

O Righteous Father

I've struggled with prayer on and off, to be honest, for several years. I want to be honest: out of all the sermons preached, this one creates a sense of hypocrisy. The struggle has been very specific, and it has never been about a lack of faith; more about: do I understand what I'm asking God to do, and is it in accordance with His revealed will and nature? However, at the end of the day, it resulted in a lack of prayer. I thought that, although wrong, God would understand where I'm coming from. But this isn't good enough. My relationship with God in this area should be stronger. I admire so many of you and your faithfulness in prayer. Truly. We all struggle in different areas. So, you can imagine how I've felt when being asked to preach on prayer when I've struggled myself. To be honest, principally, it probably should come from someone else. However, it brought me back to the word and encouraged me to fight the battle I've been trying to win. I need the Lord to help me win this battle. Perhaps you've struggled with this as well.

Jesus offered an example prayer in Luke 11:1-4.

- Jesus acknowledges and praises His Father.
- He asks for help (both physically and spiritually).
- He's mindful of others ("we" language).
- **Prayer is simple.** There are many questions about how to pray (to Jesus, in His name, to praise before requesting, etc.). I understand. Especially for those new in the faith. However, the mature should see how this distracts from what is really pretty straightforward and simple. We're talking to God. When we read prayers in God's holy word, it becomes clear that prayer, generally speaking, is a conversation directed toward God without any set pattern.

Jesus helped them see the value of prayer in Luke 11:5-13.

- It's not about three loaves of bread. It's about how you view the Father.
- It's not about three loaves of bread. It's about a form of asking, seeking, & knocking.
- It's not about three loaves of bread. It's about a Father and Son relationship.
- **Prayer is trust.** Jesus seamlessly flows from the example prayer to encouraging a relationship with God. Not a technical discussion about the "how." When I'm in need of God and trust He is interested, we're not interested in exactly how it was said. We're not considering an irreverent attitude. I can't imagine a Father who would deny His child because, though the child's heart was trusting and sincere, it was not worded the exact way He desired.

Jesus' opened His heart to God in John 17.

- We're going home.
- We're not there yet.
- We're walking with others.
- **Prayer is commitment.** If you have multiple children, you can love them equally yet individually. Yet, a healthy family wants the best for all, so there's always an "us" thinking. Everyone loves and is committed to each other, though we also enjoy one-on-one aspects. Jesus so powerfully illustrates oneness and commitment to God and His people. Ultimately, we are all one. Prayer connects us to God and His people. It fuels our commitment to God's will.