



Week 3: Luke 11:5-13

## THE PERSISTENCE OF PRAYER

Luke's gospel places this passage after a simplified version of a similar account in Matthew 6. Using a parable of two neighbors, Jesus teaches his disciples a model for persistence in prayer, and calls us to base that diligence upon the generous character of the Person to whom we are praying. In other words, we are to continue in prayer because we know that our God is generous in his mercy and help.

### THE SCRIPTURE: LUKE 11:5-13

<sup>5</sup> And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, <sup>6</sup> for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; <sup>7</sup> and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. <sup>9</sup> And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. <sup>11</sup> What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; <sup>12</sup> or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

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<sup>2</sup> The word here, **anaideia** conveys a sense of shameless boldness without concern for one's own dignity.

## LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 3

### OPENING QUESTIONS

1. "Persistence pays off." Can you think of a way that this truism has played out in your life?
2. Can you think of time in your life when you simply asked someone for something large and it was given to you? How did that make you feel?

### DIVING DEEPER

3. "In the passage on the previous page, use one color to circle all occurrences of the words 'give,' 'given,' or 'gifts.' Then, using a different color, circle all instances of 'ask' or 'asks.'"
4. In this instance, Jesus uses a story to convey a powerful truth. If Jesus were teaching this truth through story today, how do you think he might change it?
5. The key to our persistence in prayer lay in Jesus' uses of the word, *anaideia*, which the ESV translates as "impudence," or a shameless boldness without concern for one's own dignity. How would this attitude affect our prayers if we came to the Lord? How is this word different from "rude."
6. What are the three verbs associated with prayer in verse 9? Do you seem them describing an escalating persistence in prayer?

7. When it comes to prayer the word "asking" is obvious, but what do you think "seeking" and "knocking" look like when we apply them to our lives?
  
8. As we see in verse 13, Jesus isn't equating the sleeping man with God, but is contrasting him with God. Why is that important to remember?
  
9. When we pray, we're putting our faith into action, affirming that (1) God exists and is listening to us, (2) God is inherently good, and (3) we can trust Him to answer generously and wisely, just as He has done in the past. Of these three, which do you most struggle with, and why?
  
10. The passage wraps up in an unexpected manner, stating that the Father will give the Holy Spirit instead of, for instance, "good gifts." Read the following passages and explain why the answer to prayer with the gift of the Holy Spirit is actually the best gift for us:
  - a. Romans 8:15
  - b. Romans 8:26
  - c. John 16:4-15
  
11. Do you think it is possible to be confident in prayer for the wrong reasons? What are some poor reasons people are confident in prayer?
  
12. As you conclude this week's study, in which areas do you sense that the Lord is specifically calling you to dial up your persistence in prayer?