

Lord, teach us to pray!

Jesus Gives a Lesson on Prayer

*Dear Andrew!**

Have you ever thought of letting Jesus teach you how to pray? Would there be a better teacher? Definitely not! Whether you are experienced in prayer or not – simply take time to learn from Jesus.

The disciples observed Jesus praying time and again. They noticed that He spent a lot of time in prayer with His heavenly Father. He spoke with Him as a child would talk with his/her beloved “daddy” (Abba). This deeply touched them. „Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit.”¹ Through this fellowship with His Father He was able to bring the light of heaven to people. The disciples realized that His authority and His miracles were closely connected to His prayer life. They hoped that by Him teaching them on the subject of prayer that they could accomplish a lot more as His fellow workers. That is why they made this request to Jesus: “Lord, teach us to pray.” Jesus responded to their request.

His lesson on prayer is recorded in Luke 11:1-13. He had three points of emphasis:

¹ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 139.1

our personal requests, intercessory prayer for others and constantly asking for and receiving the Holy Spirit. To start with we will read Luke 11:1-4.

*“Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘**Lord, teach us to pray**, as John also taught his disciples.’ So He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’” (NKJV)*

In His **first point** of emphasis Jesus gave us a model prayer for our personal requests. We call it “the Lord’s Prayer”. It contains six requests. (In the book of Matthew an explanation follows the prayer.) This shows that our relationship to God may indeed be shaped by requests.

In the first group of three requests the focus is on God. He should be first in our prayers. To hallow His name means to respect and honor God, to worship Him and to enter and maintain an intimate relationship with Him.

* Andrew according to the biblical Andrew in John 1:41-42.

When I ask God for His will to be done on earth, then it reminds me of my own readiness to do what He wants. God's will should be accomplished in my life. We may even ask: "*Lord, continuously give me the steadfast will to be willing to do what you want.*" (Hebrews 13:21)

And when we pray "Your kingdom come", this request admonishes us to prepare for this event and to orient ourselves in our daily lives for the return of Jesus. We also want to help let as many people as possible know about this great event so that they can prepare themselves for it.

The second group of three requests touches on important areas of our personal life: sustenance, forgiveness and temptation.

1. Sustenance: "Give us **day by day** our daily bread." We see here again that our lives are programmed for a 24-hour day. In our previous studies we have already ascertained that this principle doesn't only apply to the body, but also to the soul and mind, because 2 Corinthians 4:16 says that the inward man is renewed **day by day**.

When Jesus spoke about the request for our daily bread, then He certainly meant all the basic sustenance with everything we need in our daily lives.

2. Forgiveness: The next request in this model prayer shows us our constant dependence on God's forgiveness. At the same time, it admonishes us to be willing to forgive.

"... **for we also** forgive everyone who is indebted to us." How can a person who isn't willing to forgive all people for everything, expect forgiveness for himself? We can see clearly here that this unconditional readiness to forgive is only possible when we continually receive forgiveness from God and ask for His strength – the strength of the Holy Spirit. In our own strength it is impossible to forgive everyone everything! God's forgiveness is the first step so that we can, strengthened by His love and grace, forgive the pain others have caused us and their guilt - including our own part – and give it to God. It is wonderful to live without any burden.

3. Temptation: The third request in this group reminds us that we are constantly exposed to temptations to evil. But God can and wants to safeguard us against failure. Some people think that because we are sinners that we have to continue sinning, meaning transgressing God's commandments of love and hurting ourselves and others. No! Jesus is not only a sin-forgiving Redeemer, but He also came to save His people **from their sins**. He wants to protect us from sinning through a life in close contact with Him.

John wrote: "*Whoever abides in Him does not sin.*" (1 John 3:6 NKJV) "*We know that whoever is born of God does not sin (= doesn't keep on sinning); but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.*" (1 John 5:18 NKJV)

We can see in these six requests that we have a wonderful heavenly Father, who wants to take care of us in all areas. We should remember that in the Lord's prayer we are praying for **our** relationship with God and **our** personal needs. So, it is definitely correct when we pray for ourselves first.

In the **second point of emphasis** – Luke 11:5-8 – Jesus taught us to pray for others.

*“And He said to them, ‘Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and **I have nothing** to set before him’; and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you?’ I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.”* (NKJV)

In the orient people often traveled at night because it was too hot during the day. We don't know why the guest didn't arrive at his friend's house until midnight. In any case, the host wasn't prepared for visitors – very embarrassing! Hospitality is extremely important in the orient!

That is why he went to his neighbor and said: **“I have nothing** to set before him.” He isn't asking his neighbor/friend for something for himself, but rather so that he can feed and take care of his guest. Jesus is teaching intercession for others. We should ask **so that we can give**. Jesus addresses an important point here: we have nothing which we can give to the needy. But we have a friend – Jesus – who has everything that is needed.

This reminds me of a scene in 2 Chronicles 20. Jehoshaphat was the reigning king at that time and was very devout. His country, Judah, was being attacked by a mighty army. Jehoshaphat prayed:

“... For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.” (verse 12 NKJV) In other words: we are completely helpless. We have nothing. How did God answer this prayer? *“... Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.”* (verse 15 NKJV) And how did the war end? *“Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.”* (verse 22 NKJV)

What does Jesus teach us about intercessory prayer?

1. Personally, we have nothing which can resolve the hardship or even really help it.
2. We have a friend who has everything necessary.

But in this parable the friend isn't immediately willing to help. Naturally, this doesn't apply to God – He wants to help us. But we should learn that our intercessory prayers **won't always be answered immediately**. The friend finally helps because of his persistence. We definitely don't want to be persistent in a negative manner with God, but also not with a false sense of shame. Here, Jesus is teaching us **perseverance** in praying for others. And the result of this intercession was finally successful.

The man in the parable received enough food so that he could feed his unexpected guests. God answers our intercessory prayers and wants us to pray for other people. And – “the more earnestly and steadfastly we ask, the closer will be our spiritual union with Christ.”²

In the books “*40 Days – Prayers and Devotions to Prepare for the Second Coming*” by Dennis Smith and “*Spirit-Filled Coworkers of Jesus*” by Helmut Haubeil, it is suggested that while studying and praying for 40 days, we should also pray intensively for five unreached people and get in touch with them so that we can show them Jesus’ love and so they can begin a personal relationship with Him. We can either pray alone for these five individuals or together with a prayer partner.

Thus far Jesus’ lesson was about our personal requests and praying for others. To sum up, Jesus wants to encourage and remind us that we can pray for **anything** that is in His name, according to His will. He clearly explained that our prayers will be answered.

In the **third point of emphasis** and the last part of Jesus’ lesson we read in Luke 11:9-13:

“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. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone?”

Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (NKJV)

Jesus is the master teacher. He repeats his lesson with other images and terms. Ask, seek, knock. Then he explains why asking is necessary in verse 10: “for everyone who asks receives”. “God does not say, Ask once, and you shall receive. He bids us ask.”³

In James 4:2 it says: “... Yet you do not have because you do not ask.” (NKJV)

When we pray we aren’t reciting a poem written ahead of time. But rather, we pray for specific things which we need in our lives. And we receive them because we ask. And if someone still shouldn’t be convinced of the necessity and the wonderful opportunity of asking God, then He gives two examples from everyday life. When our children ask for fish, we don’t give them a snake. And if the child wants an egg, we won’t put a scorpion in their hand. When our children ask for something, then they always receive something good which is of help to them. Parents never give their children poison or fulfill any rash wishes which might injure them. And if sinful people can act like this, how much more is that true of our heavenly Father.

2 Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 146.1

3 Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 145.3

But we need to remember something when we are praying for other people: God doesn't force anyone to repent and He doesn't manipulate anyone. However, in His infinite wisdom He can lead someone to change their ways. We don't know how He does this or how much time He needs.

Now, Jesus has brought us to the **climax of His lesson**: ***"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*** (verse 13 NKJV) (Greek = continually asking, asking daily)

Why did Jesus choose the Holy Spirit as the climax of His lesson? How was it in His life? "From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism [was filled] of the Holy Spirit."⁴ – "Jesus will do the same for you when you ask Him. It is His wish to give you the Holy Spirit every morning in preparation for the day."⁵ Because Jesus was able in the power of God – the power of the Holy Spirit – to master every day and because He also wants to do this for us is why He made this the climax of His lesson on prayer.

God's greatest gift, which then brings all other gifts, is the Holy Spirit. And if we want our requests and intercessions to be heard, then we have to be filled with the Holy Spirit while praying. God's Word says: "... *praying in the Holy Spirit.*" (Jude 20 NKJV)

It is necessary for us to consecrate ourselves anew with all we are and have to God every morning. Thus, we maintain our fundamental relationship with Jesus. This includes gladly committing ourselves to Him again. "Lord, I surrender myself to You with everything I am and have." It means that I follow and obey God in everything and remove all obstacles, for example unforgiven guilt, harboring a grudge, self-reproach, resentment, sinful lusts, etc.

And the other important daily request is asking by faith to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is done best with promises where God has promised us the Holy Spirit, for example Luke 11:13. This will make a positive change in our lives and our prayers will be answered more often. Because through our connection with the Holy Spirit we will come to know what and how we should pray and what might be blocking our prayers. I think we can be thankful for these three points of emphasis Jesus made, even though we will never finish learning.

Jesus taught us to seek a connection to God through our requests and we can pray for our personal needs. Furthermore, He taught us to pray for others, with the assurance that our heavenly Father will hear us, when we live in an intimate relationship with Jesus and are filled with the Holy Spirit. "We must not only pray in Christ's name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."⁶ "The Holy Spirit will take the things of God and show them unto you, conveying them as a living power into the obedient heart."

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 139.1

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 147.3

⁵ Dennis Smith, *40 Days – Prayers and Devotions to Prepare for the Second Coming*, p. 7

Why did Jesus choose the request for the Holy Spirit as the climax and conclusion of His lesson on prayer?

The Holy Spirit was the greatest gift that Jesus could give to His disciples. It is the crowning gift, the gift of all gifts.

Jesus lives in us through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18; Ephesians 3:16-17). Only the Holy Spirit can maintain the connection between Jesus and us. He wants to live His victorious life through the Holy Spirit in us, so that we can also be conquerors. The Holy Spirit is the foundation for a joyful, attractive and fruitful life in Christ. Ephesians 3:16 shows us: God makes us strong through the Holy Spirit in the inner man. In this way Christ lives in our hearts. He develops His character in us: the fruit of the Spirit. This is the way to the path of God's abundance (John 10:10; Ephesians 3:19; Colossians 2:10).

I have found four great promises about a life with the Holy Spirit and four commissions or commands by God to live in the Holy Spirit:

Promises for the Holy Spirit

- › Luke 11:13: Ask for the Holy Spirit; He is a gift.
- › John 7:37: Desire the Holy Spirit, then we can go to Jesus and drink = He satisfies our yearning for God, for happiness.

- › John 7:38-39: Believe Jesus, then rivers of living water will flow from us.
- › Acts 5:32: Obey the Holy Spirit. When we obey God, then He can and will bless us in abundance in our lives.

Four Commissions or Commands of God

- › Acts 2:38: Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- › Galatians 5:16: Walk continually in the Spirit – then we safeguarded against sin.
- › Ephesians 5:18: Be filled with the Spirit – the Lord wants us to grow in our lives with the Holy Spirit.
- › Jude 20: Pray in the Holy Spirit. As a result, you develop a fulfilled prayer life with many answered prayers.

What does the Lord's commission to live in the Holy Spirit mean?

This means that this is possible with His help. Ellen G. White says: "Whatever is to be done at His command, may be accomplished in His strength. **All His biddings are enablings.**" This means that when God commands something that we can really do it with His help.

When God commands something this shows that He has established it. This reminds us of Psalms 99:4. It says about God: You determine what is right. God, the Creator, has established the standard. He has determined in what way we can maintain a connection with Him: Only through the Holy Spirit do we have this contact. Only through a constant life in the Holy Spirit is the connection preserved. This means that whenever I deviate from the path which God has established, then I lose something – damages occur!

When God commands us to live in the Holy Spirit – very closely linked with Him – and I reject it, ignore it or don't feel like it, then I am separated from God and sin! Then I am leaving God's protection and I am in danger!

I want to conclude with a quote from Ellen White: "Let your heart break for the longing it has for God, for the living God. [When our longing is deficient, we may pray for this longing. At times even every day (John 7:37).] The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised."

Dear Andrew,

It might do you good to read this letter on Jesus' prayer lesson multiple times. This will strengthen and promote your prayer life. Then you will be able to rejoice over many answered prayers and be able to tell about them with gratefulness! May the Lord bless you!

With warm regards,

Helmut

Praying with Promises

Praying with Promises

Our heavenly Father has given us an important help so that we can trust Him easily. We call it “praying with promises.” “To blot the promises of God from the Word would be like blotting the sun from the sky ... God has placed the promises in His Word to lead us to have faith in Him.” Praying with promises is described in detail and in a way to easily put into practice in *Steps to Personal Revival*, chapter 5.

Key Texts for Praying with Promises

1 John 5:14-15: “*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him (God), that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know (immediately) that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*” (NKJV)

2 Peter 1:4: “*By which [an intimate relationship with Jesus] have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*” (NKJV)

Experiences of Praying with Promises

A retired pastor and union department head in the USA wrote on June 26, 2017: “... I read the book *Steps to Personal Revival* three times. I never thought that I would find such new knowledge about prayer. Prayer based on God’s promises. In the meanwhile, God has given me victories in my life which I would have never thought possible.” F. S.

This pastor wrote again on July 25, 2017: “Since I started to read the book (I have read it six times as advised in the book) and have learned to pray with promises, **my life has been changed.** ... The Lord led me to prepare a sermon for camp meeting on our greatest need: the refreshing shower of God’s Spirit. **In all the years that I have served God, I had never before sensed the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way as it moved the 3,000 attendees in this auditorium.** – My wife has noticed a complete change in me. I am also surprised about myself.” F. S. shortened

Expect Great Things from God and Venture Great Things for God

A Young Pastor Prays for Mission

Taken from the book of experiences “*Never Alone*”, volume 1 which was printed in November 2023 and includes more than 70 experiences that were published in the “*Missionsbrief*”. It is a source of joy to read these experiences on Friday evening or at the close of Sabbath.

Loren Nelson was an associate pastor working together with Burton Maxwell. He was called to pastor the church in Cottage Grove, Oregon, USA in 1973. He believed in the power of prayer. He asked his church members to write down all the names of their friends, who they wished were baptized. He then placed the names on his personal prayer list. The only condition was that they visited the person in question with him and introduced him. He received 86 names. He started to pray for them and to visit them.

Three years later Loren Nelson was supposed to be transferred to a new district. Shortly before he moved, he turned his attention towards the first name on his prayer list. This man hadn't made a decision to be baptized yet. Loren Nelson talked to the elder about this. The elder then decided to pray a whole night for this man. The following day the man made his decision. He was baptized and later became an elder in the church.

What happened to the other 85 names on the list? Loren Nelson's prayer and work resulted in 86 of the 86 people being baptized in those three years.

Almost 67% of people baptized are relatives or friends. L. Nelson came into close contact with precisely these people through his offer. Taken from: *Wind in the Sails: Prayer in Mission* von Tim Crosby in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century*, p. 121 (Review and Herald)

“Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” (Psalms 50:14-15 NKJV)

The Eurocity Train makes an Extra Stop

“Your ticket please.” After the friendly conductor took a brief look at my ticket he soberly stated: “You are sitting in the wrong train!” I was traveling back home from the mission school TGM in Carinthia, Austria. I had just left Salzburg and was traveling in the direction of Munich. I had actually wanted to change trains in Rosenheim, but this train wasn't scheduled to make any stopovers until arriving in Munich.

I had indeed gotten on the wrong train in Salzburg! What should I do now? The conductor said: “I will speak with the train engineer and see if it is possible to make a stop in Rosenheim. But remember that you are already 13 minutes late now.” Now I prayed: “Father in heaven, please make the train engineer willing to make a short stop in Rosenheim. If not, You could maybe create an obstacle that would make him stop.

If both things don't work, then I am prepared to go to Munich and not get home until after midnight. I ask for Your intervention and claim the promise in Psalms 50:14-15: *“Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”* (Psalms 50:14-15 NKJV) (Verse 14 states the condition for an answer and verse 15 is the promise.)

Shortly before Rosenheim, I gathered all my things together and went towards the exit. The conductor came and told me that the train would stop for just a moment in Rosenheim. I thanked him very warmly. So, the Eurocity train made a short stop just for me! Praise and thanks to our God. People's quandaries are opportunities for God!

Intercity Express Train (ICE) – Departure at an Indefinite Time

Just after boarding the Intercity Express Train (ICE) in Cologne (Germany) a disturbing announcement made me break out in a sweat. “We ask for your patience because a technical problem will delay our departure for an indefinite time.” A delay now? This meant that I wouldn't catch my connection in Munich anymore. So, I won't make it home today.

I prayed and told God about my trouble. Right after I claimed the promise in Psalms 50:14-15 the train started to move. We even made up the time we had lost and I caught all my connections and arrived home the same day.

The Intercity Express Waited Unexpectedly

On a Sunday I was traveling from Rheine, Westphalia via Münster to Hamm. I was on a regional train which was behind schedule by 10 minutes. In Munich I would need exactly these 10 minutes to make it to my connection on the Intercity Express. So, I asked the railway official on the regional train if he could speak with the train management in Hamm and ask if they could arrange for the Intercity Express (ICE) to wait 5 minutes. The friendly man did as I asked, but was told “No”! Then I prayed again for God’s help and claimed the promise Psalms 50:14-15. When we arrived in the train station in Hamm I could see the ICE waiting. Ten passengers from the regional train were able to catch the ICE within two minutes. I sat down next to a man who was wondering why the ICE hadn’t started yet. I told him the reason: “I can tell you why we aren’t moving yet. I prayed that the ICE would wait five minutes and the five minutes aren’t up yet.” When the five minutes were up, the train pulled out of the station and I was able to catch all my connections.

Does the Railjet train wait in Villach (Austria)?

After completing a seminar in Croatia, I started my trip home midday on Sunday and wanted to reach Bad Aibling, Germany by evening. Unfortunately, the train from Slovenia was delayed by 17 minutes. I wouldn’t arrive in Villach, Austria until after my connecting train had already left. I learned from the conductor that the next connecting train going to Bad Aibling wouldn’t make it there until the next day. So, I asked the conductor to call and ask if the Railjet train could wait for me in Villach. Explaining that the Railjet trains never wait, the conductor immediately declined to make the call. I beseechingly asked him again to make the call. “Ok, I will make the call, but please don’t get your hopes up.” I pled for God’s help by claiming Psalms 50:14-15. After some time, we received the message that the Railjet would wait. In Villach I sat down next to a lady in the Railjet, who after a moment said in an annoyed voice: “I would like to know why this train isn’t moving.” I answered: “I can tell you why.” And then proceeded to tell about my prayer.

“So, it’s your fault that I won’t catch my connecting train in Salzburg. How can someone even bother God with something like that.” This woman was actually a very nice lady, because she had interrupted her family vacation in order to go to Vorarlberg, Austria to help her sick mother. Later, we asked the conductor about the connecting trains in Salzburg, whereupon the conductor said that we would make up the lost time and arrive on time in Salzburg. My seatmate would also catch her connecting train. When God answers my prayers, other people don’t have to suffer as a consequence.

Read
more



BOOK 1: STEPS TO PERSONAL REVIVAL

Being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Our lord himself has given the command:¹ Let yourselves be consistently and repeatedly filled anew with the spirit!²

- 1 Ellen G. White, *Mount of Blessing*, MB 20.3 (egwwritings.org)
- 2 Johannes Mager, *Auf den Spuren des Heiligen Geistes* (Lüneburg, 1999), p. 101

www.steps-to-personal-revival.info

FOREWORD FOR LEADERS AND FUTURE LEADERS MULTIPLYING THE RESULTS

CHAPTER 1: JESUS' MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

What did Jesus teach about the Holy Spirit?

Are you acquainted with Jesus' most powerful message?

CHAPTER 2: WHAT IS THE CENTER OF OUR PROBLEMS?

Is there a spiritual cause to our problems? Is the cause a lack of the Holy Spirit?

What is the main problem with being a carnal Christian?

CHAPTER 3: OUR PROBLEMS ARE SOLVABLE

What is God's solution for our problems? How can we grow to be happy and strong Christians? What is the relationship between baptism and the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER 4: WHAT DIFFERENCES CAN WE EXPECT?

What advantage do we have with a life filled with the Holy Spirit?

What do we lose when we don't pray for the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER 5: THE KEY TO PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

How can I implement and experience God's solution for me?

How should I pray so that I am sure of being filled with the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER 6: WHAT EXPERIENCES LIE AHEAD OF US?

Personal experiences, as well as experiences from churches, a conference and a union

CHAPTER 7: INTEREST AND SHARING

The Joy that we give returns to our own hearts. (German Proverb)

How can I help others to experience "Life in Abundance"?

How do we pass on the message? Which ways are there?

