray for. Now praying your kingdom come doesn't mean that we can't pray for anything for ourselves.

Because there are things that we need in order to love and serve God. So this is also for His kingdom. It is good and right to pray for those things. So the next three petitions in the Lord's prayer are personal requests.

It goes from God's name and God's kingdom to give us, forgive us, lead us. And the content of our personal request to God has three parts.

[22 : 35] It's provision, pardon, and protection. And all our personal needs are accounted for in these three petitions. The first personal request is in verse three.

Give us each day our daily bread. It's God who sustains us, so we must come to God for both physical and spiritual provision. And a petition that says, give us each day our daily bread assumes that each day we are daily walking with God.

That our companionship with Him is not something that we turn to just in times of crises, but it's something that we engage in every single day. And this prayer for daily bread has in view God's provision of manna in the wilderness for Israel.

Exodus 16 tells us that when Israel was going through the wilderness to their promised land, they had no food to eat, but God rained manna, which is a type of bread described as a fine flaky like thing, like coriander seed, white wafers made with honey.

He rained it from heaven. And he said that he did this daily with the dew of the morning. And the Israelites were instructed to collect a very specific amount depending on how many members they had in their families.

[23 : 52] And they recommended not to save any of it for the next day. And they recommended not to collect more than they need. And the uncollected manna on the ground melted when the sun grew hot during the day.

And the manna that they tried to save for the next day rotted with worms. The point of it all was that God wanted Israel to live daily by faith in daily dependence on God for his provision.

He's not going to give us a year's supply of spiritual blessings and food so that you can live without him for that next year. He wants us to come to him daily in dependence on him.

And that's what Jesus teaches as well. He teaches this in Matthew 6 31-34 Therefore do not be anxious saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we eat what shall we wear for the Gentiles seek after these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

[25 : 12] So God calls us to depend on him daily for those troubles and when we do he's promised to provide us and sustain us prove true. Sometimes we despair of the troubles and sufferings that fill our lives because we're worrying about tomorrow.

Because we think to ourselves I can't keep going like this for another day another week another month another year. I don't know how I'm going to get food on the table for my family for the next month.

I don't know how I'm going to last this entire winter with my depression. I don't know how I'm going to make it through the demanding early years of my children. I don't know how I can get through this illness.

I don't know how I'm going to keep living with my difficult spouse. But God is not asking us to worry about tomorrow or the next week or the month or the next year.

He tells us to worry about today. Look to God for your help and ask for his sustaining grace for today and you will find that there is sufficient grace for you.

[26 : 31] Lamentations 3 22-23 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning.

Great is your faithfulness. As people who work hard to provide for ourselves and for our families we can forget to depend on God for daily bread.

But we need to recognize that our daily provision comes from God even if we work really hard to get them. The intellect that we have the abilities that we have the opportunities that we have the jobs that we have the health that we have that enable us to work where do you think they came from?

They all came from God. God. So each day we go to work we should thank God for his daily provision. But more than just physical provision is in view here.

Because in John 6 Jesus says I am the bread of life. The true bread that the bread that Moses brought down from heaven pointed to.

[27 : 40] The fulfillment of it all. Jesus is the ultimate spiritual bread bread of life. He is the one who gives spiritual nourishment to us.

Daily we should seek life, peace, and joy, and rest that come from only Christ to live in this world. Daily we need his strength to subdue our sinful flesh.

Daily we need Jesus to cry out for him for his spiritual provision. Maybe some of you have been hungry for a while. Are you relying on the experience of God's grace yesterday or a year ago or when you first came to faith to sustain you now?

God has new grace, new mercies sufficient for you today. So the first three petitions of the Lord's prayer that we've just seen hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, give us each day our daily bread.

They mirror the three temptations that Jesus faced in the wilderness in Luke 4 in reverse order. The devil tempted Jesus to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple in an attempt to force God's hand and make him demonstrate his care for Jesus.

[29 : 06] But Jesus responded, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test. Instead of trying to manipulate God and use him to make much of ourselves, see how loved I am, see how great I am.

Jesus refused to test God because in the temple, that is the place where God's name should be hallowed. His name should be honored as holy.

The devil also tempted Jesus by showing him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment's time and saying to him, to you, I will give all this authority and glory for it has been delivered to me and I will give it to whom I will.

If you then will worship me, it will all be yours. But Jesus resisted the devil saying, you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.

Instead of seeking the glory and authority of the kingdoms for ourselves apart from God, we are to pray, let your kingdom come God. And lastly, the devil tempted Jesus while he was hungry saying, if you are the son of God, command this stone to become bread.

[30 : 17] But Jesus resisted and reaffirmed his allegiance to God, depended on him to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, to depend on his provision.

So these three temptations that Jesus faced represent the kinds of temptations that we will face as his followers on a daily basis until the day we die. God and these are the devil's main strategies to get us to reject, to renounce God, our allegiance to God and to live for ourselves and to go after the idols of this world.

But in our passage, Jesus is giving us a tool with which we can fight this spiritual battle to counteract the schemes of the enemy and that's by praying, Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, give us each day our daily bread.

And the fourth petition and the second personal request, it flows from these first three because as sinful people who are not yet perfected in the image of Christ, we will fail to follow God, we will fail to hallow God's name, we will fail to seek first his kingdom, we will fail to depend on him for daily bread.

So it should be the habit of the Christian life to seek God's forgiveness. Verse 4 says, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

[31 : 43] This verse reveals that the primary debt that Luke has in mind is not financial debt but it's spiritual debt, it's the debt of sin. We are to ask God for forgiveness for our sins.

And the reason why we can approach God and seek his forgiveness, the reason that he gives here is that we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

Earlier in Luke chapter 6 verse 31, Jesus commanded us, as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. And then he explained this in verses 37 to 38, judge not and you will not be judged, condemn not and you will not be condemned, forgive and you will be forgiven, give and it will be given to you.

The implied subject of all of these passive verbs is God. So if we do not judge others wrongly, God will not judge us. If we forgive them, God will also forgive us.

This is not because our doing good works in like forgiving others becomes the basis for salvation. Rather, these good works that we do, us forgiving other people is the evidence of our salvation because salvation is a gift from God.

[33 : 03] We're saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ but those who are saved by Jesus Christ do good works. And part of that good works is how we extend forgiveness to others.

That's why in Ephesians 4, 32, it says we are committed to forgive one another as God in Christ forgave you. It's because God has already forgiven us that we are to forgive one another.

God's forgiveness is the basis for our forgiveness. And for that reason, if we don't forgive other people, God will judge us as unforgiven people.

We will not receive his ultimate forgiveness on the day of judgment. So we can only pray to God, forgive us our sins if we are also honestly willing to extend the same forgiveness that we expect of God to others.

Unforgiveness is a grave sin. It imprisons us to anger and bitterness and resentment. It cannibalizes our joy. It spells our ultimate doom.

[34 : 11] God's sin. Because only those who forgive will be finally forgiven. And the final petition in Luke's version of the Lord's prayer is for protection, spiritual protection.

Lead us not into temptation. The prayer for pardon from sin flows naturally into this prayer for protection so that we might be kept from further sins.

This doesn't mean that God's the one that leads us to temptation. James 1.13 says clearly that God tempts no one. But because it is in his power to fortify us and guide us away from sin, we should pray to him in this way.

It's an admission of our own weakness. We're acknowledging that apart from God's powerful intervention on our behalf, we are powerless to withstand the temptations that come our way.

Christians are not self-confident and self-righteous people, but people who are humbly dependent on God in prayer. This is how we should pray.

[35 : 23] Then in verses 5 to 13, Jesus teaches us why we should pray. And Jesus sets out this hypothetical scenario in verses 5 to 7. Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him.

And he will answer from within, do not bother me, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything. Hospitality, as we've been seeing, was prized very highly in the ancient world, and it was this man's obligation, even if his guest arrived really late at night, midnight, like in this case, to still set out food for two unideal options.

The first option was to say, hey, sorry, don't have food, just wait till tomorrow and be a bad host. That's the first option. The second option is to be a rude neighbor and go to a neighbor and be like, hey, I don't have food and I have a guest, please give me some food.

So you either got to be a rude neighbor or a bad host, so not good options on either side. And so he goes, he opts for the second option, he opts to be a rude neighbor, so he goes over to his neighbor and says, hey, man, I'm in a real pickle here.

I have a buddy in town, but I don't have any food to serve him. Please just give me three loaves. I'll make sure to pay you back. Look at the words of you. He says, lend me three loaves.

[36 : 48] It's like a technical business transaction. He wants to pay him back. And then Jesus then asks, do you think this friend will reply? Do not bother me.

The door is not shut and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything. Do you think that this person will respond that way? So this seems to be a typical ancient house where the whole family sleeps on one mat.

So he has children with him in bed. And the doors shut and the doors in this context would have had a wooden or iron bar placed through these rings on the door panels. So it would have created a lot of creaking wood noise as well as clanking metal noise.

And if you know about children and sleeping, no children want to sleep. It's a struggle to put them to bed sometimes. He's lying with his children in bed and rude knock on the door at midnight.

You can imagine the tension. This guy's understandably upset. But do you think this man, this man, this friend had the audacity, the shamelessness to come disturb their peaceful night, and do you think this friend will refuse this shameless man?

[38 : 06] And Jesus gives the answer in verse 8, I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence, he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

Isn't that true? I mean, he's already disturbed them and bothered them and probably woken up his children. This friend will get up and give the man the bread he needs out of sheer disbelief, probably scowling at him, shaking his head and thrusting the bread to him.

Here, take it. Now leave me alone. We're so familiar with the concept of prayer, so familiar with the Lord's prayer that the audacity of it all doesn't shock us like it should.

Because all the petitions in the Lord's prayer, if you look at them, they're all imperatives, they're commands. Jesus' prayer is not full of ifs and woulds and mights.

Rather, they are bold, direct, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, give us each day our daily bread, forgive us our sins, lead us not into temptation.

[39 : 20] These are bold, bracing prayers. And that's how God wants us to pray to Him. Isaiah 62 says, you who put the Lord in remembrance, those who put the Lord in remembrance are those who pray to God and bring to God to remember the things that He promised Him.

God, remember you said this to us? Remember you promised this to us? We're asking you. We're bringing to your remembrance. He says, you who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest and give God no rest until He establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth.

This is how God's Word teaches us to pray. Give God no rest. Prevail upon Him. Remind Him of the promises contained in His Word.

Approach Him in prayer with shameless audacity. go to Him frequently and at all times and don't let Him off the hook. Persevere in your prayers until He grants it to you.

That's how the saints have prayed in ages past. Jacob, he says in Genesis 30, he wrestled with God all throughout the night saying to God, I will not let you go unless you bless me.

[40 : 48] Colossians 4, 12, Paul says this, Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in His prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

The word struggle is the word, same word that is used to describe a wrestling contest, an athletic contest. Do you wrestle with God in your prayers?

Do you wrestle with God on behalf of your brothers and sisters that they might stand mature before God? Well, how I wish all of us, if I had people who were wrestling on my behalf this way, there are people wrestling for you in prayer.

Hannah and I wrestle for you in prayer. Our elders, our leadership team, we wrestle for you in prayer. Do you wrestle for one another in prayer?

There's no victory, there's no blessing, there's no progress, no growth, no sanctification, some of that falls on us. when you see a brother or sister struggling with the besetting sin, do you wrestle with God?

- [42 : 44] God, you promised, you promised that you give him power to be victorious. Why aren't you giving it to him? God, you promised that you will help her when she is anxious.
- Why don't you help her, God? Do you wrestle with God? prayer is the stuff of battle and it's in the struggle of prayer that kingdoms of darkness fall.
- It's in the struggle of prayer that spiritual victories are won and no wonder of course it's hard to pray because our enemies oppose it with all their might.
- But you don't skip it just because it's hard. We must pray. Our monthly three days of prayer and fasting begins tomorrow. It concludes with our weekly prayer service on Wednesdays.
- Those are ways you can get involved to pray. You can find a prayer guide on our website tomorrow. Prioritize those things. Come to pray before the service.
- [44 : 03] Join the prophecy team to pray at 9. 15 a.m. Pray in your own private prayer closets. Find accountability and pray shamelessly, boldly, and frequently, and persistently, and you will see life and fruit come from that.
- Even this friend gave the villager the three loaves of bread so that he wouldn't be bothered anymore. How much more than will God who is our gracious loving father give us what we pray for.
- That's Jesus' logic in verses 9-10. And I tell you ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find knock and it will be opened to you.
- For everyone who asks receives and the one who seeks finds and to the one who knocks it will be opened. So simple isn't it? Ask and it will be given to you.
- But we like to qualify that, complicate that, and nuance that until it virtually nullifies the amazing promise that it contains. Yes, it does presume that we are praying for what is good.
- [45 : 18] Because in the following verses, Jesus explicitly says, I will not give you what is not good. We might think something is good for us. It might actually be bad for us.
- That's true. But this promise still stands. Ask and it will be given to you.
- Jesus continues in verses 11-13, What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?
- 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? There are several important contrasts that Jesus is making here.
- First, he contrasts the father among us, earthly parents, from the heavenly father. And Jesus' assessment of earthly fathers is not at all flattering. He says, if you, then who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, Sean, you're an evil parent, but you still know how to give good gifts to your children, and that's true.
- [46 : 32] I give them a lot of good gifts. You think I, as your heavenly father, will not give you good gifts that you ask for? This is referring to the spiritual blessings, because earlier in Luke 10 19, Jesus gave his disciples the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy.
- So the serpents and scorpions are both venomous beasts that symbolize, represent the poisonous power of the enemies of God. And they're being contrasted here with the good gifts which is summed up in the Holy Spirit.
- He's not going to give you bad things. Maybe you think that God's handing you over to the devil. He is never going to hand you over to the devil.

He's never going to make you subject to his power influence when you ask him for good things. He's not going to leave you alone and abandon you to suffer under his death grip. He's going to give you good gifts.

He's our good and gracious Father. And the Spirit of God is the sum of all of his blessings. Our union with Christ comes through the Spirit.

[47 : 50] Our adoption into his family comes through the Spirit. The joy and comfort peace and rest we experience in Jesus they come through the Holy Spirit. He will give you the Holy Spirit make you a child of God.

And all of these privileges are ours because of what Jesus has done for us. we were not worthy to be his children.

We failed. We brought shame to our heavenly father. But because he loved us and he wanted to bring us and restore us to his family restore us as his heirs God sent his beloved son the perfectly obedient son and he took our shame.

He died for our sins but he was worthy and because Jesus was worthy he was raised from the dead because he was righteous death could not hold him down and he was raised and those who trust in Jesus are united to him so that those who call Jesus Lord can call his father our father that's what enables us to pray I went to a birthday party recently for a toddler and whenever you go to something like that it's crazy there's a lot of crying wailing there's a lot of giggling and laughing a lot of screaming a lot of scolding but what's amazing is the parents in this cacophony of noise they hear their child cry and they know right away it's their child out of the dozens they hear their child cry and they know when their children cry this has been demonstrated over the years people have studied it it's true why because they are familiar with the voice of their children because they're attentive to the voice of their children and our heavenly father is attentive to your voice our heavenly father is familiar with your voice when you pray he hears and he promised ask and it will be given to you so seek

God in prayer through Jesus