

TALKING TO GOD

Luke 11:1-13

Jan 1992 Newsweek: "Talking to God" includes everything from transcendental meditation, to sitting quietly getting in contact with the "real you" (praying to yourself!), to genuine prayer to the God of the universe.

Lots of focus on religion, but little impact on daily life!

More people are praying today, in some fashion, than ever before.

More than 3/4 of all Americans say they pray at least once a week.

More than 1/2 report praying at least once a day.

Even among atheists or agnostics, nearly one in five prays daily.

42% ask for material things when they pray.

15% say they regularly receive a definite answer to a specific prayer

27% never have

25% have once or twice.

The world around us has widespread interest in talking to God – *WHOEVER HE (or she!) IS!*

Prayer was an important part of *JESUS'* life!

On His way to Jerusalem to die, He takes time to pray.

His example motivates followers to ask how to pray. **11:1**

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."

The Lord didn't pressure them [nor even *invite* them!] to join Him

All He did was pray – they knew what was going on

They had seen Him do it many times before.

They ask why He doesn't let them in on it!

This is a request by Jesus' disciples to their Lord.

John taught *his* disciples how to pray; aren't you going to teach *US* how to pray?

They realized that while they could be *believers* in Jesus without praying—they could trust Him, but they could not be true *disciples* until they learned to pray as Jesus prayed—until they enjoyed the kind of intimacy with God Jesus enjoyed.

[Jesus' disciples have come to realize that if we want . . .]

***To be faithful and fruitful followers of Jesus—His disciples—
we must communicate with God as He did!***

Jesus doesn't give a ritualistic formula, to be repeated in "parrot-like" fashion.

They want to know "*how to*" pray. He teaches us how to do it ourselves.

This is a prayer for disciples.

It's not given as a *script* to *duplicate*; it's given as a *pattern* to *imitate*.

The value of this prayer doesn't come from repeating it by memory every Sunday morning!

[It teaches us . . .]

KEY ELEMENTS OF PROPER PRAYING: 11:2-4

2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.
3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

1. PRAY TO OUR HEAVENLY "DAD" 11:2a "When you pray, say: "Father, . . ."

Newsweek survey demonstrates variety of approaches to "talking to God."

How we talk to God is determined by who we believe God is!

Jesus says *WE are to come as God's children, coming to our Dad . . .*

Though Jesus doesn't use intimate "Abba" some people relate to "Daddy," it does identify Him as a caring Father. As God's children, we come to our "Dad" based on that intimate, caring relationship.

In spite of God's greatness, He is not unapproachable! We can come to our Dad when we need love or care!

For our society we have to clarify what it's like to come into our Dad's presence.

Some people have pretty ugly memories of our Dad.

Going into Dad's presence wasn't something you looked forward to!

That scene is increasingly common—even among Christians—in our perverted world!
God isn't that kind of Father.

God's a *real* Father—a *loving dad* you *enjoy* spending time with.

The kind you've always wished *your* father was.

You come to Him, the One who loves to give special-occasion gifts, and ask *Him* for whatever's on your heart.

2. PRAY CONCERNING HIS NAME 11:2b " . . . hallowed be your name, . . ."

*That it will be "hallowed"— Father, we want your name to be **set apart** => lifted up, glorified.*

We want people to see *how great* God is.

We want Him set apart from everyone else—from all other "gods"
—everything people call God.

Ezekiel— "*They will know WHO I AM!*"

"They will know that I am Yahweh, and there is no other like ME!"

Prayer of faithful followers starts by acknowledging our dependence and submission.

True disciples are more concerned about the Father's reputation than about their own needs.

We recognize Who's in charge, and our dependence on Him.

My major prayer request for our church, as well as for my own life:

That God works in such a way that we not lose the excitement of watching HIM work in our church—and in our lives.

I want to see Him act, so that we'll respond: "*Wow! Hasn't God done exciting things for us!*"

I want His NAME to be set apart—to be "hallowed"!

3. PRAY CONCERNING HIS KINGDOM – His will done on earth as in heaven. 11:2c

“ . . . your kingdom come. . . .”

Purpose of prayer isn't to get man's will done in heaven, but God's will done on earth.

It's His kingdom we want to come, and His will we want to see done.

Disciple's prayer ought to include a commitment to participate in bringing about His will on earth.

4. PRAY CONCERNING OUR NEEDS 11:3 *“Give us each day our daily bread.”*

We need today's food, as well as other daily needs.

True disciples recognize that God is the Author of everything, and we are dependent on Him to provide what we need.

Asks God to keep supplying what we need, so we have strength to carry out our part in His plan on earth.

5. PRAY FOR HIS FORGIVENESS 11:4a

“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.”

Jesus' faithful followers acknowledge that we need God's forgiveness.

We all come up short of God's standard of perfection!

We ask God's forgiveness on basis that we also keep forgiving those giving account to *us*.

We acknowledge *our* lack, not holding grudges against those who offend us!

Two bases for relating to people who fail us:

1) **Authoritarian** – Do what you're told! Forgiveness doesn't fit!
Failure must be punished!

2) **Mercy** – We come confidently to God because He is merciful.
Christ told Pharisees, "Learn what this means: 'I desire *mercy*, not sacrifice."

**If we want God to deal with US on the basis of mercy,
we must have a "mercy-based" approach to others!**

We call on God to forgive us.

We forgive those accountable to us;

"We certainly offend you more than any human could offend us!"

6. PRAY FOR HIS HELP IN TEMPTATION 11:4b *“And lead us not into temptation.”*

Don't lead us into it! [What does that mean? Would God do that?]

Luke 22:46 (40) In the garden: *“Pray that you not enter into temptation!”*

Mark (14:38) – tied to fact that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

Matt. 6:13 – *“Do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil (from the evil one).”*

Don't bring on temptation

[Trial??] *Would He counsel them to pray not to enter into a trial?*

Pentecost: “a prayer for protection and deliverance from the evil one.”

Wiersbe: ". . . divine protection and direction."

Bock: Why should we ask God not to "lead us . . . into temptation?" He has our best interests at heart and does not desire that we be tempted, right?

The request **reflects a recognition about ourselves.**

If we are to be protected from temptation, we must lean on God to protect us.

Sentence has force of "do not let us succumb to temptation."

Integrity results from recognizing that without God's *leading*, we would *lead ourselves* straight into sin.

Request reflects spiritual sensitivity; it understands how prone we are to sin, if we don't seek God's face."

Lord's prayer focuses on God's control over everything.

Even when Satan is tempter, God controls His moves. Cp. Job.

"DO NOT ALLOW US TO BE LED INTO TEMPTATION."

"Don't let him do that to us . . . but rather deliver us from the evil one!"

Permissive use of prohibition

Ironside: Do not allow me to "be put in a place of temptation which I could not stand and overcome. . . . We pray not to be exposed to a test too great for us."

Consistent with Jesus' instruction in the garden.

He warned them to pray that they not be thrust into testing they were unprepared for.

God doesn't cause people to be tempted to sin.

James 1:13-14: God has nothing to do with temptation to evil.

He doesn't *tempt* anyone to do evil.

Our desires lead us into temptation!

Morris: Jesus is encouraging an attitude that flees from temptation.

Disciples recognize our weakness, recognize ease with which we give way to temptation . . . so we pray to be delivered from them."

A disciple who thinks he can stand in his own strength to face Satan's pressure, is headed for a fall.

Victory comes by acknowledging our dependence on Him for deliverance!

[After teaching His disciples how to pray, Jesus introduces 2 principles that form basis for disciple's prayer. 1st principle revealed in . . .]

11:5-10 5 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, 6 because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' 7 "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.' 8 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. 9 "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. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUSTING A FRIEND

Jesus doesn't say God is like a grouchy neighbor who doesn't want to help us!

Parables teach one main lesson—Don't try to make them "walk on all fours."

He is focusing on the value of a friend.

God is more than a friend, but we can count on Him as we would a true friend!

If a tired neighbor meets need of a "pesty" friend, who comes calling for help at midnight, how much more will a loving Father meet the needs of his own children?!!

We can ask for help in time of need, as a friend asks a friend for help

Our Father not like this neighbor. He *never* sleeps, *never* gets impatient or irritable; is *always* generous, *delights* to meet needs of His children.

However, common perception of the story gives the neighbor a "bum rap"

We misunderstand the dialogue!

Rhetorical question goes through v. 7!

"Which of you . . . having a friend . . . will go to him at midnite with a need, . . . and he will answer you saying: "Go away! Stop Bothering me!"

Friends don't treat friends like that!

You might not *like* being bothered.

But you'd be embarrassed to respond that way.

If you wouldn't help because he's a friend, you might to escape embarrassment.

"Boldness" (NIV); "Persistence" (NAS) = lit., "shamelessness" or "avoidance of shame."

Neither does He tell us which man He's referring to! = lit., "because of his shamelessness,"

OR "his desire to avoid shame," Either is possible!

It seems unlikely that Jesus is criticizing the man seeking help by referring to *him* as shameless.

The neighbor responds so as to avoid shame—he doesn't want to be embarrassed!

Wiersbe: "Hospitality to strangers is a basic law in the East. If a person refused to entertain a guest, he brought disgrace on the whole village . . . 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."

"When Jesus' faithful followers pray, God's reputation is at stake.

The way He takes care of His children is evidence to the world that He can be trusted.

The principle of a friend: The 1st man has nothing to give *his* friend.

He comes to a friend to get something to share with his friend.

Friends aren't ashamed to call a friend when we face a crisis!

We're confident enough to call at midnight.

We're confident enough to call persistently!

The friend at first thinks: "Don't you know what time it is?! My family's asleep. I have to get up and go to work in the morning!" "Leave me alone! Stop bothering me!"

He's not going to answer that way; he has an obligation to help a friend in time of need.

*How much more is God willing to help us out in our time of need? **11:9-10***
 9 "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. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Jesus' disciples have confidence to come to God boldly, without shame or fear, and ask Him for whatever we need.

Faithful and fruitful followers of Jesus are marked by continual communication with the Father:

Lit., "Keep asking, and you'll receive what you're asking for, keep seeking, and you'll find what you're looking for, keep knocking and the door will be opened for you; for everyone who is characterized by asking, receives what he's asking for; everyone characterized by seeking finds; and for everyone characterized by knocking, the door is opened."

When we pray without ceasing, when we continually depend on God for everything, we get what we're after!

Disciples are characterized by continually coming to the Father, acknowledging dependence on Him to supply all we need.

In brief, they "*pray without ceasing!*"

Therefore, faithful followers of Jesus are *satisfied*; they receive their heart's desire.

Underlying supposition: Faithful followers ask according to **2 fundamental premises of prayer:**

We want God's name set apart first—to see Him glorified

We want His kingdom here—His will on earth as in heaven

Basis of our expectancy: God's faithfulness – giving-ness – care

[. . . which brings us to 2nd principle Jesus passes on to His faithful followers; **11:11-13**

11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 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!"

THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUSTING A LOVING FATHER

We expect good gifts from our Father, because of His love.

We pray expectantly.

We expect *good* gifts, because of the Father's loving nature.

God knows all about giving GOOD gifts.

God gives the best gift, because of His love.

BEST gift is the Holy Spirit—God willingly gives to those who want Him.

This is in keeping with nature of 1st petition, and the plan of God for the immediate future.

Jesus' followers seek the coming of the kingdom.

The Spirit is part of that plan.

People who seek the kingdom, receive the Spirit who accompanies its coming.

He gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask for Him.

Acts 1-2 –PETITION IS MADE BY THE DISCIPLES– BEFORE PENTECOST!

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER AT PENTECOST--

They were together praying the same thing.

God gives them what they want–the HOLY SPIRIT

It is consistent with their deepest longings for His kingdom to come!

They prayed in agreement with God's plan for their days.

What should we be asking God for today?

What should the longing of OUR heart be today?

What difference will praying in accordance with this pattern, make in our life?

Main lesson for us:

It's possible to trust Jesus for eternal life and not pray continually.

But, it's not possible to be His disciple—to be a faithful and fruitful follower of Jesus—and not be in continual communication with the Father, like Jesus was!

**THERE IS NO MORE IMPORTANT TASK
FOR FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF JESUS
THAN PRAYER!**