

**2010 Theme: Whatever It Takes!**

**Stewardship Theme: Let's Give God What He Wants!**

**Sermon: Prayer: God Wants to Hear from You**

**Text: [Luke 11:1-13](#)**

Gary L. Wackler

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**Introduction:** Instead of talking about some of the secondary goals for our stewardship program this year, I thought we might want to also look at what God ultimately wants. “Let’s Give God What He Wants.” Before God receives our financial gifts, I believe God wants us to be men and women, boys and girls of prayer. And it is only a matter of asking Jesus to teach us.

Jesus uses a number of methods to describe prayer:

**I. There Needs to Be Practice (v. 1).**

**[Luke 11:1 \(NIV\)](#)** <sup>1</sup>One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

Like John the Baptist before him, and even the Pharisees, there must have been classes that helped their disciples learn spiritual disciplines like prayer. Yet, Jesus was no ordinary rabbi. He was not so much interested in drawing crowds as he was in developing disciples. Jesus was not interested in how many people he could bring together in one place, but more how many he could send out.

Learning almost anything can be initiated by simple observation.

A. You start by watching.

It was common to see Jesus praying. He had prayed at his baptism when the Holy Spirit descended (**[Luke 3:21](#)**). Scripture tells us that Jesus “often withdrew to lonely places to pray” (**[Luke 5:16](#)**). Certainly the disciples noticed this habit, and must have been spiritually curious.

If we are interested in prayer, we can start by reading Luke. Luke records nine prayers of Jesus. Seven of the nine are only found in his gospel. His second volume, the book of Acts, often devotes space to the church and its members praying. Luke connects prayer to the Holy Spirit frequently in Acts as he does here (**[v. 13](#)**).

Acts of piety, like prayer, can certainly be taught by lecture in a classroom, but the best way to learn a spiritual discipline is by doing it yourself, using a good model.

## **B. You mature by doing.**

There were not a lot of prayer books in the first century. Prayers were, however, a daily part of the life of any spiritually serious Jew. The disciples who followed Jesus no doubt already knew prayers from memory, the Schema, the Eighteen Benedictions, and the like. They were not necessarily asking “what” to pray, but how.

Traditionally what we have in our text, and also what is found in Matthew’s gospel, has been called “The Lord’s Prayer.” More accurately it is referred to as the “Model Prayer” or the “Disciple’s Prayer.” No matter what we call it, it should be noted this was never intended to be a prayer that had to be recited verbatim. In fact there are even differences between Matthew and Luke’s version. The prayer was only meant as a guide to make sure certain areas were covered in addressing God.

Later, the early Church’s leadership “commanded Christians to recite it three times daily” (Blomberg, *Matthew*, p. 118). But Jesus wanted us to pray in our own words like any child would speak to his earthly father. Matthew even warns against meaningless repetition (6:7) in his gospel.

The reality today is that some mechanically repeat The Lord’s Prayer virtually every worship service while others completely avoid its recitation. Neither is what Jesus wants. He wants us to explore prayer and make it our own. Simply put, God wants to hear from his children.

In virtually every prayer:

## **II. There Needs to Be Praise (v. 2).**

**Luke 11:2 (NIV)** <sup>2</sup>He said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

### **A. For our relationship**

The prayer is a guide not a formula, and we must be a daughter or a son to call Him, Father. In and through Jesus, God has come close and become personally available and involved with his children. Virtually no one in the first century would have been bold enough to call the LORD, Father. Jesus invites us to call him, Daddy, but not just anyone can call another person, Daddy.

The name of God was so sacred that Matthew writes almost exclusively “kingdom of heaven” instead of “kingdom of God.” Scribes, copyists of Holy Scripture, took special care even in writing the sacred Name.

**“In all of the Old Testament God is referred to as Father fewer than seven times, except indirectly and rather remotely. Yet in the Gospels, Jesus speaks of God as Father more than 70 times.” - Philip Keller, A Layman Looks at the Lord’s Prayer [Moody Press], pp. 11-12**

**Our concern in all our lives and in prayer ought to be:**

**B. For our Father’s reputation**

**More than anything we want the name of our God to be revered and honored. Isaiah knew this to be true in his vision. John in his vision on Patmos heard it, too.**

**Revelation 4:8 (NIV) <sup>8</sup>Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”**

**Certainly Jesus wants us to be concerned about His Father’s reputation. We have come a great distance from not even speaking God’s name to its misuse in today’s vernacular. No follower of Christ should ever misuse God’s name or say it inappropriately. But how is it that our LORD’s name might be hallowed? Isn’t it mostly by what we do? God is unique/set apart in his character. There is nothing ordinary or common about Him. There should be nothing ordinary about His people.**

**If Jesus (God) went with you everywhere, how much would your speech and behavior improve? Yet, as Christians we know that at every moment Immanuel is always with us. We need to ask: is God’s name elevated because of our lives?**

**John 14:12-14 (NIV) <sup>12</sup>I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup>And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. <sup>14</sup>You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.**

**Our prayer ought always to be:**

**C. For a coming kingdom**

**This is really about evangelism and going out. We want God to rule in every heart, including ours. Prayer is not about getting our will done in heaven, but to get God’s will done on earth. Our way or God’s way is the decision everyone must make. Regarding the kingdom, there is this tension between the “already” and “not yet.” In the time between our Lord’s coming, our prayers and our lives need to be addressing how we can bring notice and acceptance for the kingdom.**

John closes the New Testament canon with these words:

**Revelation 22:20-21 (NIV)** <sup>20</sup>He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

In our prayers:

### **III. There Needs to Be Petition (vv. 3-4).**

**Luke 11:3 (NIV)** <sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread.

This first petition is:

#### **A. For daily needs**

There is no sense in worrying about tomorrow. Matthew gives us this similar advice right after he shares the Disciple’s Prayer with his listeners:

**Matthew 6:31-34 (NIV)** <sup>31</sup>So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup>For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup>But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup>Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

We must think back to when the LORD supplied manna everyday, and in just the right quantity, for his people. God cares still about *our* needs. We should pray for our need not our greed. “The average affluent Westerner more than likely plans and prays for ‘annual bread’ except in times of extreme crisis.” - Blomberg, *Matthew*, pp. 119-120

I guarantee you that the people of Haiti today are not thinking about much more than bread, water, health and safety for their families. I pray for that, but in addition to that, I pray for the Gospel to penetrate their lives.

The second petition is:

#### **B. For forgiveness**

**Luke 11:4ab (NIV)** <sup>4ab</sup> Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

Here Jesus makes it clear that we are obligated to forgive others. Donald Guthrie says, “Those who ask for forgiveness and yet harbour an unforgiving attitude to others are asking the impossible.” - *New Testament Theology*, p. 578

The receipt of grace cannot be irresponsible or cheap, it obligates a person to forgive others as they have been forgiven through Christ ([Ephesians 4:32](#)). We are to act as Christ did on our behalf.

The third petition is:

C. For deliverance

[Luke 11:4c \(NIV\)](#) <sup>4c</sup> And lead us not into temptation.”

Here is the distinction: The devil *tempts* us to make us worse than we are; God *tests* us to make us better than we are. And Job is an example of how God tested a “righteous” man.

Here we have a petition for spiritual protection. We are never promised to be free from temptation, even Jesus was tempted. We *are* guaranteed, though, God will bring us through or provide a way out.

[I Corinthians 10:13 \(NIV\)](#) <sup>13</sup>No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

After all is said and done, the purpose of our being tested is to reveal God’s glory.

You will notice that all these petitions are community-minded. It talks in a first person plural. The prayer is about us, we and our. It is about how we need each other and depend on each other. There is certainly a time for me, I and mine, but that is after - and never to the exclusion of us. I need necessities so I might serve you. I need to forgive you or I cannot be forgiven myself. And if I fall into temptation, *our* witness is damaged to each other as well as to those outside - thereby depriving God of the glory due Him.

In the remaining text the parable moves from friends, to parents, to God.

#### IV. There Needs to Be Parable ([vv. 5-13](#))

[Luke 11:5-10 \(NIV\)](#) <sup>5</sup>Then he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, <sup>6</sup>because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.’ <sup>7</sup>“Then the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ <sup>8</sup>I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. <sup>9</sup>“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will

be opened to you. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

**A. Prayer is about persistence (vv. 5-10)**

**“Prayer is to be continual asking, seeking, knocking (present imperatives), but even so, this persistence is within a parent-child relationship which assures good gifts.”**

**- Craddock, *Luke*, p. 154**

**The point of this teaching is the persistence of the petitioner, not so much the kindness of a friend. The person who asks for bread at midnight is almost shameless in his approach and willingness to inconvenience his friend. The other part of this I noticed is the person in need does not even ask for himself.**

**If we are kingdom-minded, many (if not most) of our prayers will be for others. The answers to these prayers will glorify God. We dare not give up quickly in our prayers to God, otherwise he may wonder about our seriousness. [Luke 18:1ff](#) has a similar parable teaching us not to give up in our prayers.**

**I have two children, and there is nothing I would not do for them given a real need. I would sacrifice to see that they received. I have to be honest; I would not do that for everyone’s children.**

**But to explain one of the major differences between God and me, there needs to be parable. It is a parable:**

**B. That teaches contrast (vv. 11-13)**

**[Luke 11:11-13 \(NIV\)](#) <sup>11</sup>“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? <sup>12</sup>Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup>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!”**

**An earthly father might fail you because he has a sinful nature. God will never fail his children in their need.**

**The rabbis were well-known for using an argument called: “from lesser to greater.” In other words, if this is true (and it is), then how much more is this true. Earthly fathers, even though they are flawed, are going to provide good gifts to their children. They would never give them items like snakes or scorpions that might harm them. Instead they would give them what was good for them.**

**Our heavenly Father gives us the best gift of all. He gives himself, His Holy Spirit to provide us power, comfort, insight, encouragement and peace. Prayer is a temporary tool for a temporary situation. Someday we will see our LORD face to face. In the meantime, we have the Holy Spirit, and those of us who are Christians can ask our Father for anything knowing God's desire is to meet all our needs.**

**Philippians 4:19 (NIV) <sup>19</sup>And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.**

**Conclusion:** Prayer is vital to our growing relationship with God. Prayer increases our interaction with the Holy Spirit. Prayer is a way of making practical the lessons of Jesus. It puts us in touch with every person of the Godhead.

**“Not praying is a little like walking up to the marriage altar, saying one's vows to the spouse, and then going mute as the relationship moves from day to day.” - Darrell Bock, *Luke*, p. 312**

**Ray Stedman, in his wonderful book on prayer entitled *Talking to our Father*, said, “True prayer is an awareness of our own helpless need and an acknowledgment of divine adequacy. For Jesus, prayer was as necessary as breathing, the very breath of life itself.”**

**I encourage you to pray often to your heavenly Father. If you are not a Christian, God is not your father, nor can he be until you accept him in faith.**

**Prayer is like the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe. Without prayer we will soon surely die. But to truly live, of one point I am sure: if we give God our best, he will give us his (v. 13). As we pray about our stewardship commitment to God, let us do *Whatever It Takes* and *Let's Give God What He Wants*.**