

CAPITOL STUDIES

APRIL 30, 2025 • WEEK 16



LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS

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Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



Teach Us to Pray



BRIAN BILL ENTITLED HIS SERMON on prayer in Luke 11:1-4 “Coming Up for Air,” explaining, “Marine creatures, like whales, seals, dolphins from ocean depths must rise at intervals to breathe, so as to live.... It is also necessary for man to mount into a higher region if he is to obtain spiritual life and grace for living it. **And this the Christian does in prayer....** Relative to body size, whale lungs are proportionally somewhat smaller than human lungs. But whale lungs are far more efficient: While human lungs exchange about 15-20% of their contents with each breath, whale lungs exchange about 90% with each breath. This means that whales can take up oxygen and dispose of carbon dioxide much faster than humans, enabling them to hold their breath underwater for long periods. Man wasn’t designed to ‘stay down’ as long as whales. So, we must rise at more frequent intervals to breathe, so as to live. Oh Christian, we must rise at more frequent intervals to **Come Up For Air [Prayer], so as to live!**”¹

Pastor Arin Hess
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INTRODUCTION

In the Old Testament, there was very real fear of approaching God. Thunder, lightning, and fire came with God's presence on Mt. Sinai. In the tabernacle, God was in the very inner place where only the high priest could go and only once a year. But still the Jews knew there was a way to get to God—prayer. Psalm after psalm reminded them that the Lord wanted them to call, and He *would* answer (Ps. 50:15; 91:15; 145:18). *Everyone* could access God through prayer: “O You who hear prayer, to You *all* men come” (Ps. 65:2).

God taught His people to pray. Old Testament prayers were characterized by adoration (Ps. 34), gratitude (Jonah 2:9), recognition of God's person (Ps. 99), desire to obey (Ps. 119), and repentance of sin (Ps. 32: 5). They were humbly given in perseverance (Deut. 9:18-19) for not only themselves but for all their people. But over the years, this type of prayer had been replaced with superficial chants and formulas like those the Gentiles used for their gods. This was why Jesus needed to teach His disciples how to truly pray. In Luke 11, we see what has come to be known as “The Lord's Prayer.” It could more accurately be called “The Disciples' Prayer,” as it is a prayer for each of His disciples.

Jesus shared this pattern of prayer in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9-12) in His early ministry in Galilee. When He gave it in Luke 11, He was in Judea. These are only the recorded times. It is quite possible that He shared it even more throughout His ministry.

I. PRIORITY OF PRAYER

Luke 11:1

It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.”²

Prayer characterized Jesus' life as Luke often points out (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 29). But when Jesus prayed, it was very different from the hypocritical religious leaders. He prayed in private, in “a secluded place” (Mark 1:35), a “secret” place (Matt. 6:6). He prayed in sincerity, devotion, and dependence. “If Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, had to depend on prayer during ‘the days of His flesh’ (Heb. 5:7), then how much more do you and I need to pray!”³

“[A]t this time in Judaism, true prayer had been lost to the Jewish people.... Here's a disciple of Jesus who isn't sure he knows how to pray because what he's basically been taught is wrong.... He's listening to Jesus pray and it's very different than the prayers that he hears the scribes and the rabbis pray, very different than the prayers he's heard the Pharisees pray, very different than the prayers he's heard in his own synagogue.”⁴ In Matthew 6:1-7, we read about these “hypocrites” who pray to be seen of men, using “meaningless repetition.”

John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets. He was one of very few Jews who prayed differently—who really talked with God.



John knew the power and necessity of prayer and had helped his own disciples return to the biblical pattern of prayer.

“Jesus’ disciples wanted to learn better how to pray. They did not ask the Master to teach them how to preach or do great signs; they asked Him to teach them to pray. We today sometimes think that we would be better Christians if only we had been with Jesus when He was on earth, but this is not likely. The disciples were with Him and yet they failed many times! They could perform miracles, and yet they wanted to learn to pray.”⁵ “It is surprising that this is the only time in the Gospels where someone asked Jesus for a specific teaching.... Surely from watching Jesus’ practice of prayer, they came to realize that this practice was absolutely vital to the ‘success’ of any and every ministry! Jesus answers not with a rote ritual to follow but with a persistent pattern to practice!”⁶ “The Disciples’ Prayer” is not just for memorization and recitation, though it is good to have it memorized because it was given to us as a pattern. Jesus gave us the basic outline. We must fill in the body.

II. PATTERN FOR PRAYER

A. Person

Luke 11:2a

And He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name.’”

“The Jews of Jesus’ day tended to view God as so awesome and holy that they dared not be too intimate with Him.... They dared not utter the name of God, because it was too sacred [even in prayer].... They needed to learn that they could approach God as a kind and loving Father. In our day, it seems that the reverse is true. Most American Christians think of God as their Good Buddy in the Sky. We don’t worry about His consuming holiness and His blinding splendor. We don’t fear His chastening hand. We’re more like the children who call their permissive fathers by their first names.... **But the term ‘Father’ should not only encourage us to draw near to a kind and loving God. It should also cause us to respect His authority and to submit to Him in fear.**”⁷ We must remember, however, that only those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation from sin are able to call God “Father” (Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 4:1-7).

If we are God’s children, it is important to remind ourselves that we are coming into the presence of the Almighty God when we pray. “We had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?” (Heb. 12:9). God is holy. His name is sacred and should be treated as such. “I often hear Christians take God’s name in vain! In the world, God is not set apart as holy and revered. People often use God’s holy name as a swear word, putting God on the same level as human excrement! As Paul cites the psalmist, ‘There is no fear of God before their eyes’ (Rom. 3:18; Ps. 36:1). Setting God’s name apart as sacred or hallowed begins in our hearts. We must submit every thought to Him as the Holy LORD.





Everything we say and do must take the Holy God into account. So, as we draw near to God in prayer, we must first make sure that we reverence Him as holy.”⁸

B. Purpose and Plan

Luke 11:2b

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

True prayer involves acknowledging God’s authority and accepting His plan and purposes over my own. “It has well been said that the purpose of prayer is not to get man’s will done in heaven, but to get God’s will done on earth. Prayer is not telling God what we want and then selfishly enjoying it. Prayer is asking God to use us to accomplish what He wants so that His name is glorified, His kingdom is extended and strengthened, and His will is done. I must test all of my personal requests by these overruling concerns if I expect God to hear and answer my prayers.”⁹ In order to know the will of God, you must be searching the Word of God (John 15:7). God will never ask you to do something contrary to His Word.

C. Provision

Luke 11:3

Give us each day our daily bread.

God has promised to provide for our needs for today. He wants us to live as the children of Israel did in the days of manna—trusting in God’s provision one day at a time (Ex. 16). “As thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deut. 33:25). “So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself” (Matt. 6:34; cf. Luke 12:22-31). When we pray to our Father, asking for His will to be done, our needs will always be met. “Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name, ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full” (John 16:23-24). “This is the confidence which we have before 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 which we have asked for Him” (1 John 5:14-15).

D. Pardon

Luke 11:4a

And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

Jesus ties in our forgiveness before God with our forgiving those who have wronged us. (“Indebted” refers to someone who has sinned against us.) God’s forgiveness is granted only on the basis of His grace, not our works. The idea is that if we, who are sinful, can forgive others, then surely God, who is perfect, will forgive us if we come to Him. But there is also the notion that the true mark of one who has been forgiven by God is that he will forgive others. I can’t honestly pray, “Father, forgive my sins,” if I refuse to forgive someone who has sinned against me.



“This means that your relationship with God is inextricably linked with your relationships with your fellow man, especially with those in your family and in the church. You can’t just walk away from a strained relationship as if it doesn’t matter. If you’re bitter, you can’t pray rightly until you choose to forgive. And, the rest of us must pray for those in the church who are hurt and bitter, that they would forgive those who have wronged them.”¹⁰

E. Protection

Luke 11:4b

And lead us not into temptation.

Jesus is not suggesting that we pray to be removed from all temptation, trial, and testing. Scripture tells us that we need these to strengthen our soul: “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2-4).

“The proper prayer asks God to deliver us from overpowering temptations, recognizing that we are liable to fold under such enticement and assault. The operative inner quality here is a humble awareness of our weakness. The very best person is, at his or her best, vulnerable and easily stumbled apart from God’s gracious provision of strength. And we are never so vulnerable as when we think we are past a certain temptation. The strongest believers are sure that they cannot stand apart from the grace of God—those who doubt their ability to withstand temptation—those who plead, ‘Lead us not into temptation that is beyond our capacity to withstand.’”¹¹

III. PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER

Luke 11:5-8

Then He 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; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and from inside he answers and says, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”

“We have already seen that prayer is based on *sonship* (‘Our Father’), not on friendship; but Jesus used friendship to illustrate persistence in prayer. God the Father is not like this neighbor, for He never sleeps, never gets impatient or irritable, is always generous, and delights in meeting the needs of His children. The friend at the door had to keep on knocking in order to get what he needed, but God is quick to respond to His children’s cries (Luke 18:1-8). The argument is clear: If persistence finally paid off as a man beat on the door of a reluctant friend, how much more would persistence bring blessing as we pray to a loving Heavenly Father! After all, we are the children *in the house with Him!*



“The word translated [persistence] ...means ‘shamelessness’ or ‘avoidance of shame.’ It can refer to the man at the door who was not ashamed to wake up his friend, but it can also refer to the friend in the house. Hospitality to strangers is a basic law in the East (Gen. 18:1ff). If a person refused to entertain a guest, he brought disgrace on the whole village and the neighbors would have nothing to do with him. The man in the house knew this and did not want to embarrass himself, his family, or his village; so he got up and met the need.

“Why does our Father in heaven answer prayer? Not just to meet the needs of His children, but to meet them in such a way that it brings glory to His name. ‘Hallowed be Thy name.’ *When God’s people pray, God’s reputation is at stake.* The way He takes care of His children is a witness to the world that He can be trusted. Phillips Brooks said that prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness. Persistence in prayer is not an attempt to change God’s mind (‘Thy will be done’) but to get ourselves to the place where He can trust us with the answer.”¹²

IV. PROMISES FOR PRAYER

Luke 11:9-13

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. ¹¹Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? ¹²Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? ¹³If you then, being evil, 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?

“The tenses of the verbs are important here: ‘Keep on asking... keep on seeking... keep on knocking.’ 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. Then it is up to us to do whatever is necessary in our lives so that the Father can trust us with the answer.... Because He knows us and loves us, *we never need to be afraid of the answers that He gives....* [I]f an earthly father gives what is best to his children, surely the Father in heaven will do even more.”¹³

CONCLUSION

“Once we are secure in our relationship with God and His will, then we can bring our *requests* to Him. We can ask Him to provide our needs (not our greeds!) for today, to forgive us for what we have done yesterday, and to lead us in the future. All of our needs may be included in these three requests: material and physical provision, moral and spiritual perfection, and divine protection and direction. If we pray this way, we can be sure of praying in God’s will.”¹⁴ And we can be sure that God will answer.

FOOTNOTES

1. Brian Bill, "Luke 11:1-4 How to Pray the Lord's Way," <https://www.preceptaustin.org/brian-bill-sermons-luke#22>.
2. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
3. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Volume 1, Victor Books, 1996, pg. 214-215.
4. John MacArthur, "Jesus' Pattern for Every Prayer," <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-146/jesus-pattern-for-every-prayer>.
5. Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*.
6. Bruce Hurt, <https://www.preceptaustin.org/luke-11-commentary#11:1>.
7. Steven Cole, "Lesson 53: Lord, Teach Us to Pray! (Luke 11:1-4)," <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-53-lord-teach-us-pray-luke-111-4>.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*.
10. Cole, "Lesson 53."
11. R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Crossway Books, 1998, pg. 416-417.
12. Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*



Chaplain Arin Hess

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the
109th Legislature's
First Session

SENATORS

6:45 – 7:45 A.M.
Wednesdays
Capitol Office #1004

STAFF

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.
Wednesdays
NE State Office Building
Morrill Room



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