

The Necessity and Power of Prayer

Luke 5:12-16; 6:12-16; 9:28-36; 11:1-13

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I. Historical Background & Biblical Context

A. Historical Background

Throughout the Bible, many people turned to prayer. In moments of challenging decisions and obstacles, they prayed to God. As leaders guiding the people, they prayed to God. When they wanted to express praise, gratitude, and thanks, they prayed to God. When they needed help, healing, forgiveness, strength, or comfort, they prayed to God. The scriptures reveal a consistent pattern and reliance on prayer to God, showing us that prayer was necessary, powerful, and ongoing in the stories that unfolded in the Bible.

Consider Abraham's story and how he fervently petitioned God for mercy on behalf of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:16-33). Consider leaders like Moses (Exodus 32:30-35; Numbers 11:1-3) and Joshua (Joshua 7:6-9, 10:12-14) who found strength and direction through prayer as they led the Israelites to the Promised Land. Even kings, like David (2 Samuel 7:18-29; Psalms Chapters 51 and 23) and Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:14-19; 2 Chronicles 32:20-23), recognized the need to humble themselves before God and sought wisdom and intervention through prayer. We cannot forget prophets, like Daniel (Daniel 6:10; Daniel Chapter 9), who exemplified a commitment to serve God through prayer and carry out prophetic duties.

The life of Jesus, the Son of God, exemplifies the significance and power of prayer. Jesus consistently prayed and communed with His Father and passed this practice onto his disciples. (*This is the focus of our lesson for today.*) Prayer remained a consistent practice among the disciples and early churches (Acts 1:14, 2:42, 4:31), as well as with Apostle Paul (Acts 16:25-26; Ephesians 1:16-17; Philippians 1:3-4),

and those who worked closely with him and dedicated themselves to the service and proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

B. Biblical Context

God, in His grace, bestowed upon humanity a way to directly communicate with Him through prayer. Prayer invites us to intimately connect with God and exchange our thoughts, feelings, and desires with Him. As we consider those who preceded us in the scriptures, it is evident that prayer is necessary and powerful. Today, prayer remains indispensable and relevant. It serves as our constant source of guidance, comfort, strength, and connection to God. It stands as the most powerful weapon in our spiritual arsenal, a tool that can be wielded at any time and in any place and can transform any situation we face in our own lives.

II. The Lesson: The Necessity and Power of Prayer (Luke 5:12-16; 6:12-16; 9:28-36; 11:1-13)

In the life and teachings of Jesus, we find the perfect example of the vital and powerful role of prayer as a deeply intimate and sincere communion with God. By closely observing and understanding how Jesus prayed, we can see the necessity and power of prayer and find it as our source of strength, compass for guidance, and a way to a stronger and deep connection with God.

A. Prioritize prayer. (Luke 5:16)

Amid His earthly ministry and times filled with teaching and healing multitudes, Jesus consistently sought moments of retreat to pray. Despite the demands and busyness of His work, Jesus placed a high priority on prayer as a means of getting closer and connecting with the Father. This shows us that **prayer is necessary and important when seeking a close and personal relationship with God**. Just as it was crucial for Jesus, we too need to recognize the significance of prayer and deepen our own connection with God. Furthermore, Jesus perfectly balanced between His work and His dedicated prayer life. As followers of His example, we

are encouraged to emulate this balance in our own lives, **making prayer a priority** as we navigate our own demands and challenges.

B. Seek guidance through prayer (Luke 6:12-13)

Understanding the importance of seeking guidance from God, Jesus intentionally went to a mountain for an extensive prayer session, spending the entire night there with God. Following that night, Jesus faced the decision of choosing the twelve disciples or apostles. This decision carried immense weight, as these disciples would accompany Him, learn from His teachings, and play a crucial role in spreading the gospel worldwide after His departure.

Jesus' careful and prayerful way of making decisions shows us just how powerful prayer is in shaping significant life decisions. Turning to God for guidance through prayer helps us navigate important moments in life with clear spiritual understanding. Just like Jesus sought guidance before making the huge decision of choosing the apostles, we're encouraged to **bring prayer into our decision-making process**. We must understand that important decisions may require longer prayers. We also must learn to **approach God with patience and sincerity, trusting that He will provide our needs according to His will**.

C. Know that there is power in prayer (Luke 9:28-36)

Jesus took a few disciples with Him to the mountain for prayer. As He prayed, a remarkable transformation occurs – His face changed and His clothing radiated brightness. To add to the extraordinary scene, Moses and Elijah appeared and conversed with Him about what was to come.

Although we won't encounter the extraordinary events witnessed by Jesus and His disciples, the underlying concept remains that divine encounters and revelations can result from a deep connection with God in prayer. Prayer is powerful. Deep, consistent, and sincere prayer can bring about spiritual transformation and personal growth. Through our communion with God in prayer, we can gain insights into life,

attain peace in all situations, and understand both God and our purpose in this world.

D. We must persistently ask, seek, and knock. Have faith that God will respond. (Luke 11:8-11)

When the disciples inquired about prayer, Jesus provided a perfect model to demonstrate the proper approach to commune with God. Our prayers should acknowledge God's holiness, ask for His Kingdom to manifest, request daily provisions, seek forgiveness, and ask for guidance to stay strong against temptation.

Jesus further imparts wisdom through a parable of a friend who persistently seeks bread at midnight to show us that **persistence in prayer is always rewarded with a favorable response**. He instructs us to **ask, seek, and knock consistently and actively, assuring us that those who persist will certainly receive, find, and witness doors opening for them**. Jesus emphasizes this lesson by highlighting that if our earthly fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more will our heavenly Father, who is perfect and infinitely good, give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

This encourages us to **persevere in prayer, even amid challenges and delays**. **We must be bold, specific, and persistent in our prayers. Have faith and confidence in God, in His goodness, will give us what we truly need.**

III. Conclusion

Prayer is necessary and powerful today. Looking at the perfect example we have in Jesus, we are inspired to do the same, seeking God's guidance and wisdom through our own persistent prayers. Prayer is vital to connect with God and shape our decisions. Approach prayer with intention, persistence, and faith. The Lord's Prayer serves as a guide for our own prayers, acknowledging God's holiness, desiring His kingdom, and maintain our faith in His provisions. Prayer should be a high priority in our lives. **Pray!**