

Luke 11:1-13 “Impact Your Prayer Life” August 18, 2019
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Introduction

Some Christians are great at praying. Others struggle. I would guess that this was true of Jesus’ disciples in Luke 11. Some were great at it; others were not. One day when Jesus was taking prayer-time with his disciples, one of them said, **“Lord, teach us to pray just as John (the Baptist) taught his disciples.”** This led Jesus to respond with a lesson on prayer in our Gospel reading for today. As Jesus responds to his disciples back then, he also gives us the following lesson:

Impact Your Prayer Life ...

... with the Lord’s Prayer ... persistent prayer ... with confident prayer.

...with the Lord’s Prayer

Many of us have prayed the Lord’s Prayer many times. Obviously Jesus wants us to pray it since not only did he teach it to his disciples in the event recorded in Luke’s gospel and also in the Sermon on the Mount, he had the Holy Spirit record it in Scripture. Praying the Lord’s Prayer is good when we, God’s people, think about what we are praying. And isn’t that a problem? We know it so well that we can pray it without thinking. We start, “Our Father ...” and the next things we know we’re saying “Amen So let’s take a little time to think about what we are praying when we pray the Lord’s Prayer. It will impact up your prayer life.

So Jesus taught, **“When you pray, say, ‘Father...’** (In Matthew’s version Jesus added, **“Our...in heaven**) Here Jesus emphasized to his disciples then and now that when we Christians approach God in prayer we do not need to do so in fear because God is the Enforcer or Terminator. No. We can approach God as Father because we are his family through faith in Jesus. Jesus is assuring that because of God’s undeserved love, Jesus’ righteousness, and the forgiveness of sins that are ours through faith in Jesus, we can count on God to listen to our prayers and lovingly respond as our faithful Heavenly Father.

Jesus further taught, **“When you pray say, ‘...Hallowed by your name...’”** God’s *name* is every title by which God is known as well as that information that makes up his reputation by which God can be known - God’s word itself. *Hallowed* means holy. God and his word are holy in and of themselves. But we are praying in this petition, “God, lead us and others to honor you reverently, to use your titles respectfully, to study and teach your Word rightly, and to live godly lives to your glory.”

Jesus continued, **“When you pray say, ‘...Your kingdom come.’”** Jesus taught that the kingdom of God does not come with observation and that one can point to geographic boundaries. Jesus taught his disciples, **“The kingdom of God is within you (Lk 17).”** It is God’s ruling in our hearts through God’s Word, especially the Gospel and the Holy Spirit working through it. With this petition we are praying, “Father, preserve us and strengthen us as believers. Do the same for other Christians. But bring your kingdom to those in whose hearts right now you do not rule that they may know your love, forgiveness, peace, power, and life that has no end.”

In his Luke lesson on prayer Jesus didn’t continue, **“Your will be done on earth as in heaven,”** as he did in the Matthew version of this prayer. It may be because, as Martin Luther concluded, that God’s will is that God’s name be hallowed and his kingdom come. When we pray this petition, however, we are asking God, “Rule this universe, world and our lives according to your wisdom and will, overcoming everything that would get in your way including the devil and our own sinful nature. We submit ourselves to you and volunteer to serve you in whatever way you want us to.”

In Luke’s account, as in Matthew’s, Jesus did say, **“When you pray say, ‘...Give us each day our daily bread.’”** Daily bread, as Martin Luther emphasized, is everything that we need for our welfare from food, to clothes, to family, to good government, to education, to work to weather. Jesus is reassuring us that each day we can trust in God to take care of us and others giving us what we need. We show this trust as we pray this petition.

Jesus continued, **“When you pray say, ‘Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. ...”** Jesus reminds us here that we are sinful. But he also assures us that God has forgiven all our sins. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, **“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not counting men’s sins against them (2Co5:19).”** In this petition we show our trust in this fact and in view of our many sins committed in weakness and ignorance, we ask God, “Continue to look on us with this forgiveness that is ours through faith in Jesus. At the same time we acknowledge that forgiven, we also have the power and the responsibility to forgive those who sin against us. We commit to do so as a fruit of our faith.”

Jesus further taught, **“When you pray say, ‘...Lead us not into temptation...”** The devil tempts people to sin. God tests people’s faith but doesn’t cause people to sin. But sometimes God may put us in situations for his own good purposes that devil tries to use for his evil ones. Take for example an illness or injury. God promises in 1 Co. 10:13 that he will never let us be tempted beyond what we can bear and will always provide a way out when we are being tempted. So with this petition we pray for ourselves and others, “God, please don’t put us in situations we cannot handle in respect to temptation.” We also pray, “God, be with us when we are tempted enabling us to resist the devil standing firmly on the foundation of your word.”

In Jesus’ lesson on prayer in Luke, this is all there is. There’s no 7th petition, **“...but deliver us from evil.”** But this petition was in Jesus’ lesson on prayer in The Sermon on the Mount. When we pray this petition we are asking God to protect us and others from the devil and all the evil that he and his allies would bring on this world whether it be in the form of physical or spiritual harm. We’re asking the Lord to let his holy angels guard us and finally to take us from the evil in this world to the holiness and glory of heaven. It may be that in the Luke’s lesson Jesus was incorporating this last thought in the ultimate coming of God’s kingdom at the end of time.

Note that Jesus didn’t throw in the **“for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.”** It doesn’t mean that he never prayed this or included this in his lessons on prayer. This is similar to a part of a prayer in 1 Chronicles 29 that Jews often inserted at the end of their prayers. We certainly can include it in ours as we do. Nor did Jesus end things with an “amen.” That doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t pray it. Amen means “truth” Indicating both that this is the truth and this is what we truly pray.

What Jesus is teaching his disciples is **“Impact your prayer life with the Lord’s Prayer.”** How blessed we are to have a teacher who is also our Savior who prayed perfectly in our place and took the punishment for our failures on himself when he suffered and died on Calvary. Because of him, God forgives our failures in prayer. But then this is reason to perk up our prayer life praying the Lord’s Prayer thoughtfully and sincerely. But Jesus also adds, **“Impact your prayer life**

...with persistent prayer

This is what Jesus was teaching with the story of the man who has guests stop in expectantly at night. **⁵Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ ⁷And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ ⁸I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.** So Jesus teaching, **“Impact your prayer life with persistent prayer.”**

The difference between the two friends and God and us, is that God isn’t going to finally grow tired of our knocking and answer our prayers to get us off his case. God may wait on answering prayer to nurture not only persistence but also patience on our part, or because the timing isn’t right. Our Heavenly Father loves us as he has proven in the gift of his Son and the work of his Spirit. He isn’t going to crassly tease us. But like with exercising, he may see that waiting to answer our prayers, will make us more persistent prayers.

When Jesus uses the commands “ask, seek, and knock,” he seems to be suggesting an intensification in prayer. It’s clear that he is encouraging us, **“Impact your prayer life praying with persistent prayer.”**

...with confident prayer

It’s also clear that Jesus is teaching, **“Impact your prayer life with confident prayer.”** **“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. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”**

With Jesus commands to pray, he attaches promises that our Father will hear and answer our prayers. In case his disciples doubt this Jesus challenges them with the fact that even though they are sinful and imperfect, give god gifts to their children. ¹¹**“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹²Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?”** They’ll give their children what they need because they love their children.

“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!” This means when we pray to God, who is perfect, all-knowing, all-powerful, loving, faithful, and compassionate, he will answer us in love, wisdom, faithfulness and power. He will give us the best gift – the Holy Spirit. And if he will give us the Holy Spirit, whom we need most to remain Christians and have eternal life, our Father in heaven will give us other things that we need – the right things at the right time. It may not always be what we want. Sometimes these answers may challenge us. But when they do, our Father will be with us to help us meet the challenge.

Therefore, Impact **your prayer life ... with the Lord’s Prayer ...with persistent prayer ...and with confident prayer.**
Amen.