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# Sunday School Lesson

TOPIC:

## “4 Keys to Powerful Prayer”

Luke 11:1-13

**VERSE DISCOVERY: Luke 11:1-13 (KJV, Public Domain)**

### Prepare

- Download and post a picture of Jesus praying. In quote bubbles or on sticky notes, write different excerpts of some of Jesus’ prayers from the Bible (ex. Matthew 11:25; 26:39, 42; Luke 11:41-42; 22:32; John 17:1-25), and post them around the picture. Ask, why do you think Jesus prayed often? What do you think are some things that He and God talked about in prayer? Do you think Jesus had any concerns He may have expressed to God? Then say, If Jesus found it necessary to pray, what about us?
- Why do you think some people avoid prayer? (Allow space for answers)
- Prayer is very important for a child of God. In this lesson, Jesus shares several things He knows about prayer to help each of us when we bring our petitions before God.

### Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 5-12

#### Verses 1-4

When one wants to find out how to do something properly, the best course of action is to go to an expert. Therefore, when the disciple wanted to know how to pray, he went to the greatest source possible, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer is something Jesus did often, and He didn’t shy away from others knowing He was going before the heavenly Father with His petitions and the like. His life became a model for all to follow and the prayer portion of His life was no different. One cannot mimic what they don’t see, and what these disciples saw in Jesus was a man dedicated to talking to the Father one on one throughout the course of His days on a regular basis. Jesus didn’t try to do life alone. Why do so many of us try to?

Prayer is more important than most believe. Prayer, for the Christian, is more than just requesting from God, it’s more than petitioning and supplication. It is a place of comfort where we can unload the heaviness within. It is a source we can rely on when fighting against the adversities that are without. It is a little sanctuary in the big mess of this world where we can meet with our Creator one on one and know that we are heard.

Therefore, when asked, Jesus gladly teaches from what He knows about prayer. And, He knows everything! He knows to Whom we come (our Father) and to give respect unto His holy name. He knows above all else in prayer, that it is God's will we want performed in this world and in our lives, as it is in heaven. He knows God is our ultimate provider and He is the one who can supply our daily bread. He knows God is our forgiver for the truly repentant heart. That when we confess our wrongs before Him, He willingly cleanses us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). And, He knows that God is our deliverer, breaking the chains of evil, and setting people free.

## Verses 5-8

Another thing that Jesus knows about prayer and gladly passes on to those who willingly listen is persistence. God is not a magic genie and God is not a microwave. Often in life, things truly worth having and fighting for don't come instantaneously. Much of our culture wants everything to just plop in our laps suddenly, when God wants us to persevere; when God wants us to persist in keep pushing for it, keep coming to Him with our needs and concerns, and don't be soon moved by adversity and made to quit. Persistence sometimes seems like an uphill march with legs burning and cramping, and muscles you didn't know you had screaming for relief. Yet, the only way to reach the top is to keep going, keep pushing through the discomfort and the pain. In prayer, sometimes we must keep going no matter what, refusing to throw in the towel or stop on the sidelines. Some doors will only be opened through persistence.

## Verses 9-13

So, Jesus encouraged His disciples, and us as well, to continue to ask, seek, and knock, and do so with a believing heart. If you never ask, it will not be given. If you don't seek, how can you find? If one refuses to knock, how can the door be opened? Jesus unveiled these principles of prayer in an easy and applicable manner that the average person who truly wants their relationship with God to flourish can do so by seeking Him and His direction in their lives.

God is our good Father and He wants what's best for His children. But He also wants His children to bring their requests to Him and trust Him to give to them from His goodness (Philippians 4:6). And, what better gift of His goodness to receive than that of the Holy Spirit.

## Activities

- What special person, thing, or situation are you praying for? Use the **Journal Pages** to write your special prayer down. Use it as a guide to help you to remember to lift it up in holy petitions before the Lord.

- Younger students can draw a picture of themselves praying in the **Draw the Scene** section found on site.
- Younger students can put together a **Prayer Chain Craft** where students can link together names of people, things, and situations they are praying for (picture example found on site).
- **Game – Pray with Jesus:** This game is played in the same fashion as Pin the Tail on the Donkey. Download and print a picture of Jesus praying with a lot of background to it or add background or empty space around the picture (cardstock would be best). Hang it, tape it, or pin it to a wall or board (note: make this as big as you like by taping several sheets of paper together). On sticky note papers, have students draw a picture of themselves praying. Then, students take turns being blindfolded. Giving them a quick but gentle spin, have them try to place themselves as close to Jesus praying as possible. The one closest to Jesus wins the game, but we all win when we take Jesus' instructions for prayer and apply it to our own lives. (Feel free to give a small treat or prize to the winner and don't be surprised if they ask to play again 😊). ©WordForLifeSays.com/Game-Pray with Jesus
- Alternate activity sheets, such as **Word Search, Crossword, and more** are available on site for those who just want to work with printed materials.

## Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” Luke 11:1-13***
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 13)

## Life

Have you prayed today? If not, what are some hindrances that get in the way of your prayer life? If so, what is the greatest joy you experience when you pray?

Throughout this week, commit to memory at least one Bible verse on the power of prayer. Let that verse minister to you and build up your faith as you take your petitions to the Lord in prayer (ex. Matthew 7:7; Mark 11:24; John 15:7; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7).

TOPIC:

## “4 Keys to Powerful Prayer”

**Luke 11:1-13**

### **VERSE DISCOVERY: Luke 11:1-13 (KJV, Public Domain)**

*The operation or workings of prayer have been a mystery to some through the ages. For some prayer seems to be some mundane Christian civic duty; a check off list, if you will, of something that needs to be done. For others, prayer seems to be elusive; difficult to understand the concept of and even more difficult to do.*

*Good news! Prayer is not either of those things. Prayer is something that is given to us as an honor; as a way to reach the heavenly Father personally, one on one. How awesome is that? Prayer is as essential to the Christian life as breathing or eating. It is necessary to stay spiritually nourished in Him.*

*So, when Jesus’ disciples asked Him to teach them to pray, He gladly obliged because He Himself knows the significance and power in prayer. In this lesson, there are four key components that can help us have a more powerful prayer life. The good news is, we’re learning from the best. We are sitting at the feet of Jesus and taking in these points as He shares with His disciples. Blessings ~*

### **LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY**

**Luke 11:1 “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”**

One’s life speaks volumes; more than one’s words ever will. Most people will judge you by what they see and what Jesus’ disciples saw was a man who was dedicated to prayer. While He walked on the face of this earth, He was known for offering up “prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears,” (Hebrews 5:7). Witnessing personally His uninhibited habit of

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going before the Father with His petitions and the outpourings of His soul, the disciple wanted to know more.

How awesome it is for the disciple to see such a one as He doing the miraculous and being identified as the Son of God, still find a need for prayer? It's huge! It lets us know that if Jesus needed constant contact with the Father to do life on earth, then so do we. Perhaps this is why a disciple of His questioned Him on prayer and wanted to know more on how to do it?

So, after He was finished **“praying in a certain place . . . one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray.”** The Bible doesn't tell us which disciple it was that asked, and it doesn't matter. What does matter is the disciple's willingness to learn from the Master. When one sees something genuine and real, they want more of it and want to know how it's done. I believe the disciple saw a treasure in prayer and longed to experience it as Jesus did.

Asking to be taught the ins and outs of this valuable resource was the beginning of a great discovery that Jesus was all too willing to share.

Below are four key points that popped out at me during this study on this model prayer that Jesus taught. These are key elements that I believe will help boost our prayer life, taking it out of the mundane onto a platform where it makes a real difference in our lives.

## KEY #1: ONE HAS TO HAVE ACKNOWLEDGING PRAYER

**Luke 11:2-4 “And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”**

When one acknowledges something or someone they are ascribing or giving them credit that they deserve. Here, opening His teaching on prayer, Jesus jumps in without hesitation, stating, **“When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven.”** Now, notice first that Jesus didn't say “if” ye pray. He point-blank expected that His people should have an active and working prayer life so He said, **“When ye pray.”**

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Starting with the statement, **“Our Father which art in heaven,”** Jesus acknowledges to whom one’s prayers should be directed. And, in the verses following God gets the credit for everything! This is acknowledgment.

**“Our Father which art in heaven,”** points one in the right direction. There are many voices that try to offer advice and insight to the world we live and to the troubles and woes we face. Yet, none can have the insight as He who created all things. None is Sovereign as He to really be our champion for real change. That can only come from He who is enthroned in heaven for all eternity; by He Whom everything takes its commands: **“Our Father.”**

**“Our Father”** describes the intimate, relational context in which God wants to be committed to us. Did you get that? God wants to be **“Our Father”** so much that Jesus, God incarnate, instructed us to address Him as such in prayer. Man may not always step up to the plate to fill this role, but God does. He willingly takes on the role of **“Father,”** meaning more than provider in my view. He takes on the responsibility to love, care and nurture them who come to Him seeking Him as daddy. Romans 8:15 describes it as this: “Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” This adoption is an on-purpose act of love that He is seeking to fulfill as role of **“Father.”** God “will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty,” (2 Corinthians 6:18).

**“Hallowed be thy name.”** Part of acknowledging prayer is respecting His holiness. Oh, I cringe when I see people take the name of the Lord in vain. God’s name is not like any other and should not be treated as it is. His name is holy (Isaiah 57:15), and He is the one who “dwell in the high and holy place.” When one invokes God’s name in prayer it is not a plaything. We are seeking His holiness to come in on our behalf; garnering His stamp of approval. Heaven knows how to treat His name so much that they speak the word “holy” three times: “Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts,” (Isaiah 6:3).

Acknowledging prayer recognizes God’s authority, His power, His Sovereignty, His control, His kingdom and His will overall. **“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.”** No wonder at the end of the parallel of this prayer found in Matthew 6:13 it states, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” We should want to see the glory of God’s will take over the atmosphere of this old stale world **“as in heaven.”** We should have heavenly visions of God’s power reclaiming this earth.

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Acknowledging prayer recognizes that God is the provider of all. **“Give us day by day our daily bread.”** “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God,” (2 Corinthians 3:5). We, as all other things created, are dependent on Him as our provider. “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” (Matthew 6:26). God will provide.

Acknowledging prayer knows that forgiveness comes from God: **“And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.”** 2 Chronicles 7:14 declares, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” God wants to spiritually heal people from their sin-sick ways. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” (1 John 1:9).

In return, we are expected to offer forgiveness to those who ask for it. Gulp! Yes, forgiveness in any form can be a hard pill to swallow. But, let me ask you this. How many times has God said no to us whenever we sought for healing and restoration for the wrongs we have done? Exactly, He hasn't! Forgiveness, much like love, is nothing to be played with. It is not a lip service to please others rather, it is a heart service to the Lord. It is, in a sense, showing to others the same grace and mercy that God showed toward us. And, we acknowledge that this is His will for us.

Acknowledging prayer shows God as a deliverer: **“And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”** God doesn't tempt people into sin. “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man,” (James 1:13). Sin is a choice and so is choosing to let God lead and trusting Him to keep you in those hard times. “O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee,” (Psalm 25:20). “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me . . .” (Psalm 19:13). He is a keeper to them that know Him as a deliverer and He is a protector against the ultimate enemy, the devil.

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## KEY #2: ONE HAS TO HAVE PERSEVERING PRAYER

**Luke 11:5-8 “And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him, as many as he needeth.”**

The scenario is simple: it’s late in the midnight hour and someone has dropped in unexpectedly. The problem with the scenario is due to the lateness of the hour and the unexpected nature of the visit there was not enough time to gather resources to care for this visitor.

The proposed solution: knock on the neighbor’s door who is a friend and ask for some help. The problem with the solution: again, stating the obvious, it’s midnight. We are in bed. Are you trying to wake up the kids with all that knocking and yelling out there?! **“I cannot rise and give thee.”**

Now, I don’t know about this neighbor, but waking up at midnight is not exactly a welcomed intrusion into my otherwise restful night. Then, to have the audacity to show up banging on my door and asking for food at that time... well, that’s a whole other story! But hospitality was central to the culture of the day and was expected to be doled out accordingly.

Also, in those days, sleeping arrangements were generally shared by the whole family. Doors had big, heavy bolts that clanged and banged if moved. To get to the bread one would have to step over kids, make noise to get the bread and bang and clang the door opened and shut again. At this point, the whole house could easily be disturbed.

Jesus stated that the neighbor eventually will give his friend what he is asking but not because he is a friend. He will only get up out the bed because of his **“importunity;”** or his persistence.

Jesus uses this scenario to teach us the power of persevering prayer. One cannot give up so easily. We have been afforded the privilege to come before the throne of grace “that we may

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obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,” (Hebrews 4:16). We must be persistent in that privilege.

One’s lack of persistence in prayer can be tied to a lack of faith. Jesus told the parable of the unjust judge and the widow to illustrate His point: “Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me,” (Luke 18:5). Jesus then asked, “Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. *Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*” (Luke 18:7-8, emphasis mine).

A powerful key component of prayer is not to give up too quickly.

### KEY #3: ONE HAS TO HAVE EXPECTANT PRAYER

**Luke 11:9-10 “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”**

When one prays expect to receive an answer; expect to see some sort of fulfillment to come from your prayers. Look for something to happen as a result of your praying.

He doesn’t tell us to “**ask**” without the expectation of receiving something. No, He says if you do this, then this will happen; and so, it goes with the other instructions to “**seek and knock.**”

Even if the answer doesn’t look the way you imagine it should, your prayers do not fall on deaf ears. Be confident that God hears you. God is attentive to you. God does not leave you in a state of wanting. David said, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want,” (Psalm 23:1). There will be results.

When I plant a seed in the ground, I expect to see some sort of growth come out of it. It may take a while but eventually, I should start seeing a little sprout begin to poke its head through the surface of the dirt. As I watch it grow to full fruition, I expect to be able to reap off of what I have sown.

Your prayers are like you planting a seed, and what is being said here is that when you do these things: **ask, seek and knock**; growth is going to come from it. Expect it!

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The word “**shall**” appears as reassurance four times in just these two verses meaning this is what will happen as a result of praying in this manner. Let me remind you that Jesus is the one who is teaching this lesson and He is the one telling us to “**Ask . . . Seek . . . Knock.**” He is the one who speaks of “**receiving, finding and opening**” as a result of praying.

Whatever it is, keep looking to God for the answer. “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God,” (Philippians 4:6). Make it known unto God and keep making it known with the anticipation of seeing something happen.

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him,” (1 John 5:14-15). Therefore, we can expect to see results.

## KEY #4: ONE HAS TO HAVE BELIEVING PRAYER

**Luke 11:11-13 “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer a him a scorpion? If ye the, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”**

Believe in the goodness of God. Believe in your relationship with Him as a child of the heavenly Father. Believe that He always seeks to give you His best (ex. John 3:16). I often refer to God in my personal prayer as the Good Father who gives good gifts to His children. It’s something we must hold on to and depend upon.

Believe that God knows how to answer our prayers. I am a mom who is not perfect, but I love my children to distraction. I want what’s best for them. If they ask for food, surely I will not make a stone sandwich and expect them to eat. I want them to experience good things. I want them to be satisfied with the goodness of my house. God is perfect in all that He is and does, so doesn’t He too have the same aspirations and love toward them that are His? He is not aloof but caring. He is not unapproachable; rather, He invites us to ask for the good.

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We have to step out of ourselves and believe with childlike faith that our heavenly Father knows and cares about our petitions that go up before Him. This is a trust issue in our relationship with Him. We rely on Him to supply: “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus,” (Philippians 4:19). He is well able and wants to answer our prayers. “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, *believing*, ye shall receive,” (Matthew 21:22, emphasis mine).

Believe it today.

And, the most precious gifts of all that He is more than willing to give to those who ask is the gift of the “**Holy Spirit.**” We need the “**Holy Spirit!**” He is our comforter (John 14:16). He is our sealed promise (Ephesians 1:13). “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us,” (Romans 5:5). The “**Holy Spirit**” teaches us the things of God, (1 Corinthians 2:12-13). We need the gift of the “**Holy Spirit**” in order to make it in this world. Therefore, ask with a believing heart, and God will give!

Prayer is powerful! Jesus lists key points for every believer to enrich their own prayer life. It’s up to us to use this valuable information to the fullest.

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TOPIC:

## “4 Keys to Powerful Prayer”

Luke 11:1-13

Please Answer the Review Questions Below

1. **T or F.** John taught his disciples how to pray. (Luke 11:1)
2. The first step in acknowledging prayer is recognizing God as our \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 11:2)  
**A. Savior      B. Helper      C. Father      D. Keeper**
3. Describe what it means when we pray **give us day by day our daily bread.** (Luke 11:3)

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4. When we pray for God to **forgive us our sins**, what does He expect from us as well? (Luke 11:4)

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5. What gift does the heavenly Father want to give to those who ask? (Luke 11:13)  
**A. Holy Spirit      B. Bread      C. Fish      D. Egg**

6. **T or F.** The friend will rise at midnight and give to his neighbor because he is his friend. (Luke 11:8)

7. What other parable did Jesus use to teach His disciples about persistent prayer and faith? Where is it found?

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