

AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: “Be Persistent in Prayer” Luke 11

Scripture of Lesson: Luke’s Gospel 11: 5-13

1. God’s generosity

A. God is generous to those who ask, seek and knock

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. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [v 11: 9-10]

Lord Jesus gave this teaching as related to the model prayer in which they were to ask for “daily bread,” for forgiveness of their trespasses, for the kingdom of heaven to come and for God’s will to be done here on the earth as in heaven. However, this particular teaching about God’s generosity seems closely related to asking for “daily bread,” in other words, what we need, both materially and spiritually—for the ‘good things’ from God.

Lord Jesus teaches His disciples about God’s generosity. God is indeed generous to all of His creation and it is often referred as God’s ‘providence.’ A distinction is usually made between “general providence,” which refers to God’s continuous upholding of the existence and natural order of the universe, and “special providence,” which refers to God’s extraordinary intervention in the life of people.

that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. [Matt 5: 45]

B. This trait of God refers to the general providence, through which God chooses to shed His blessings to all of His creation as set forth through the laws of nature, which He has built into His creation. Even the evil disciples of Satan enjoy breathing the clean air, drinking clean water and eating the produce of the land. These general blessings of God continue until He intervenes and decides to end them. Through the ten plagues brought upon the Egyptian people through Moses and Aaron, God turned His blessings into curses because Pharaoh refused to obey God’s command to let the people of Israel go out of Egypt. This story shows that God’s blessings are of no guarantee to the unbelievers. When the curse of death comes upon them if not before, all of the blessings they have been enjoying in life will be taken away from them. But it is not so with God’s chosen people. Death is only a step into God’s bigger blessings throughout eternity, which cannot be compared to the blessings of life here on the earth.

C. God gives special blessings to His chosen people here on the earth.

Remember His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth, O seed of Abraham His servant, You children of Jacob, His chosen ones! [Psalm 105: 5-6]

Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? [Luke 12: 24, 28]

D. God wants us to see that His marvelous works are for the benefit of His people and His kingdom. People of this world benefit from them because God’s love is still extended to them. So, God’s works and provisions are particularly meaningful to His people because God loves them more than those who do not know God. As parents of your own children, you love and care for your children while being kind to children of other families. Likewise, God bestows particular care and blessings to His children.

2. Ask, seek and knock

A. *“Everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened [v. 11:10]–*
This is a wonderful promise to God’s people. What are we supposed to ask and how do we ask?
Through the parables in verses 11: 5-13 Lord Jesus teaches us answers to these questions.

B. What should we ask God

- i. The asking man of verse 6 seeks to borrow three loaves of bread to feed an unexpected visitor to his household. He does not seek something for himself or for his own family’s need but for someone else. However, he receives from his friend, the benefactor, “as many as he needs” [v. 8]. The benefactor is moved by this man’s persistent pleading for his guest and considers what is being asked as for ‘his own need.’ When we pray for our neighbor as if the need is our own, God sees what is in our heart and gives what we ask.
- ii. Lord Jesus considered the gift of Holy Spirit as the ‘best gift’ that God wishes to give to His seeking children [v. 13]. He discouraged His disciples from asking for natural needs through repetitious rote prayers like catechism.

And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. “Therefore, do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. [Matt 6: 7-8]

Therefore, do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. [Matt 6: 31-33]

- iii. So, it is the privilege of God’s children to pray for expansion and furtherance of His kingdom, and for demonstration of His power and sovereignty in the world. This teaching, however, does not exclude us from asking for our own needs. God WANTS us to come to Him with our needs on a daily basis just as a loving mother wants her children to come to her asking for the little as well as big things they need. Even if what we ask for is only a little thing, God wants to hear our prayers.

C. How should we ask

- i. The greatest benefactor, God, will rise and give to the seeking Christian for two reasons: because he is a friend but more because of her incessant asking [importunity] [v. 8].

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers [Romans 1: 9]

- ii. We need to ask in faith, firmly believing that God will answer our godly pleadings.

So, Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.” [Matt 17: 20]

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. [James 1: 5-7]

Discussion topics:

1. *What are the objects of my prayers? What have I been praying for lately?*
2. *How do I ask God? Do I ask in full faith or haphazardly?*