

Text: Luke 11:1-13

Title: “Don’t Quit Praying”

We are created for intimacy with God. A person without Christ has no relationship with God ... totally cut off from God and spiritually dead. Intimacy isn’t possible. But when we put our trust in Christ and are saved the capacity for intimacy with God is activated. Our spirit comes alive and we can connect with His Spirit. That becomes the fuel for our life. We are designed to run on intimacy with God, not on the things of this world. Without that intimacy we’ll always feel there’s something missing in our lives. But when we do connect with God we’ll find the strength to overcome temptation and to live a holy life. We’ll have the power to serve God effectively. So we want you to UPGRADE to greater intimacy with God through prayer.

Open your Bibles to Luke 11:1. In our 40 Days of Prayer worship times we’re tracking the prayer life of Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. Luke gives us more details about the prayer life of Jesus than any of the other Gospel writers. **Read Luke 11:1.**

Jesus not only taught about prayer; He lived a life of prayer. Sometimes Jesus prayed alone, but at other times He let His followers see and hear Him pray. And when they did they realized there was something special happening between the Father and Jesus. They saw how Jesus’ whole life flowed out of His intimacy with the Father. His life was fueled by intimate prayer with God. The disciples saw this and it caused them to ask, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

When you pray that prayer with a sincere heart, count on God answering it. There’s nothing God desires more from us than to draw near to Him in prayer. So Jesus did what the disciples asked Him to do. He taught them *to* pray. He taught them the importance of prayer. And then He taught them *what* to pray ... what to say when they pray. **Read Luke 11:2-4.** This is a shortened version of what is called the Lord’s Prayer found also in Matthew 6. But then Jesus taught His disciples *how* to pray effectively. **Read Luke 11:5-13.**

Jesus uses two common images or parables to drive home an important principle for prayer: Don’t quit praying.

QUOTE – Rick Warren in the small group video session last week said, “If you’re praying you’re not giving up. If you’re giving up you’re not praying.” Don’t quit praying. Don’t quit praying for God to restore your marriage. Don’t quit praying

for God to save your child. Don't quit praying for God to heal or to bring you the right mate or to open the door to the mission field. Don't quit praying. First ...

1. DON'T QUIT PRAYING ... CONFIDENTLY

The disciples may have wondered, "Can we be so bold as to ask God for His name to be hallowed and for His kingdom to come? Can we be so bold as to ask for our daily needs to be met? Can we really ask God to forgive us? Can we ask God to lead us?" So in response to that Jesus tells this parable about boldness and confidence in our praying. Look at it again. **Read Luke 11:5-6.**

So here's a man who is awakened in the middle of the night with the sound of someone pounding on his door and shouting something. Now this is not something than any of us would look forward to. It generally means that there's bad news.

ILLUSTRATION – One night a couple of years ago our doorbell rang in the middle of the night. We went downstairs and looked through the peep hole to see one of our neighbors standing on the porch. As I opened the door she had a panicked look on our face. Their little baby was having difficulty breathing and they needed to get him to the emergency room quickly. She asked if we would watch their other little preschool son until the grandparents could get there. Well, of course we were ready to help.

Now it's one thing for your neighbor to wake you up in the middle of the night to ask for help with an emergency like a sick child. But you might be a little upset, if your neighbor woke you up to borrow some bread, as it happens in Jesus's story. But actually this really was a big deal and it happened all the time. People traveled from place to place and depended on the hospitality of strangers. A stranger could come to you in the night and say, "I need a place to sleep and eat before I continue on my journey." And you would be expected to help them out.

The man inside the house said in v.7, "That's your problem, not mine. My door is already locked, and my wife and children are all in bed with me." I know that sounds strange but again in biblical times houses were typically very small. There was one room that would be used during the day for living and eating, and at night it was used for sleeping. So they all slept in the same room, if not in the same bed. So for the guy inside to get up and help the guy outside would disturb his whole family. Then Jesus said...

Luke 11:8 - 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.

Sure they're friends and neighbors, but what moves the guy on the inside is the boldness of the guy on the outside. The word "boldness" means "shameless begging." It means, "I don't care how ridiculous this sounds, or what you may think of me. I'm desperate."

So Jesus is teaching something about prayer, but more importantly about our heavenly Father. Now why would Jesus compare His heavenly Father to a grumpy, selfish neighbor? Well this is what is called a *contrasting parable*. The idea here is not that God is like the man in the house. The idea is that God is *not* like the man in the house. The inside man said to the outside man, "You're stretching the limits of our relationship. But because of your boldness I will give you all you need." And Jesus' point here is that if that stingy, grumpy neighbor is that way, how much more will our loving heavenly Father respond to our boldness.

The Bible tells us to approach God with confidence so that we can receive grace and mercy to help in our time of need. Now what we know from reading the rest of the NT is that our boldness and confidence is not based in our own goodness. The only reason we can approach God like this is because Jesus died to take away our sin and give us right standing with the Father. So when we pray in Jesus' name, we're coming to God, not in our righteousness, but in Christ's righteousness. That's the reason we can be confident when we approach God in prayer. We don't have to shrink back or hold back.

So when we come to God where not stretching the relationship and neither are we straining God's resources. He's a great God. He can handle what we bring to Him in prayer.

ILLUSTRATION - A wealthy person is honored by the magnitude of the request made of them. Don't you think that billionaire Bill Gates would be insulted if you went to him begging and pleading for a ten dollar donation for your kids PTA? This guy has given away billions of dollars. Don't be afraid or hesitant to ask great things of God. He is a great God.

QUOTE: John Newton, who wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace" also wrote a lesser-known hymn that has a stanza that says this: "Thou art coming to a King,

large petitions with thee bring; For His grace and power are such, none can ever ask too much; none can ever ask too much.”

Don't quit praying confidently. Next ...

2. DON'T QUIT PRAYING ... PERSISTENTLY

Luke 11:9 - “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.

Jesus uses three words to describe the activity of prayer: we ask, we seek and we knock. “Ask” is a common word for prayer. It means to ask with urgency. “Seek” is another synonym for prayer. God said in...

Jeremiah 29:13 - You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Notice we're not just seeking answers; we're seeking God. This is a process of getting increasingly closer to God ... pressing in on God ... asking, seeking, knocking. The tense of these verbs mean: “keep on asking; keep on seeking; keep on knocking.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17 says for us to “pray continually” ... pray without quitting. The man on the outside kept on knocking. And the guy on the inside responded to His persistence. He opened the door and gave his neighbor all he needed. And when we knock and the door is opened to us we're met by a loving Father who longs for us to approach Him.

Luke 11:10 - For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Later in ...

Luke 18:1 - Jesus told his disciples ... that they should always pray and not give up.

And we don't just do it for the midnight emergencies. We live in His presence continuously and instantly rolling every care over on to Him. Don't quit praying confidently, persistently, and...

3. DON'T QUIT PRAYING ... SPECIFICALLY

We are to ask specifically because God desires to answer specifically. The man in Jesus' story didn't just ask for help; he asked for bread. The more specifically we ask, the greater glory God gets when He answers specifically.

ILLUSTRATION – At our prayer service last Sunday evening we showed a testimony of the mother of the Kendrick brothers who have produced some powerful Christian movies in recent years. Mrs. Kendrick is well up in years, but she still loves to tend to her flowerbeds and garden. But her yard is rather large and she has a hard time getting around. So one morning she prayed about it and wrote a specific prayer request on a sticky note and put it in her Bible. One week later was Mrs. Kendrick's birthday. Just before her birthday one of her sons woke up one morning thinking about what to get his mother for her birthday. The idea came into his mind. He called his brothers and said, "Mom needs something to make her yard work easier. Let's get her a golf cart." The brothers agreed and on the day of Mrs. Kendrick's birthday they had all the family over to her house. They asked her to close her eyes and when she opened them there was this beautiful golf cart. She began to cry. She went into her house and got the sticky note from her Bible where she had written down her specific request *that God would provide for her a golf cart*. You see she might have just prayed generally, "Lord, help me to keep working in my yard." And God would have been glorified when He gave her the strength. But with this specific request, God was glorified even more when He answered specifically.

Jesus uses another image to drive home the importance of praying specifically.

Read Luke 11:11-12.

If a child asks for some bread dad's not going to reach outside and grab a snake to give to his child. Ridiculous! And if the child asks for an egg the dad wouldn't give them a scorpion. It's inconceivable unless the father is crazy. And God never gives His children anything that will harm them. And He will not hold back anything that will help them.

Now, does that mean that we always get exactly what we ask for in prayer? No. That's the mystery of unanswered prayer. There are plenty of examples in the Bible when God didn't answer exactly as His people prayed. But I will tell you this. When this life is over and we get the chance to look back over the journey of our life, we will see that in the times that God didn't give us exactly what we asked for in prayer, as it turned out He gave us something more and better.

We never have to be afraid of the answers that God gives when we pray. So don't quit praying confidently, persistently, specifically and ...

4. DON'T QUIT PRAYING ... EXPECTANTLY

Luke 11:13 - 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!"

And if weak human dads have the instinct to take care of their children, how much more will our perfect heavenly Father do that which is good for His children. You never have to be afraid of putting something in God's hands. What if God says no? Even if God doesn't respond exactly as you asked Him to do, or when you asked him to do it, know this: Whatever He gives and whenever He gives it is always the best.

ILLUSTRATION – One of my spiritual heroes is Hudson Taylor who was a missionary to China in the late 1800s. God had put in on his heart to take the Gospel to a region that had never been visited by missionaries before. Many tried to persuade him not to go. It was too dangerous. He responded: "It is not difficult for me to remember that the little ones (his children) need breakfast in the morning, dinner at midday, and something before they go to bed at night. Indeed, I could not forget it. And I find it impossible to suppose that our Heavenly Father is less tender or mindful than I."

Notice Jesus said in v.13, "Your Father in heaven gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him." That tells me that of all the things we should be asking God for, our greatest need is more of Him. The point of prayer is not just getting more things ... it is getting more of Him. He gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. He gives Himself.

So where do you stand with God today ... far away or close up. He gives the Holy Spirit for salvation ... for strength ... for service ... for supply. Move toward Him today.