

## PERSEVERING PRAYER

God will give His Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

### KEY POINTS

- ❖ Early in Luke 11, after Jesus has finished praying, His disciples ask Him to teach them to pray. Jesus teaches the “Our Father” prayer (*what* to pray), then tells the story of a man whose neighbour gives him bread – not out of friendship, but to get some peace, because the neighbour asks persistently (*how* to pray).
- ❖ **Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you** (Lk. 11:9 – active). The words *ask* and *knock* imply the expectation of a relatively quick response; we normally ask someone we are speaking directly to, and we normally knock on a door that’s in front of us.
- ❖ But *seek* implies a longer timeline with nothing tangible in front of us. Yet all three words give a sense of *pursuit* after something needed.
- ❖ Verse 10 stresses, in a passive sense, *what will happen* to those who ask, seek and knock. They will *receive, find* and *have the door opened* to them. Our persistent prayer gets results, not because of any skill on our part, but because of the nature of the One we are asking (praying to).
- ❖ Jesus then uses the example of a human father who does not withhold good from his son (verses 11 – 12)
- ❖ **If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?** Even an imperfect human father would not be manipulative or deceitful, giving his son something that might look like the bread he needs but is actually potentially harmful. **We feed our children ‘the bread of truth’ in order to give them a firm and healthy base of spiritual nourishment.**
- ❖ **If he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?** Fish represent harvest, an image of new life, as in Peter’s great catch before Jesus called him to be a “fisher of men” (Luke 5; Matthew 4: 9). A human father would not give his hungry son something that takes away life and brings death. **We feed our children ‘fish’ that multiplies at the application of Jesus’ Word (Matthew 14:13-21), so that their lives can grow and not be barren.**
- ❖ **If he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? An egg is tasteful to the tongue and nourishes the body.** A scorpion will sting the tongue and poison the body, but Jesus gave His Disciples power over scorpions and the over power of the enemy (Lk. 10:19). A human father would not send an enemy against his son. **We want what is good for our children.**
- ❖ If we who are evil know how to give good gifts to our children, what will God – who is good – do for His children when we petition Him? (See Lk. 11:13.)

### KEY SCRIPTURE: Luke 11:9-13

- ❖ Jesus’ guarantee is that your heavenly Father will give you the Holy Spirit when you ask Him. We must recognize that when we receive this gift, it does not mark an end, but a beginning.
- ❖ In John 16:13, Jesus says that when *the Spirit of truth* comes, He will *guide us* into all truth. We are uncertain of the direction to take, and in our uncertainty we sometimes “ask amiss” and therefore “do not receive” (James 4: 3).
- ❖ But, ultimately, the goal of our prayer is *to be led by God’s Spirit*, so we exercise faith and continue to seek. Our faith leads us to “all truth,” in which we cannot be disappointed.
- ❖ Yet we are often discouraged with life’s results. So, the Holy Spirit comes as our *Comforter*, and abides with us forever (Jn. 14:16 KJV).
- ❖ Comfort is a state of being that occurs inside us. If we allow them, external circumstances will affect us. But God’s Spirit in us has even more influence, if we listen to Him. The world cannot know (receive) Him, but *you* know Him because He dwells in you (Jn. 14:17).
- ❖ Using communication that often goes beyond language (Romans 8:28), His Spirit shows us *how to be* while we are handling whatever situation comes to us. No situation can separate us from the love of Christ (8:38-39) – you cannot be separated from what is *in* you.
- ❖ So, let’s persevere in prayer daily. Let’s keep asking, seeking, knocking. The Spirit of God will fill us. The peace of God which passes all understanding will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

### DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. In your words, what does it mean to “ask,” to “seek,” to “knock” in terms of prayer to God? What does it mean to be “persistent” based on the key scriptures? (See also Luke 18:1-6.)
2. Jesus said, “...much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.” How do we ‘cash in’ on this promise?
3. Based on the scriptures above and any others that come to mind, share and discuss all that the Holy Spirit provides for us (guidance, comfort...).

### PRAYER TIME

Lord, thank You for the promise of answered prayers and especially for the promise of Your Holy Spirit. You truly are a good, good Father.

## WEEK OF SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2022

### NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week’s message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✓ (Reminds me/Confirms)    💡 (New idea)    ☁️ (Think about)

! (Do this)    ❤️ (Speaks to my heart)    ↔️ (Must share)

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### PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

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Go deeper with your Life Group family.  
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD  
Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline

Start-up: Were you ever disappointed by a gift you got (or did not get) from someone? Why did you feel that way?